

Politics and Literature

GOV 335O/CTI 324

Spring 2024

Unique # 37335 and 29289

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30PM – 2PM

Instructor: Dana Stauffer,
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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 2:00-3:15 and

Thursdays 10:15-11:45

Course Description

This class explores the political wisdom found in great literature. We will consider questions of justice, necessity, human virtue, human nature, the good human life, and political leadership. Our particular theme will be the contrast between the ancient and modern outlooks on politics. The course is divided into two units, ancients and moderns. In the ancient unit we will read one play by each of the three titans of classical drama: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. We will seek to understand the particular perspectives of each of these three playwrights. We will consider such questions as: What motivations and concerns drive the choices of the main characters in the tragedies? What lessons do the characters learn? Our modern unit is devoted to the plays of William Shakespeare. We will turn first to *Julius Caesar*, which is about the transition from ancient to modern politics. Then we will take up Shakespeare's portrayal of modern politics in the first tetralogy (*Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, and 3*, and *Richard III*). We will pay particular attention to Shakespeare's understanding of the role of Christianity in shaping modern politics. Finally, we will conclude with Shakespeare's greatest masterpiece, *Hamlet*.

Course Flags

Writing: This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

Ethics: Courses carrying the Ethics Flag equip you with the tools necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. Courses carrying this Flag expose you to ethical issues and to the process of applying ethical reasoning in real-life situations.

Required Texts

Greek Tragedy Texts: *Aeschylus II*, *Euripides IV*, and *Sophocles II*. All three books are in the Complete Greek Tragedies series edited by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. University of Chicago Press.

Folger Shakespeare Library editions of: *Henry VI Part 1*, *Henry VI Part 2*, *Henry VI Part 3*, *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Hamlet*. Published by Simon and Schuster.

Grading and Requirements

Short Response: 5%
Midterm exam: 15%
Paper 1: 30%
Paper 2: 30%
Attendance: 10%
Class Participation: 10%

I DO use plus and minus grades as follows: 92.5 and up = A, 89.5 and up = A-, 86.5 and up is a B+, and so on.

Short Response

Early on in the semester, we will post a short answer question in Canvas. Responses will be graded from 1 to 5. The stakes are not high on this assignment because its aim is to give you a sense of how well you are writing. Submission will be via Canvas. This assignment will be worth 5% of your grade.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will be an in-class essay on the Greek tragedy unit. You will need to bring a blue book to the exam. I will give you at least 2 questions to choose from. You will not have the questions in advance; however, I will give you some idea in advance of what the questions will be about. There is no precise word range, since you will be writing out answers in class, but your answer should be at least two pages, and will probably be more like 5 pages. Answers will be graded for clarity, accuracy, organization, textual evidence, writing quality, depth, and originality of analysis.

Papers

There will be two required papers in this course. The first will be 1000-1500 words. You will receive a tentative grade on your first submission; you will then have the opportunity to revise it after receiving feedback. The second paper will be 1500-1800 words.

I will provide a list of possible essay topics for each paper. They will be analytical questions about the readings. You will not be required to use secondary sources. As with the midterm exam, answers will be graded for clarity, accuracy, organization, textual evidence, writing quality, depth, and originality of analysis.

Attendance

Attendance is a significant portion of your grade in this course. The first two weeks of classes are considered a grace period. We will begin taking attendance in the third week of classes. After that, if you have more than 5 unexcused absences in the class, your credit for attendance will begin to drop 1 point off your final grade with each additional absence, up to 10 percentage points maximum. If you are ill or miss

class for religious reasons, that is considered an excused absence. Please send an email to the TA to let him know.

Class Participation

You should come to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the reading. Bring the text with you to class. You will need a paper copy of the texts, as I do not allow e-readers in class.

Class participation credit can be earned in 3 ways:

- 1) Volunteer to be a class note-taker. We will ask for volunteers in the first few days of classes. This role entails posting your notes to Canvas after each class. We need 3-5 note takers. This option has the added bonus of entitling you to your laptop in class (otherwise not allowed). If you take on this role, the rest of the class will be relying on you for notes. You must post your notes at least 80% of the time or risk losing credit. These positions are first come, first serve.
- 2) The tried-and-true method of talking in class. You do not need to speak in every class, but you should be attentive and engaged even when you are not speaking.
- 3) All students, note-takers and non-note-takers alike, will be required to give an oral group presentation one time in the semester. Students will form groups of 3-4 by means of a sign-up sheet. Each group will be responsible for a 15-20 minute presentation on an aspect of one of our Shakespeare plays. These will be part of your participation grade. This is a good opportunity for students who do not generally talk a lot in class to gain participation credit.

Classroom Policies, Including Lateness and Technology Policies

We will employ a seating chart, beginning in the second week of class. We will take attendance by means of this seating chart, so you need to remember your seat and sit in it each class.

Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive and distracting. If you need to leave class early, please let me know before class starts. Students who are late more than twice, or who leave in the middle of class more than twice, will be counted absent instead of present with each additional late arrival or early departure.

Technology: With the exception of designated volunteer note takers, and/or those with a documented disability accommodation, the use of laptops, e-readers, tablets, or computers of any kind is prohibited in class. Cell phones must be silent and out of sight. **If you are observed on your phone or laptop in class texting, surfing the web, etc, you will be marked absent for the day. A second offense will result in another absence, and a 3-point deduction from your class participation grade (from a 10 to a 7, for example). A third offense will result in a 0 for class participation for the semester.**

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's [relevant policies](#).

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. **We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit titleix.utexas.edu or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

Notification of a need for disability accommodations must be given to the professor at least 14 days prior to a paper due date or exam.

Accommodations for religious holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Honesty

In all of your work for this course, you are expected to know and to adhere to University of Texas policies regarding academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course. Please familiarize yourself with the University honor code.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. Any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Approximate Course Schedule:

The readings schedule is a rough estimate of when each of the readings will be covered. I will post a Canvas announcement after each class specifying the exact assignment for the next class. Those announcements will override the approximate schedule found here. **MAKE SURE TO SET YOUR NOTIFICATIONS IN CANVAS TO RECEIVE CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS. THOSE ARE MY PRIMARY METHOD OF COMMUNICATION.**

January 16 Introduction

Unit I: Ancients

January 18 Aeschylus' *Eumenides*
January 23 *Eumenides*
January 25 *Eumenides*/Sophocles' *Ajax*; short response assigned
January 30 *Ajax*
February 1 *Ajax*/Euripides' *Orestes*; ***short response due***
February 6 *Orestes*
February 8 *Orestes*
February 13 Midterm Exam

Unit II: Moderns

February 15 *Julius Caesar: Paper 1 Assigned*
February 20 *Julius Caesar*
February 22 ***Oral Presentations***
February 27 *Caesar*/Henry VI Part 1
February 29 Henry VI Part 1
March 5 Henry VI Parts 1 and 2: ***Paper #1 Due***
March 7 Henry VI Part 2
March 19 Henry VI Part 2 and 3; *Papers back*
March 21 ***Writing workshop/presentations if needed***
March 26 Henry VI Part 3
March 28 Part 3/Richard III; ***Revised Paper #1 due***
April 2 Richard III
April 4 No Class
April 9 ***Oral Presentations***
April 11 Richard III; ***Paper #2 Assigned***
April 16 *Hamlet*
April 18 ***Oral Presentations***
April 23 *Hamlet*
April 25 *Hamlet: Paper #2 Due*

There is no final exam in this class.