Syllabus Outline for Thinking with Tragedy: Ancient Genres and Their Influences
COLIT-GA 2821 (and POET-GA 2001 and ELEC-GG 2830) Wednesdays, 5:00-7:30 pm

Professors Laura Slatkin and Susanne Wofford Fall, 2014

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1. A term paper of about 20-25 pages due at the end of the semester. Please consult with us on your topic.
2. One page of analysis/commentary (weekly response paper) prepared before class each week on a topic from our reading, posted to the Forum on NYU classes for that week by Tuesday evening at 6 pm.
3. All students will read the weekly responses from each other by class time.
4. Each student will lead the discussion and present a focused interpretation of an aspect of our readings once during the semester—we will create a class calendar to organize these presentations. These presentations should be no more than 15 minutes long and be intended to open up a discussion. They should be presentations from notes possibly including visuals presented on the screen not read essays. The discussion following the presentation could be 10 minutes, so that the whole event would be no more than 25 minutes or so.
5. As this list suggests, active participation and regular attendance is a requirement of the course. If you have to miss more than one class, we will consider that something must be wrong, and will expect you to schedule an appointment to discuss your work.
6. You must be able to use the NYU Classes system in order to get the readings for this class and to post your comments. Please also make sure that we have the email you actually use as well as a working phone number for you. Auditors will have to be formally entered into the NYU Classes site by our Assistant Emily Mansfield.

PLEASE NOTE: We plan to schedule two classes outside of the normal time. One is actually an extra class which we hope you will make time for. The second is to make up the class that would normally take place the Wednesday of Thanksgiving week—we assume that you will want to be able to travel before Thanksgiving.

IN ADDITION, in an effort to really work you hard, we will ask you to try to make room for at least two additional events. The first is that King Lear from the Globe Theater will be playing at Skirball in late September and October, and we will get tickets for the class for you. IF you cannot come when the class goes, we will ask you to try to go on your own.
In addition, Fiasco Theater Company, a professional theater company in residence at Gallatin, will be presenting a staged reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* on **Nov 12**, and we would like you to make every possible effort to arrange to see that reading.

The Gallatin Theater, run by Kristin Horton, is presenting a series of plays and performances in November on the theme of the Roman Shakespeare. Kristin will be directing a performance of Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* and a group of undergraduate actors will be presenting Julius Caesar. We strongly encourage you to make time at least to see *The Rape of Lucrece*.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

**Sept 3**  
**Epic into Tragedy I**  
Homer, *Iliad* 1; Aeschylus, *Oresteia*.


**Sept 10**  
**Tragedy as Aftermath**  


**Sept 17**  
**Revenge redux/Tragedy as hyper-corporealization**  
Seneca, * Thyestes*; Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*. (Ovid, Philomela.)


**Sept 24**  
**Kingship, Kinship**

Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannos* (Oedipus the King); Aristotle, *Poetics*


**Oct 1**  
**Shakespeare, King Lear**


**Thursday October 2:** One possible visit to the Globe Production of Lear in Skirball with Laura

**Oct 8**  
**Bare Life and Tragic Form**

*King Lear*; Beckett, *Endgame*

Kott, J., “King Lear or Endgame,” from *Shakespeare our Contemporary* (1964)

99; Recommended viewing: Peter Brook, *King Lear*; Kurosawa, *Ran*; Kozintsev, *King Lear*.

**Thursday Oct 9: Second possible visit to King Lear at Skirball with Susanne**

**Oct 15**

**Tragic internalization/Internalization as tragedy**

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*


**Extra Class/ party to be scheduled** sometime in this period to discuss Sulayman Al Bassam, *The Al Hamlet Summit*

Recommended reading: Selections from Margaret Litvin, *Hamlet's Arab Journey: Shakespeare's Prince and Nasser's Ghost*.

Comments and essays on The Al Hamlet Summit:
http://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/blog/2013/07/26/al-hamlet-summit-intro/  

**Oct 22**

**Tragic metatheater, tragic modernity**

Euripides, *Bacchae*

Oct 29 Rotating desire/tragic thresholds

Euripides, *Hippolytus*; Racine, *Phèdre*.


Nov 5 From Tragedy to Pastoral/ From Pastoral to Tragedy

Euripides, *Cyclops*; Tasso, *Aminta*; Theocritus *Idyll 1*; *Idyll 11*


Recommended reading: Henke, R., *Pastoral Transformations: Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays* (Selections); Bishop, T., “The Winter’s Tale or Filling up the graves” in *Shakespeare and the Theater of Wonder* (Cambridge: 1996); Clubb, L., “Pastoral Jazz from the Writ to the Liberty,” in *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. Michele Marrapodi (Aldershot: 2007)

Evening of November 12 Fiasco Theater Reading of *Antony and Cleopatra*

Nov 19 Epic and Tragedy II: tragic eros
Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*; Plutarch *Life of Marc Antony*. (Selections from Plutarch *Of Isis and Osiris*); *The Tragedie of Antonie*, by Robert Garnier, translated by Mary Herbert (Sidney), the Countess of Pembroke (1595)


**Nov 26**

**Class to be rescheduled** -- topic will be continuing the discussion of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Aeneid* Books 1, 2 and 4

**Dec 3**

**Tragic Civitas**

Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*; Cervantes, *Numancia* (1583)


Recommended reading: Cavell, S., “Who does the wolf love? Reading Coriolanus” in *Representations* 3 (summer 1983); Wofford, S. “The Body Unseamed” (Introduction to *Shakespeare’s Late Tragedies*.)

**Dec 10**

Euripides, *Trojan Women*; Ellen McLaughlin, *Iphigenia and Other Daughters* (1995); Racine, *Andromaque*