Antigone: heroine or harridan? political dissident or family loyalist? Harbinger of the free subject or captive of archaic gender norms? Speaking truth to power or preserving traditional privilege? Sophocles' *Antigone* has been good to think with since its first production in the fifth century BCE. From ancient commentators through Hegel to contemporary gender theorists like Judith Butler, readers have grappled with what Butler calls "Antigone's Claim." The play's exploration of gender, kinship, citizenship, law, resistance to authority, family vs. the state, and religion (among other issues) has proved especially compelling for modern thought.

**Course Assignments**

**January 27**  Introduction: problems and perspectives; Athenian theater; Sophocles' *Antigone*: literary and historical contexts.

**February 3**  citizenship and the *polis*

Readings:  
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<td>a)</td>
<td>Antigone;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Thucydides, <em>The Peloponnesian Wars</em>, selections</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Goldhill, S. <em>Reading Greek Tragedy</em> (Cambridge: 1986), ch. 3</td>
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February 10    language/logos and authority
Readings: a) Goldhill, S. *Reading Greek Tragedy*, ch. 4; b) Segal, C.
“Sophocles’ Praise of Man and the Conflicts of the Antigone” in
*Interpreting Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca: 1986); c) Nussbaum, M. *The Fragility

February 17    gender and agency
Reading: a) Foley, H. “Antigone as Moral Agent” in *Female Acts in
Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: 2001); b) Ormand, K. “Family Matters in the
Antigone” in *Exchange and the Maiden* (Austin: 1999);

February 24    kinship and the state
Reading: a) Butler, J. *Antigone’s Claim*; b) Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology*
(selections) [c) recommended: Murnaghan, S. “Antigone 904-920 and the
Institution of Marriage”, *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986)]

March 2        tragedy and the polis
Reading: a) Vernant, J.-P., “Tension and Ambiguity in Greek Tragedy”
in *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Paris: 1981); b) Zeitlin, F.
“Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama” in *Greek Tragedy and

March 9        after Antigone
Readings: Fugard, *The Island*; Ellen McLaughlin, *Kissing the Floor*

Secondary readings will be posted under the Resources tab on NYU Classes.

Course requirements: 1) class attendance and participation; 2) required reading; 3) *weekly response paragraphs on the assigned reading; 4) final take-home exam, due March .

Grading will be based on: class participation and response paragraphs 50%; final exam 50%.
All your written work must be your own; “borrowed” work will be severely sanctioned in accordance with school policies. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.

*Class Paragraphs: beginning next week (Feb. 3), please post on NYU Classes (by Tuesday at 6 p.m.!) AND bring to class a coherent 1-2 paragraph response to the week’s reading; students will volunteer or be called on to read their observations and comments. Make sure that at least three of your responses include discussion of the background reading.

**Take-home exam:** please post on NYU Classes and deliver hard copy to my office by March 14.


Although we will work in class from the edition of *Antigone* listed above, a slightly more contemporary translation can be found on the web at:

http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/sophocles/antigone.htm

A line-by-line commentary on the play, geared to an older translation by R. C. Jebb, can be found at:

A useful website for Athol Fugard’s *The Island* can be found at: http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/crossings/lit/island.htm