Oedipus: exemplary sovereign or outlier? savior of the city or its destroyer? Upholder or suspender of the law (including the laws of kinship)? Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* has been good to think with since its first production in the fifth century BCE.

Requirements: weekly readings; response paper for each class meeting (as of 2/2, posted on NYU Classes); 5 min. oral report; final paper.


Secondary readings will be posted on NYU Classes under “Resources” or handed out in class

Schedule:


**Polis, pollution, and prophecy** [Who?]

**Week 1**  
January 26  Introduction. *Oedipus the King* 1-215.

Recommended optional background reading (selections posted on NYU Classes):
Bacon, H., “The Chorus in Greek Life and Drama”, *Arion* 3.1 (1994-95) 6-24;

**Week 2**  

Kingship, community, curse [Where? and When?]

Week 3

Recommended optional reading: Parker, R. Miasma, Ch. 6; Osborne, R. “Sophocles and Contemporary Politics”, Ch. 19 in Ormand, K. ed. A Companion to Sophocles; Euben, P. “Identity and the Oedipus Tyrannos”, Ch. 4 in The Tragedy of Political Theory (1990);

Week 4


Kinship structure, tragic structure [What?]

Week 5
February 23    OT 911-1185. Reading: Aristotle, Poetics

Week 6

Epistemophilia [Why?]

Week 7
March 8         OT 1416-1530. Reading: Freud, S. Interpretation of Dreams (selections); Vernant, J-P. “Oedipus Without The Complex”, Ch. 4 in Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, 85-111; Lear, Jonathan “Knowingness and Abandonment,” Ch. 3 in Open Minded: Working out the Logic of the Soul (1999).

Secondary readings will be posted on NYU Classes.
Course requirements: 1) class attendance and participation; 2) required reading; 3) *weekly response paragraphs on the assigned reading; 4) **group oral report; 5) final take-home exam.

Grading will be based on: class participation and response paragraphs 45%; report 10%; take-home final exam 45%.

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. 2), please post on NYU Classes – not later than 6 p.m. the day before class, a coherent 1-2 paragraph response that you think will stimulate or enrich class discussion. These responses will not be graded, but will constitute an element of your participation in the class.

Your paragraphs should focus on the reading of the week, and may include: questions you have about the text, observations on themes, figures of speech, dramatic structure, or other narrative features. Make sure that at least two of your five responses include discussion of the secondary reading.

**Collaborative oral report, weeks 6 & 7:
The class will be divided into small groups. Each member of the group will report to the class – in a presentation of 5-8 min -- on an aspect of the reading assigned for that week. The presentation should contain a close reading of key passages in the play or in one of the assigned articles/essays. All members of the class are responsible for doing all the readings for both weeks.

Each member of the group will write up and hand in through NYU Classes her/his individual presentation notes, with appropriate citations from the primary and secondary material. Remember, this should be a collaborative project; each group should meet together to discuss how to coordinate the individual presentations You do not have to upload a response paragraph the day you give your oral report. Please feel free to consult with me as you prepare your report.