

Professor Keri Walsh

Faculty Memorial Hall 318

M/R 4:00-5:15 PM (Section R23)

Office: 520 W Dealy Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 5:00 PM

ENGL 2000:

Texts and Contexts: The Art of Tragedy



Course Description: In this section of Texts and Contexts, we take three ancient Greek plays as our starting point for reflecting on the extreme artistic, intellectual, and ethical demands of tragedy over the last two and a half millennia. We begin by examining Sophocles's influential *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone* in the context of Aristotle's theories of tragedy. We turn next to Euripides's *Medea*, a play about a woman who kills her own children to avenge herself on an unfaithful husband. Drawing on Nietzsche and other theorists of tragedy to interpret Medea's choices, we analyze modern adaptations by playwrights and filmmakers. In the second half of the course, we study two plays by William Shakespeare. Students will write a review of a live

performance of *Richard III* and analyze the choices the director and actors have made in bringing the play to the stage. Finally, students write a paper about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in modern adaptation.

Course Attributes: Eloquentia Perfecta 2, Fordham College/Rose Hill, Texts & Contexts

Required Course Texts:

Aristotle, *Poetics*, Penguin Classics, Translated and Introduced by Malcolm Heath (ISBN-10: 0140446362 / ISBN-13: 978-0140446364)

Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays*, Penguin Classics, Translated by Robert Fagles and Introduction by Bernard Knox (ISBN-10: 0140444254 / ISBN-13: 978-0140444254)

Euripides, *Medea and Other Plays*, Oxford World's Classics, Translated by James Morwood and edited by Edith Hall, (ISBN-10: 0199537968/ ISBN-13: 978-0199537969)

Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea and Heart of the Earth: A Popul Vuh Story* (ISBN-10: 097053440X / ISBN-13: 978-0970534408)

William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, Folger Shakespeare Library (Simon & Schuster), (ISBN-10: 0743482840 / ISBN-13: 978-0743482844)

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, The New Folger Library (Simon & Schuster), (ISBN-10: 074347712X / ISBN-13: 978-0743477123)

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Grove Press, ISBN-10: 0802132758/ISBN-13: 978-0802132758)

- **In addition to the required textbooks, short Critical Readings** will be posted on Blackboard and shared by e-mail. Students are responsible for printing them out and bringing them to class. Short critical readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the syllabus, as follows:

*Nicole Loraux, *The Mourning Voice*

*Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other*

Overview of Assignments

There are two exams and three major writing assignments for this course.

Midterm Exam—This exam will cover Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Sophocles’s plays *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*

September 19 in class
10% of final grade

Essay #1—Lens Essay on *Medea* (4-5 pp). You will develop an argument about one of the *Medea* adaptations we will examine, using a theoretical text (Loraux, Nietzsche, or Zeitlin) to provide a framework for your argument:

Due Monday, October 21 in class
20% of final grade

Essay #2—Theatre Review of *Richard III* (2-3 pp). You will attend a live performance of *Richard III* in New York and write a response to it following the genre conventions of the theatre review:

Due Thursday, November 7 in class
10% of final grade

Essay #3—Hamlet in Adaptation Paper (5-7 pp) You will analyze an adaptation of *Hamlet* and develop an argument about how one of the original play’s major themes is treated in the work that is adapted from it:

Due Monday, December 9 by e-mail (to kwalsh36@fordham.edu)
30% of final grade

Final Exam—This is a comprehensive exam that will cover all material from the course, including the material already covered on the Midterm exam (Dec 12 / Dec 16):

December 12 at 1:30 (for 2:30 PM section R32)
December 16 at 1:30 (for 4:00 PM section R23)
20% of final grade

Course Participation: Includes your positive contribution to the classroom setting, attendance, preparation, sensitive and engaged participation in discussion, punctuality, meeting deadlines, and always having the readings with you in class:

10% of final grade

Technical Matters for submitting your essays:

- ❖ All essays should be typed (word processed), double-spaced in 12-pt. Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. Number your pages starting on p.2 & staple all pages together (hint: buy a stapler!).
- ❖ Use MLA in-text citation method with a Works Cited list at the end.
- ❖ Give your essay a title that reflects your main ideas. Never settle for a title like “Essay #2.”
- ❖ **SAVE YOUR WORK** often, and print out hard copies occasionally. Computer disaster is not an acceptable excuse for late or incomplete work.



UNIT ONE: GREEK ORIGINS AND ECHOES

Thur Aug 29 – Introduction

Mon Sept 2 – Labor Day, University closed

Wed Sept 4 - Aristotle, *Poetics* (entire book, including Heath’s introduction)

Thur Sept 5- Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (p. 131-185, up to line 526)

Mon Sept 9- Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* (p. 186-251)

Thur Sept 12- Sophocles, *Antigone* (p. 35-90, up to line 655)

Mon Sept 16- Sophocles, *Antigone* (p. 91-128)

Thur Sept 19- MIDTERM EXAM

Mon Sept 23- Euripides, *Medea* (entire play)

Thur Sept 26- CRITICAL READING: *Zeitlin, “Playing the Other”

Mon Sept 30- CRITICAL READING: *Loraux, “The Mourning Voice,” *Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

Thur Oct 3- Lars von Trier, *Medea* (screening)

Mon Oct 7- Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman* (Act I)

Thur Oct 10- Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman* (Act II)

Mon Oct 14—Columbus Day, class cancelled



UNIT TWO: SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE

Thur Oct 17 – *Richard III* (Act I)

Mon Oct 21- *Richard III* (Act II)—**Essay #1 Due (Lens Essay on *Medea*)**

Thur Oct 24- CRITICAL READING: *Garber, *Shakespeare’s Ghost Writers*

CRITICAL READING: *Charnes, *Notorious Subjects*

Mon Oct 28- *Richard III* (Act III)

How to Write a Theatre Review

Wed Oct 30 – Excursion to see *Richard III* on Broadway

Thur Oct 31- *Richard III* (Act IV)

Mon Nov 4- *Richard III* (Act V)

Thur Nov 7- *Hamlet* (Act I)-- **Essay #2 Due (Review of *Richard III*)**

CRITICAL READING *Calderwood, *To Be and Not to Be*

Mon Nov 11- *Hamlet* (Act II)

CRITICAL READING *de Grazia, "Hamlet's Delay"

Thur Nov 14- *Hamlet* (Acts III and IV)

Mon Nov 18- *Hamlet* (Act V)

Thur Nov 21- *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Acts I and II)

Mon Nov 25- *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Act III)

Thur Nov 28—Thanksgiving, Class Cancelled

Mon Dec 2 – *Hamlet 2* screening

Thur Dec 5—Course conclusion

Mon Dec 9—**Essay #3 Due (*Hamlet in Adaptation*)**

(submitted by e-mail to kwalsh36@fordham.edu by midnight)

FINAL EXAM: Monday December 16, 1:30 PM