

Ancient Greek Justice and Literature

PHI-135 and ENG-136

Travel Cluster to Greece

Spring 2015

PH 105

Mondays 6:30-9:30

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Hours: MWF 2-3, or by appointment

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Hours: T 11-12, W 1-2, or by appointment

Cluster Description: At the center of Athenian politics are the law courts in which the business of the city-state was determined and carried out. Justice, as understood by the contemporaries of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle was mediated through the practices and procedures of an adjudicative system whose beginnings are clouded in the mist of Greek tragedy. Our excursion into this judicial system will begin at the architectural ruins of Apollo's priestess at Delphi; these ruins serve as a backdrop for discussing the mythical foundations of the first court in Athens, the Areopagus. We rely on Greek storytelling to explore this early form of justice. Such traditional justice is deeply entrenched in the Greek worldview, largely due to the ubiquity of the epic texts the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which we attribute to Homer. These epics will introduce us to the ancient Greek paradigm of humanity, through the heroes and gods of the Trojan War. At the same time we will use the *Oresteia* trilogy of Aeschylus as a ground to grasp the break from a society in which aristocratic "blood feuds" are the means for settling judicial disputes, to the establishment of a court governed by the wisdom of Athena.

From these mythical beginnings of Athenian justice we will proceed to the justice of the "citizen's courts" that tried, sentenced and executed Socrates. Our primary texts will be the *Athenian Constitution*, supposedly written by Aristotle, and famous court orations of the time period that reflect the societal justice grounding the system. Concentration will be on the surfacing of a justice of "seeming" (*doxa*) and honor (*timh*) established according to an image of citizenship based on an externalized "other" in which justice is determined by what can be seen. One effective way of understanding this culture of scrutiny and reputation is to read the social satire of comic playwright Aristophanes; we will be reading *The Clouds* as a commentary on this form of social justice.

Finally, we will transition into the third period of Greek justice. We will read the early dialogues of Plato concerning the trial of Socrates, dialogues in which we will see the surfacing of a revolutionary idea of justice. This Socratic view of justice (*dike*) will be grounded in a transcendent form of idealism that ultimately will establish what comes to be known as "guilt culture," an idea of justice that is adjudicated via an idealized, internalized other. Here it is key that a Greek should act upon principle and not, necessarily, upon the law; the drama of Euripides' *Medea* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* reflect this developing value, which is now considered a notably Greek quality. As we immerse ourselves in the height of Greek tragedy, we will be obliged to consider it through the lens of the contemporary Greek dramatic theory—Aristotle's *Poetics*.

We will culminate our readings and excursions into the text with a visit to Greece, including some of the archaeological sites that surfaced in our texts. This will include excursions to

Delphi, the Acropolis, Agora, and Areopagus with an archeologist to help us further understand the Ancient Greeks.

Cluster Goals: By the end of this course, students should be able to 1) define the meaning of justice for the Ancient Greeks during different periods in their history; 2) explain the process of transition from one form of justice to the other; 3) and explain the Greek ideal of justice as presented in literary and philosophical texts. For the final joint project, students should be able to 1) research the history and importance of the archeological sites we will be visiting during our Greek travels; and 2) explain the relationship between those sites and the key questions of justice explored through the course.

Required Texts:

The Athenian Constitution, by Aristotle (trans. Rhodes), Penguin
4 Texts on Socrates, Plato & Aristophanes (trans. West), Cornell University Press
The Oresteia, Aeschylus (trans. Fagles), Penguin
Iliad, Homer (trans. Fagles), Penguin
Odyssey, Homer (trans. Fagles), Penguin
Poetics, Aristotle (trans. Heath), Penguin
Medea, Euripides (trans. Svarlien), Hackett
The Three Theban Plays, Sophocles (trans. Fagles), Penguin

Classroom Policies:

Late Work--Papers, exams and presentations are due on the day they are due. Late work will be docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late. That means an "A" paper would receive an "A-", if it is a day late, a "B+" paper would receive a "B" and so on.

Academic Integrity --Passing off the work of someone else as your own is dishonest. When you borrow ideas, you must document them both orally and in writing. Failure to do so will result in failure on the assignment, and, in some cases, could result in failure for the course. If you have any questions about documentation, see your instructors. Please refer to the student handbook for the college policy on academic integrity.

Attendance --We meet only once a week, so you shouldn't miss any classes. If you miss more than one class, your final grade for the course will be docked 1/3 of a grade for each day you miss beyond one. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in extreme circumstances, and you must discuss it with us.

Required Assignments and examination:

First and foremost every student should keep abreast of the reading. We are Socratic educators, and hence believe that dialogue is the best form of instruction. In order to promote this it is essential that you read the assignments as this will aid in our discussion. To aid in this we request that you maintain a reading journal that should include questions and comments that you will share with the class. It will also allow you to make connections between the two courses.

There will be two take-home essay exams (midterm and final) in the philosophy section and a number of short papers in both the philosophy and English sections. The final philosophy exam will not be comprehensive, but will only cover the material from the midterm on.

Students will also do a combined group research project and presentation that will integrate material from both courses in the Cluster on the archeological sites we will be visiting.

As part of the travel component of this class, students will be expected to keep a travel journal of their experiences and we will have regular class gatherings to discuss our experiences, both academic and social. Each student will also be expected to do a short presentation on one of the sights that we will visit in-country.

Grading:

Grading will be determined using the following percentages:

PH 135

Short Papers	20%
Midterm	25%
Final	25%
Research Project	30%

ENG 136

Epic Simile Paper	15%
Reading Journal/Participation	10%
Iliad Paper	15%
Odyssey Paper	15%
Tragedy Paper	20%
Final Group Research Project	25%

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Tentative Chronology (15-week session)

Date

PHI-135

ENG-136

1/12	Philosophical ideas of justice. Film: Greeks: Crucible of Civilization	Introduction: How to read the <i>Iliad</i>
1/26	<i>Agamemnon</i> , by Aeschylus: A family in turmoil, or the price one must pay for the transference of 'blood guilt'.	<i>Iliad</i> Books 1-4
2/2	<i>Libation-Bearers</i> : Do I not know you from somewhere? The hereditary transference of guilt. Short Paper	<i>Iliad</i> Books 5, 6, 9, 14
2/9	<i>Eumenides</i> : A struggle between old and new, or how to appease the Furies.	<i>Iliad</i> Books 16, 18, 19, 20 Short essay on Epic Simile
2/16	<i>Athenian Constitution</i> , examination of the history of the Athenian judicial system.	<i>Iliad</i> Books 21-24
2/23	<i>Athenian Constitution</i>	<i>Odyssey</i> Books 1-5, 8 Iliad Essay Due
3/2	<i>The Clouds</i> Philosophy Midterm	<i>Odyssey</i> Books 9-14
3/16	<i>The Clouds</i> , by Aristophanes	<i>Odyssey</i> Book 18-24
3/23	Film: <i>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>	Odyssey Paper Film: <i>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>
3/30	<i>Euthyphro</i> , by Plato: A Socratic examination of piety. Short Paper	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
4/7	<i>Apology</i> , by Plato: Socrates defense: Socratic dike in action.	<i>Medea</i> Short research plan for final projects due.
4/13	<i>Crito</i> , can justice allow us to escape an unjust verdict?	<i>Oedipus the King</i>
4/20	<i>Crito</i> .	<i>Antigone</i> Essay on Tragedy Due
4/27	Prep for joint project Short Paper	Prep for joint project
5/4	Presentations and preparations for our travel abroad. Philosophy Final	Presentations