

School of Arts & Sciences Prospectus Spring 2023

CLST 1601 301

Ancient Drama

This course will introduce students to some of the greatest works of dramatic literature in the western canon. We will consider the social, political, religious and artistic functions of drama in ancient Greece and Rome, and discuss both differences and similarities between ancient drama and modern art forms. The course will also pursue some broader goals: to improve students skills as readers and scholarly critics of literature, both ancient and modern; to observe the implications of form for meaning, in considering, especially, the differences between dramatic and non-dramatic kinds of cultural production: to help students understand the relationship of ancient Greek and Roman culture to the modern world; and to encourage thought about some big issues, in life as well as in literature: death, heroism, society, action and meaning.

Class Structure for Spring 2023

In-Person class sessions twice per week with the option to implement virtual events as needed in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic. Course materials, assignments, and group activities will typically be shared through Canvas. Students can expect to complete weekly reading assignments and to post informal responses (~300 words) to an online discussion board. Class sessions will be centered around discussing the assigned passages from the plays, as well as reflecting on literary and cultural topics pertinent to them. Occasionally, students will be asked to watch video clips or engage with other media to enhance their understanding of ancient drama and culture. We are also tentatively planning to go see a performance of an ancient play together.

Outline of Assignments & Assessments

This class will require students to post weekly responses (~300 words) to an online discussion board. There will be two exams; one midterm and one final exam. In the exams, students will be asked to identify brief passages from the plays read in class and to discuss them. The class will also have a final project for which students will work in groups. The final project will consist of creating an original adaptation of a scene of a Greek play and acting it out in front of class. Attendance and participation are expected from all class participants.

Essential Course Policies

Required books will be posted later. Most of our readings will be accessible through Canvas.