

MEDAILLE COLLEGE
AGASSIZ CIRCLE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK
COURSE OUTLINE

Program: Humanities
Course Number: ENG 425
Course Title: Themes and Topics in World Literature: Drama & Justice
Number of Credits: 3
Prerequisites: Any 200 Level Literature Course

A. Catalog Description of Course:

This course will explore examples of World Drama that contemplate the multifaceted dimensions of the concept of “justice.” Through this, students will be introduced to the concept of theatre as social forum. Through reading, discussion, & perhaps performance of a selection of texts, along with cinematic examples, students will contemplate the notion of the “just” and how different social structures, cultural & historical circumstances, religions and morality systems have a direct influence upon the interpretations and administration of justice.

B. Goals:

- * To acquaint the student with key Classical Greek dramatic works, and the roots of the concept of theatre as a space of social discussion
- * To provide students with background information to understand those Classical texts
- * To read selected texts from twentieth century world drama that expose various cultural constructions and conundrums within the theme of “Justice”
- * To examine various ways that twentieth century world dramatists have used the theatre as a social forum
- * To foster an understanding of one theme – “justice” – and an awareness of how the meaning of that concept varies, depending upon social, cultural and historical circumstances.
- * To encourage critical reading of primary texts
- * To model and encourage the use of secondary resources in analysis of works.
- * To aid in developing student empathy towards other cultural value systems.

C. Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will be able to

- * Recognize and discuss the plot, character and theme of selected Greek classical texts
- * Explain the influence of some of those texts upon twentieth century texts
- * Apply basic elements of dramatic construction to an analysis of twentieth century theatrical texts
- * Understand the historical/social/cultural circumstances that inspired the original creation and form of these theatrical texts, and understand how historical/social/cultural circumstances influence our reading of these texts.
- * Understand and utilize selected critical texts as a means to deepen their analysis of the creative work studied
- * Analyze and discuss how particular dramatic texts from various world cultures expose the complexities of the notion of “Justice”

D. Outline of Course Content:

- * Classical Roots to the genre & theme: theatre as social forum in Ancient Greece
- * Theatre as social forum in the 20th century: a theoretical background
- * Theatre as social forum in post-World War II Germany

* Theatre as social forum in the late 20th – early 21st Centuries

E. Suggested Texts:

Required:

Corrigan, Robert W., editor, *Classical Tragedy: Greek & Roman* Applause Books
ISBN: 1557830460

Selections from the following:

Shaw, George Bernard *St. Joan* (and/or countless other plays or essays by Shaw)

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Measures Taken* (as course handout) or *The Good Woman of Szechuan* or *Mother Courage*

Brecht, Bertolt. Selected essays.

Weiss, Peter *The Investigation*

Sobol, Joshua *The Ghetto*

Fugard, Athol, John Kani & Winston Ntshona “The Island” (as course handout)

Maponya, Maisha, “The Hungry Earth” (as course handout)

Taylor, Richard Norton *The Colour of Justice* and/or *Justifying War*

Soyinka, Wole *The Strong Breed*

Kipphardt, Heinar *In The Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*

Churchill, Caryl *A Number* and/or *Far Away*

Lavery, Bryony *Frozen: A Play*

Hare, David *Stuff Happens*

Frayn, Michael *Copenhagen* and/or *Democracy*

Blank, Jessica, et al *The Exonerated* (both play & film)

F. Suggested Modes, Media, and Techniques of Instruction:

Discussion

Group discussion & projects

Dramatic Readings

Videos & films

Exams & quizzes

Written Assignments

G. Instructor References:

Arnott, Peter. *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Ashby, Clifford. *Classical Greek Theatre: New Views of an Old Subject*. University of Iowa Press, 1998.

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Jewish Wife & Other Short Plays*. English version by Eric Bentley. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Brock, Gillian, and Darrel Moellendorf. *Current Debates in Global Justice*. Springer Press, 2005.

Brockett, Oscar G. *History of the Theatre*. Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

Brubaker, Pamela K. editor. *Justice in a Global Economy*. Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006.

Demetz, Peter. *After the Fires: Recent Writing in the Germanies, Austria, and Switzerland*. San Diego & New York: HBC, 1992.

- Gerould, Dan. *Theatre/Theory/Theatre: The Major Critical Texts from Aristotle and Zeami to Soyinka and Havel*. New York: Applause Books, 2002.
- Gilbert, Helen. *Postcolonial Plays: an Anthology*. London & New York: Routledge, 2001.
- *Postcolonial Drama*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Mandle, Jon. *Global Justice*. London: Polity Press, 2006.
- Patterson, Michael. *The Revolution in German Theatre: 1900-1933*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Rehm, Rush. *Radical Theatre: Greek Tragedy and the Modern World*. Duckworth Publishing 2003.
- Reinelt, Janelle. "Towards a Poetics of Theatre & Public Events: *The Color of Justice*" *TDR: The Drama Review*. 50. 3 (T191) (2006): 69-87
- wa Thiong'o, Ngũgí. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Curry, 1986.
- Wiles, David. *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Willett, John, translator. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1964.
- Worthen, W.B. *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2004.
- Zarilli, Philip B. et al. *Theatre Histories: An Introduction* New York & London: Routledge, 2006.