

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English/Theatre Arts 226, Graduate Seminar in Tragedy, Section 1, Fall 2012

Instructor: Professor Bonnie Cox
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Office Hours: Wednesdays: 2:45-3:45 and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Wednesdays: 4:00-6:45
Classroom: Faculty Office Building 104

Course Description and Goals: This course will study the tragic nature of human experience as it is expressed in one short novel and seventeen plays that represent the Western tradition from the late fifth—century B.C.E. to the mid-twentieth century C.E. Class sessions will employ short professor lectures, student presentations, and student- and professor-led discussions, with emphasis on active student discussion and interaction.

During the course of the semester, students will

- engage a wide range of tragic forms;
- become familiar with a wide range of critical approaches, both classic and modern;
- explore the relationship between tragedy and melodrama;
- develop their own working definitions of both tragic form and tragic vision.

Learning Outcomes for the Master of Arts in English and Comparative Literature:

Students will demonstrate

1. an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric;
2. high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research;
3. critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts;
4. a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline, d) write under time constraints;
5. a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Required Texts:

The Poetics, Aristotle (provided electronically by instructor)
The Oresteia, Aeschylus (ISBN # 9780140443332)
The Oedipus Cycle, Sophocles (ISBN # 9780156027649)
Euripides I: Four Tragedies (ISBN # 9780226307800)
The Complete Plays, Marlowe (ISBN # 978014036334)
Macbeth, Shakespeare (ISBN # 9780451526779)
King Lear, Shakespeare (ISBN # 9780451526939)
Three Plays, Webster (ISBN # 9780199539284)
The Master Builder and Other Plays, Ibsen (ISBN # 9780140440539)
The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald (ISBN # 9780743273565)
Death of a Salesman, Miller (ISBN # 9780140481341)
Three Plays, O'Neill (ISBN # 9780679763963)
Tragedy, Vision and Form, Corrigan (ISBN 9780744278873)

Except for the particular translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which the instructor will provide to students electronically, all required texts are available through the Spartan Bookstore. It is important that we all work from the same translations of the non-English-origin texts; and please be aware that, while electronic versions of some of the required texts may be available at no cost, these versions often lack line number designations, which impedes textual discussion and accurate citation.

Course Requirements: Weekly Reader Responses, two papers, two presentations, and active participation in classroom discussion and exchange of ideas.

Writing:

Informal Reader Responses: Beginning with the second class meeting, students will write an informal response (250 words minimum each) to the assigned primary texts weekly (for the purpose of this assignment, *The Oresteia* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* will each count as a single text). These responses must demonstrate a critical engagement with the texts: raise questions, suggest answers, share discoveries, posit hypotheses, make connections to other texts, apply theory, etc. **NO SUMMARIES.** (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4)

Formal Reader Response: Students will write one (1) formal response (500 words minimum) to one primary text (for the purpose of this assignment, *The Oresteia* and *Mourning Becomes Electra* will each count as three separate texts). This response will engage the text in one or more of the same ways as the informal responses, but in more depth, and will serve as the basis for the student-led discussion of the text in question. (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4)

Papers: Students will write two papers (5-7 pages each). The first paper will be a close reading of a section of primary text (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4). The second paper will be theory and research informed (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4). Students will write an abstract and an annotated bibliography for the second paper and provide copies of these for all seminar members.

Presentations: Students will make two presentations. One will be based on the student's Formal Reader Response to one of our assigned primary texts. The second will summarize the content and evaluate the thesis of a secondary text from the Corrigan anthology; students will make copies of the written substance of this second presentation, with complete bibliographic citation, and will distribute those copies to all seminar members on the day of the presentation. Each of the two presentations will serve as the entry to the student-led discussion of the texts in question. (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4)

Class Protocols:

Written Work: All written work is due at the beginning of class; it must be typed, double spaced, titled appropriately (e.g., Reader Response # whatever is not an appropriate title), and follow MLA guidelines; pages should be stapled in the upper-left corner (no paper clips or folders, please!). Your name should appear on every page; pages should be numbered. Keep a copy of everything you turn in, including your notes, drafts, and research materials. No late work will be accepted unless (1) you have made arrangements with me in advance, or (2) you provide written verification that circumstances completely beyond your control prevented your getting the work in on time. I do not accept work via email. **Please note:** having to work is not beyond your control; it's a choice.

Attendance and Participation: On-time class attendance and active participation in the class discussion are important. If you miss class, you will always miss something important. Missed work may not be made up. The degree to which you do or do not come to class on time and prepared to contribute actively and productively to the classroom exchange of ideas and information will be a 15% factor in determining your final grade in this course.

Please Note: (1) You cannot contribute if you are not here; (2) your presence, in and of itself, does not constitute participation.

Dropping and Adding: Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/) web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Grading: Your class participation will be assessed as follows:

- A = Regular, helpful questions and comments; fully engaged
- B = Occasional, pertinent questions and responses; good listening
- C = Infrequent, tangential questions or comments; attentive
- D = Rare interaction; disengaged from discussion; not prepared for class
- F = Regularly absent, physically or mentally

Grading: Your written work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Qualities of an “A” Assignment:

Content:

- complies with all parts of the assignment
- displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the following ways:
 - finds a general significance in the specific instance
 - identifies and resolves a contradiction
 - disproves or qualifies a common misconception
 - achieves a fresh insight into a frequently discussed topic
 - places the known in a novel context
 - supports an arguable assertion
- develops its thought by explanation, example, illustration, or analysis, as appropriate
- displays flawless logic
- has the voice of a real person speaking to a real audience
- is interesting and detailed

Organization:

- has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis
- has an effective and appropriate overall pattern of organization
- has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences that are verbally or logically related to the thesis
- has effective and appropriate transitions between paragraphs
- has an effective introduction and conclusion

Style:

- frequently chooses grammatical options that mirror the content portrayed
- shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers
- frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs to control rhythm, pace, and emphasis

Mechanics:

- has NO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling errors
- demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of MLA citation and documentation conventions

Qualities of a “B” Assignment:

Content:

- complies with all parts of the assignment
- displays original, provocative thought in one or more of the ways listed above
- attempts to develop its thoughts in the ways listed above
- contains no overt logical fallacies
- has the voice of a real person
- is detailed

Organization:

- has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis
- has an overall pattern of organization
- has unified, coherent paragraphs organized around recognizable topic sentences related to the thesis
- has appropriate transitions between paragraphs
- has an introduction and conclusion

Style:

- shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers
- frequently and appropriately uses emphatic sentence patterns such as long cumulative and periodic sentences, various strong parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs

Mechanics:

- has no more than ONE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling error; the error does not prevent comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous assignment
- demonstrates a sound knowledge of MLA citation and documentation conventions

Qualities of a “C” Assignment:**Content:**

- complies with the main parts of the assignment
- finds significance beyond the subjective response
- goes beyond mere description of the topic and response (analysis, generalization, etc.)
- is detailed

Organization:

- has a recognizable thesis, stated or implied, that conforms to our definition of a thesis
- has coherent paragraphs organized around topic sentences, most of which relate to the thesis
- has a recognizable beginning, middle, and end

Style:

- shows a variety of sentence lengths and openers
- occasionally uses emphatic sentence patterns such as cumulative and periodic sentences, parallel structures, and compound sentences using semicolons and conjunctive adverbs

Mechanics:

- has no more than TWO diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent comprehension; does not repeat an error marked on a previous assignment
- demonstrates a basic understanding of MLA citation and documentation standards

Qualities of a “D” Assignment:**Content:**

- complies with the main parts of the assignment
- makes a definite statement about the topic
- attempts to support that statement

Organization:

- has a recognizable thesis
- attempts to support that thesis
- has paragraphs organized around topic sentences
- has enough coherence to be recognized as a unit

Style:

- varies sentence types frequently enough to avoid monotony
- attempts the occasional stylistic emphasis of an important point

Mechanics:

- has no more than THREE diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; errors do not prevent comprehension; does not repeat errors marked on a previous assignment
- attempts to follow MLA citation and documentation conventions

Note: Any writing assignment that earns less than a “D” in any of the four grading categories will be considered unacceptable and will receive a failing grade.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Informal Reading Responses		15%
Formal Reading Response	10%	
Presentations		20% (10% each)
Participation		15%
Papers		40% (20% each)

There is no such thing as “extra credit.”

University Policies

Academic integrity: Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University’s Academic Integrity policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Department Policies

The Department of English and Comparative Literature reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU [Catalog](#) (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A,B,C,NoCredit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for NoCredit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C,NoCredit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawl) because neither NC nor W affects students’ grade point averages.

In English and Comparative Literature courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

English/Theatre Arts 226: Fall 2012 Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change with fair notice of one week; such notice will be transmitted to students both in class and electronically.

Week 1	8/22	Course Introduction and Overview Corrigan: Introduction, "Tragedy and the Tragic Spirit," pp. 1-13	
Week 2	8/29	Aeschylus: <i>The Oresteia Trilogy</i> : <i>Agamemnon</i> <i>The libation Bearers</i> <i>The Eumenides</i>	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 3	9/5	Sophocles: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> Corrigan: Rosenberg, pp. 271-279 Corrigan: Myers, pp. 155-163	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 4	9/12	Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i> Corrigan: Hegel, pp. 331-342 Corrigan: Kierkegaard, pp. 350-365	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 5	9/19	Euripides: <i>Medea</i> Corrigan: Krieger, pp. 30-46 Corrigan: Abel, pp. 52-61	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 6	9/26	Euripides: <i>Hippolytus</i> Corrigan: Jaspers, pp. 65-72 Corrigan: Arrowsmith, pp. 265-270	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 7	10/3	Marlowe: <i>Faustus</i> Corrigan: Frye, pp. 134-135 Corrigan: Auden, pp. 164-167	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 8	10/10	Shakespeare: <i>Macbeth</i> Corrigan: Langer, pp. 113-123 Corrigan: Lukacs, pp. 76-93	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 9	10/17	Shakespeare: <i>King Lear</i> Corrigan: Sewall, pp. 47-51 Corrigan: Birenbaum, pp. 186-190 Due: Paper #1: Close Reading	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 10	10/14	Webster: <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i> Corrigan: Heilman, pp. 205-215 Corrigan: Bentley, pp. 193-204	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 11	10/31	Ibsen: <i>The Master Builder</i> Corrigan: Scheler, pp. 17-29 Corrigan: Krutch, pp. 227-237	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 12	11/7	O'Neill: <i>Desire Under the Elms</i> Corrigan: Klapp, pp. 252-262 Corrigan: Gassner, pp. 297-306	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:

Week 13	11/14	O'Neill: <i>Mourning Becomes Electra Trilogy</i> <i>Homecoming</i> <i>The Hunted</i> <i>The Haunted</i> Corrigan: Hyman, pp. 240-251	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 14	11/21	Pre-Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class	
Week 15	11/28	Miller: <i>Death of a Salesman</i> Corrigan: Miller, pp. 168-170 Corrigan: Kerr, pp. 317-322 Corrigan: Boas, pp. 143-154	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 16	12/5	Fitzgerald: <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Corrigan: Morrell, pp. 176-185 Corrigan: L. Goldman, pp. 136-139 Course Evaluations	Presenter: Presenter: Presenter:
Week 17	12/12	Due: Paper #2, with copies of abstracts and annotated bibliographies Paper Discussions	