

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for HUMN 35

GREEK TRAGEDY

Effective: Fall 2006

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

HUMN 35 — GREEK TRAGEDY — 3.00 units

Selected tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; particular attention given to values and meanings characteristic of aesthetic perception, philosophic content, and historic perspective; recovery and integration of these values as a humanistic approach to Greek tragedy.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. examine major structural elements of Greek tragedy;
- B. explain the tragic idea that underlies each play;
- C. compare and contrast various translations of the plays;
- D. analyze the formal staging requirements of Greek tragedies;
- E. identify mythic background of the plays;
- F. relate the plays' contents to philosophical concepts;
- G. evaluate ways in which themes of Greek tragedy appear in works of art since the fifth century.

V. CONTENT:

- A. The Ancient Greeks
 1. Social, economic, and political development
 2. Early Athens
 3. Delian Leagues and Athenian Empire
 4. Athenian democracy Text
- B. The Arts in ancient Greece
 1. Art and architecture
 2. Music and dance
 3. Poetry and prose
 4. Theatre
- C. The Greek tragedies
 1. Aeschylus
 2. Euripides
 3. Sophocles

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Instructor-guided discussions of reading
- C. Artistic adaptations in art, music, film and other texts
- D. Small group discussions
- E. In-class reading aloud of plays

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Reading: 1. Read Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound and be prepared to explain the importance of this specific translation to your understanding and enjoyment of the work. 1. Read Euripides' Medea and be prepared to compare the central character with other female characters in previously-read plays. Text B. Writing: 1. Write a brief essay describing how you might stage Euripides' Hippolytus. Relate your description to the formal requirements demanded for staging fifth-century tragedy. 2. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast Euripides' Alcestis with Gluck's operatic adaptation. C.

Collaborative learning: 1. In your small group, discuss, rehearse, and perform a scene from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*.
2. Choose another student with whom you can prepare and present a contemporary version of one of the tragedies studied or a contemporary piece which you think might structurally qualify as Greek tragedy.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

B. **Frequency**

1. Weekly journal
2. Weekly post-discussion short writing
3. One small group presentation of a dramatic scene
4. One joint presentation of contemporary mythic application
5. Two written examinations (midterm and final)

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound*. Trans. by Scully, James and Herington, J.C. ., Oxford UP, 1975.
2. Euripides *Ten Plays*. Trans. by Roche, Paul., Penguin, 1998.
3. Fine, John V.A. *The Ancient Greeks: A Critical History*., Harvard UP, 1983.
4. Sophocles *Antigone*. Trans. by Braun, R.E., Oxford, UP, 1973.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: