CL2442

**Greek Drama 2017-18**

**Taught by**: Dr. Richard Hawley

**Value**: 1 unit = 30 credits **Prerequisites**: none

**Course delivery**

* One hour lecture + one hour seminar per week. I shall divide you up into groups at the start of term. Please note: the timetable shows two seminar groups – you will be allocated to ONE of these. I shall ask for your preferences and for valid timetable clashes at the first session. I shall try to accommodate preferences, but as the seminars have to be roughly the same size, this may not always be possible.
* Students will be expected to work several hours per week outside class in advance of the seminars, using translations of selected plays, seminar worksheets, recommended scholarship, and extra resources available on the course Moodle page.
* Dr. Hawley will deliver all the lectures and seminars himself.

**Course content**

We shall cover the wide range of surviving classical Athenian dramas, with a focus on tragedy in the first term and comedy in the second. Authors studied will therefore be: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander, with a look at Aristotle and other ancient literary critics on drama.

We shall consider the following for example:

* Drama's engagement with contemporary politics
* Literary and philosophical influences (e.g. Homeric epic, sophistic thought, political philosophy)
* Characterisation
* Plot and structure
* Stagecraft (props, costume, machinery etc.)
* The presentation of social groups: aristocratic elite, women, the elderly *vs*. the young, the farming community, prostitutes
* Types of comedy, types of audience: political satire, literary parody
* The development of comic drama from Aristophanes to Menander
* Theorising drama: Aristotle and other ancient literary critics on tragedy and comedy

**Course assessment**

* Two essays (2500-3000 words), one per term: both must be submitted, but the better of the two marks contributes 20% towards the course assessment. A choice of essay titles will be available at the start of the course from the course Moodle page.
* One three-hour exam in the Summer Term, worth the remaining 80%.

**Required textbooks**

You will need to buy the following translations for these plays, which we’ll be studying in detail. These will be the ones which we shall all be using in the classes and which I shall be using in the exam. **Please make sure that these are the translations that you buy.**

* Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* in the translation by Richmond Lattimore (University of Chicago Press, 3rd edition 2013; also on Kindle)
* Sophocles’ *Antigone, Oedipus the King,* and *Electra* in the translation by H.D.F. Kitto (World’s Classics, Oxford University Press; also on Kindle)
* Euripides’ *Hippolytus, Electra,* and *Helen* from the World’s Classics, Oxford University Press paperback *Euripides: Medea and Other Plays* (translated by James Morwood)
* Six plays by Aristophanes: *Wasps, Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs* from the Penguin *The Frogs and Other Plays* (translated by David Barrettt, revised by Shomit Dutta; also on Kindle); and *Birds, Lysistrata* and *Assembly-Women* from the World’s Classics Oxford University Press paperback *Aristophanes: Birds and Other Plays* (translated by Stephen Halliwell)
* Menander’s *Dyskolos, Samia, Epitrepontes* and *Aspis* from the Penguin *Menander: Plays and Fragments* (translated by Norma Miller; also on Kindle)

If you have friends or relatives who are looking to gift you useful books for the course, these are some recommendations:

* J. Gregory *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, Blackwell 2008 & Kindle: a very good selection of recent essays.
* O. Taplin *Greek Tragedy in Action*, 2nd edition, Routledge 2002 (or earlier edition) & Kindle. A genuine classic: this focuses on the staging.
* E. Hall *Greek Tragedy: suffering under the sun*, Oxford University Press 2010 & Kindle. A recent guide, full of good ideas and approaches.
* J. Robson *Aristophanes: an introduction*, Duckworth 2009 & Kindle.
* D.M. MacDowell *Aristophanes and Athens: an introduction to the plays*, Oxford University Press 1999 & Kindle. More scholarly and detailed than Robson.

**Course Moodle page & handouts**

This will become available just before the start of the next academic year, when course registrations have been finalized and College has ‘rolled over’ the Moodle pages for the next intake.

The course page contains a large number of extra learning resources, including most of the secondary scholarship that you will be expected to read and think about each week for seminar discussion, so you won’t need to access it all in the library.

**The page also includes all the lecture handouts and seminar worksheets**: **you will be expected to access these electronically or to bring along your own printed hard copies to lectures and seminars**. Paper copies will not be distributed in class. This is in line with the College’s sustainability policy.

**Second Year Projects**

Linked Second Year Projects are available; please see separate document.

**Suggested vacation work**

It might be an idea to start reading the plays that we’ll be studying: see the list above under ‘Required textbooks’. This would be particularly advisable if you are relatively new to Greek drama.

All the translations that I’ve asked you to buy have very helpful introductions, which describe the contexts and themes of the plays. These are well worth reading before you study them.

If you want to read some other tragedies, which will be helpful for the autumn term, I can warmly recommend Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis* and Euripides’ *Trojan Women*!

If you have any queries, please do email me. Otherwise I look forward to seeing you in the autumn.

RGH 5/2017