

Winter 2009
 HUMS 4904: Renaissance
 Studies
 Professor Wallace
 Class Time: Friday, 8:30-
 11:30am
 Office Hours: Friday,
 11:30am-12:30pm
 Office: 1922 Dunton Tower
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 andrew_wallace@carleton.ca

Tragedy

A study of the plays classified as tragedies in Shakespeare's First Folio (1623). The twin goals of the course will be to reconstruct the spaces and intellectual contexts in which early modern tragedy was produced, and to read Shakespeare's tragedies in relation to a sequence of ancient, early modern, and contemporary theories of tragedy. The course proposes that the First Folio's tragedies do violence to easy generalizations about the genre's resources, and one of our projects will be to determine what is at stake in our attempts to theorize the tragic impulse. Topics for discussion will include katharsis and its disappointments, the erotics of genre and theatrical space, and the relationship between philosophy and tragedy. Supporting readings will include texts by writers such as Aristotle, Descartes, Nietzsche, Stanley Cavell, and Martha Nussbaum, as well as some work on the contexts and conditions of early modern playhouses and print.

Required Texts

William Shakespeare, The Norton Shakespeare: Tragedies (Norton)
 [ISBN: 978-0-393-93140-2]

*Course texts are available at Octopus Books (116 Third Avenue, the Glebe). Phone 233-2589.

**A course binder [CB] of complementary (required) readings will be kept in the English Department's photocopy room (1812A Dunton Tower).

Evaluation

25% Seminar presentation/paper
 25% Annotated Bibliography
 50% Research Paper

Faithful attendance and informed, frequent participation are mandatory. Members of the seminar are responsible for conscientious preparation and discussion in class. All members of the seminar are expected to attend all meetings and participate fully in discussion. You must bring all of the day's readings to every class. Missing two classes will reduce your final grade by 5%; missing more than two classes will prevent you from passing the course.

Seminar presentations are to be delivered (that is, read from a full typescript) as a methodical engagement with one or two problems posed by the day's readings. You will submit your typescript at the end of class. Seminars will be timed and cut off at 20 minutes. (Time yourself delivering the paper, but this should come to approximately nine double-spaced pages). The seminar presentation will provide a detailed, analytical account of the day's supporting reading, and forge a few preliminary links with the day's primary text. Be sure to frame the presentation to generate and facilitate discussion. [25%]

One annotated bibliography assignment of approximately eight pages (three introductory pages plus ten annotated entries at an average of two entries per page). This assignment will be discussed during our first meeting. The assignment is due at the beginning of our last meeting before Reading Week. [25%]

Topics for the final essay (18 pages) must be discussed and approved. The research paper will be a full development of work initiated in the annotated bibliography assignment. You are expected to have done a "considerable" amount of new research on your topic since the completion of your annotated bibliography assignment. You must submit a hard copy of the paper; I will not accept email attachments. The paper is due one week after our last meeting. [50%]

Reading Schedule

January 9: Introduction

- Course business, overview, the First Folio and its Genres, the problem of Troilus and Cressida

January 16: The Tragedy of Coriolanus

- Martha Nussbaum, "Interlude 1: Plato's anti-tragic theatre," The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 122-135. [CB]
- Michael Warren, "Shakespearean Tragedy Printed and Performed," The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy, ed. Claire McEachern (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 69-85. [CB]
- No seminars

January 23: Titus Andronicus

- Aristotle, "Poetics," The Complete Works of Aristotle, ed. Jonathan Barnes, rev. ed. 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984) 2: 2316-2340. [CB]
 - Andrew Ford, "Katharsis: The Ancient Problem," Performativity and Performance, eds. Andrew Parker and Eve Kokofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, 1995) 109-132. [CB]
 - Stephen Orgel, "The Play of Conscience," Performativity and Performance, eds. Andrew Parker and Eve Kokofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, 1995) 133-151. [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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January 30: Romeo and Juliet

- Martha Nussbaum, "Interlude 2: luck and the tragic emotions," The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986) 378-394. [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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February 6: Timon of Athens

- Terry Eagleton, Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) Introduction (ix-xvii), 1-39. [CB]

- Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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February 13: The Life and death of Julius Caesar

- Seneca, Thyestes, [Works], ed. and trans. John G. Fitch, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2004) 9:217-323. [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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February 17: No class (Reading Week)

February 27: The Tragedy of Macbeth

- Simon Forman's description of the play
 - Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008). [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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March 6: The Tragedy of Hamlet

- Stanley Cavell, "Knowing and Acknowledging," Must we Mean What we Say? (1969; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 238-266. [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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March 13: King Lear

- Stanley Cavell, "The Avoidance of Love," Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 39-123. [CB]

- Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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March 20: Othello, the Moore of Venice

- Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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March 27: Anthony and Cleopater

- Nussbaum, "Tragedy and Self-Sufficiency: Plato and Aristotle on Pity and Fear," Essays on Aristotle's Poetics, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) 261-290. [CB]
 - Seminar:
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- Seminar:
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April 3: Cymbeline King of Britaine [CB]—no seminars