An Introduction to Greek Drama: Preliminary Syllabus

Course Code: CLA 51
Instructor: Donna Zuckerberg

Course Texts:
In this course we will read five plays: Aeschylus’ *Persians*, Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, and Menander’s *Cantankerous Old Man*. While recommended translations of these plays are available at the Stanford bookstore, students may read the five plays in any translation they wish.

Grade Options and Requirements:

Enrollees seeking a “letter grade” for the class must attend at least six of the seven class sessions. They will also be required to write a response paragraph of approximately one double-spaced page about each of the five plays. I will provide in advance at least three discussion questions for each assignment to stimulate these responses, which will be due at the beginning of class on the week when we are discussing the play in question. For the two plays that will be discussed for two weeks, the response paragraph may be handed in on either session.

Enrollees seeking “credit” for the class, but no grade, must attend at least six of the seven sessions.

There are no requirements for enrollees taking the class for “no grade requested.”

Schedule:

Week 1: Tragedy I
  ➢ Overview of Greek Tragedy
  ➢ Aeschylus’ *Persians*
  ➢ The definition of tragedy
  ➢ The development of the tragic genre

Week 2: Tragedy II
  ➢ Aeschylus’ *Persians*, continued
  ➢ Tragedy and mourning
  ➢ Greeks and ‘barbarians’ on the tragic stage

Week 3: Tragedy III
  ➢ Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*
  ➢ Tragic heroes and tragic flaws
➢ Greek mythology and tragedy
➢ Religion and prophecy in tragedy

Week 4: Tragedy IV
➢ Euripides’ *Trojan Women*
➢ Gender dynamics on the Greek stage
➢ War and peace in tragedy

Week 5: Comedy I
➢ Overview of Greek Comedy
➢ Aristophanes’ *Frogs*
➢ Comedy’s cast of characters: slaves, gods, politicians, intellectuals, and animals

Week 6: Comedy II
➢ Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, continued
➢ Comedy and parody
➢ Comedy’s troubled relationship with tragedy

Week 7: Comedy III
➢ Menander’s *Cantankerous Old Man*
➢ The development of Greek comedy
➢ Greek drama after the Greeks: from Menander to Shakespeare