

Classics 3130F: Athenian Drama

Course Description

The yearly City Dionysia festival at Athens was the most impressive dramatic festival in ancient Greece. Over 1,000 Athenian citizens each year participated in the production dithyrambic circular choroi, tragedies, satyrplays, and comedies which were performed to an audience of up to 15–20,000 spectators in the Theater of Dionysus on the slopes of the Acropolis.

Using the City Dionysia as our model, we'll spend the term reading in translation examples of each of the dramatic genres presented at the festival. While we read these texts, we'll also consider things such as the origins of drama, what socio-political role the different dramatic genres played in fifth century Athens, and the materiality of drama. We'll also read secondary scholarship that represents some of the many different ways scholars approach research on drama.

Required Books

1. *The Greek Plays: Sixteen Plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides*. Eds Lefkowitz and Romm. 2017. ISBN: 978-0812983098 (there's also an e-book version that's about half the price of the paperback). [You can also access a digital copy through the library here](#) (limited to one user at a time and unfortunately use is online-only)

2. *Aristophanes: Birds and Other Plays*. Tr. and ed. Halliwell. 2008. ISBN: 978-0199555673 (no ebook version). There will be scans available on the course reading section of OWL.

If you have other translations, you can read those, but tests will be based on the assigned texts. All readings will be available through the Course Reading section of OWL starting on 1 September.

Evaluation

- 20% — Attendance and participation
- 10% — Essay proposal (Week 5)
- 20% — Test (Week 7)
- 30% — Essay (week 12)
- 20% — Final exam (in the December exam period)

Topic schedule

Introduction to Ancient Drama /// Dithyramb (Pindar fr. 75–77 and Bacchylides *Odes* 18 + 19) /// Aeschylus *Persians* /// Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* /// Sophocles *Electra* /// Sophocles *Antigone* /// Fragments and New Music /// Euripides *Helen* /// Euripides *Bacchae* /// Sophocles *Trackers* // Aristophanes *Birds*

Note that the texts we will read often include potentially harmful content.

Course Learning Objectives and Outcomes

1. Develop your passion for reading literature.
2. Be able to describe and explain the historical development of dramatic forms and the socio-political roles they played in Classical Athens.
3. Refine your ability to critically read and interpret ancient dramatic poetry (and other forms of literature).
4. Develop your ability to create and carry out a plan of research.
5. Develop your ability to clearly communicate your ideas both orally and in writing.

Assignment information

1. Attendance and participation: Attendance is self-explanatory. Participation is expected throughout the course, and can include thoughtful class discussion contributions, office hour discussions, or submissions of topics or issues to discuss in class via email or OWL. In-class participation is preferred, but the other options mean that lack of time during classes won't affect your ability to participate. One class per week will usually be devoted to the discussion of the secondary reading assignment for that week. In order to prepare for that class, you should take time to critically read the assigned reading(s) and write down one or two questions or connections from the readings.
2. Essay proposal: The essay proposal is meant to get you thinking about your essay well in advance of its due date. The proposal will consist of a research question, brief summary of what you think your essay will include, and an annotated bibliography. The topic is up to you and can be on any aspect of drama that interests you. **You should consult with me by the end of week 4 about your topic idea.** The annotated bibliography should include at least four academic sources and why you think they will be useful for your proposed research. This also offers you an opportunity to get feedback ahead of the essay. I will provide examples of my own annotated bibliographies and essay proposals as a guide for you.
3. Test: The test will be held over 2 class days. Each day you will get a mix of three "items" related to tragedy. These will be either excerpts from dramas we've read in class or images we've seen in class. You will choose **two** of the items to identify and then write a short essay on. Your short essay can include things such as item's place in the history of scholarship, its importance for the study of drama, how it relates to lecture topics and/or secondary readings we've done for class. You are also welcome to write about its relation to other research you've done.
4. Essay: Your essay should be about 3000 words long (including footnotes but not including bibliography) and make an argument about some aspect of drama you find interesting. It should be your own work (**not written with or by AI**). Since it is a research essay, you will be expected to use and engage with academic sources. I've also uploaded two of my own essays that were written for classes on drama. The first one, on Euripides' *Medea*, was the first essay I ever wrote for a literature class and the first class I took in Classics back in 2013. The second essay, on Euripides' *Ion*, was written last year.
5. Final Exam: The exam is the exact same format as the test, but in one session during the exam period (so you will have 6 items and be expected to comment on 4). The passages and images will be selected from classes after the midterm, but you can and should be able to connect them with themes or topics that were discussed at any point during the course.

Important University Policies

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Student Absences

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:

If necessary, an extension will be granted.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totalling 10% or more of the final course grade, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Assignments for this course are all due on the Mondays. If you cannot make the deadline on Monday, OWL will still accept submissions up until Friday. Consider this a no-questions asked extension that you make use if you cannot for any reason submit your assignment on the Monday. Anything after Friday will only be accepted if you provide proper documentation by following the procedures above.

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Counselling office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

The Special Exam will be scheduled in January.

Accommodation and Accessibility

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>. In accordance with policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mappu13.pdf), the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Use of Electronic Devices on Tests and Exams

No electronic devices will be permitted to be used during tests or exams unless academic consideration requires it (e.g. typing). See "Support Services" section for information to request accommodations for writing tests and exams.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Support Services

Academic Counselling

Your Home Faculty's Academic Counselling or Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Accessible Education

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Digital Student Experience

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being:

<https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC,

<https://westernusc.ca/services/>.