

Professor Francus
English 693: The Classical Tradition
Spring 2020
Tuesdays, 4:00-6:50
Colson G-18
Office: 227 Colson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15 and by appointment.
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Course Description: This course provides a survey of classical Greek and Roman literature, which was the mainstay of Western education for centuries, and embedded in Western culture as a result. Authors and artists constantly turned to these texts for inspiration, and their adaptations reverberate throughout Western culture even after the source texts left the curriculum, as evident in Joyce's *Ulysses*, the Coen Brothers' *O Brother Where art Thou* and Lucas's *Star Wars* trilogies; Spike Lee's *Chi-raq*; Neil LaBute's *Medea Redux*; Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady*; O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*; and Freud's use of Oedipus. By studying these Greek and Roman works, we will grapple with the characters and issues that they present, and work through the ways that classical literature continue to speak to the human condition and contemporary Western culture.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to the works of Greek and Roman literature that have formed the basis of the traditional literary canon in the West.
- To discuss the notions of "classic" and "classical."
- To discuss definitions of genre, particularly definitions of the epic, drama, and literary criticism.
- To discuss classical literature from a variety of critical and theoretical frameworks.
- To discuss the mechanisms of canon formation and the import of canonicity within literary studies.
- To discuss mechanisms of adaptation, appropriation, and allusion.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and evaluate classical literature from a variety of critical and theoretical frameworks.
- Analyze and evaluate definitions of "classic" and "classical."
- Analyze the development of genres in classical literature, particularly the epic, drama, and literary criticism.
- Analyze and evaluate the mechanisms of literary influence and canonization.
- Analyze and evaluate classical literature in broader literary and cultural contexts (for instance, in light of adaptation in Western literature and film; etc.)

Course Schedule (which may change at instructor's discretion):

January 14	Introduction	
January 21	Homer, <i>The Iliad</i>	
January 28	Homer, <i>The Iliad</i>	
February 4	Homer, <i>The Iliad</i>	Assignment Deadline 1
February 11	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>	
February 18	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>	
February 25	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i>	
March 3	Virgil, <i>The Aeneid</i> (excerpts)	Assignment Deadline 2
March 10	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i> , <i>The Clouds</i>	
March 17	Spring Break	
March 24	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>	
March 31	Euripides, <i>Medea</i> , <i>The Bacchae</i>	
April 7	Aeschylus, <i>Prometheus Bound</i>	Assignment Deadline 3
April 14	Class cancelled	
April 21	Longinus, <i>On Sublimity</i> Plato, <i>Symposium</i> Horace, <i>The Art of Poetry</i>	
April 28	Ovid, selections from <i>Metamorphoses</i> (handout) Sappho, selected poetry (handout)	
May 4		Assignment Deadline 4

Course Texts (available at WVU Bookstore):

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata and Other Plays* (Penguin; translated by Alan H. Sommerstein)
Classical Literary Criticism (Oxford UP; edited by DA Russell & Michael Winterbottom)
The Greek Plays (Modern Library; translated and edited by Mary Lefkowitz & James Romm)
Homer, *The Iliad* (Penguin; translated by Robert Fagles)
Homer, *The Odyssey* (Norton; translated by Emily Wilson)
Plato, *Symposium* (Hackett; translated by Alexander Nechamas & Paul Woodruff)
Virgil, *The Aeneid* (Vintage; translated by Robert Fitzgerald)

Course Assignments:

In consultation with me, you will develop a series of assignments (at least three) that will allow you to engage with the course texts in a variety of ways that best meet your academic needs.

Some possibilities (NB: the assignment lengths and percentages of the final grade are estimates, to be discussed in conferences with you):

A lesson plan for a text on the syllabus, with a narrative (~5-6 pages; for 20% of the final grade)

The lesson plan should be for a specific audience, which you specify (undergraduates; graduate students; high school students; senior citizens; etc.); the lesson plan may involve more than one class session (and you determine the number of sessions, and the content of the session(s)); and the lesson plan should involve some activity or assignment to assess student engagement with the text that you have chosen. Your narrative will explain your choices, and the goals of your lesson plan.

An analysis of a modern adaptation or appropriation of one of the course texts (~5-6 pages for 20% of final grade; ~8-10 pages for 30% of grade with research component)

Choose a modern adaptation or appropriation of one of the course texts, and provide an analysis of it based on your knowledge of its classical source text. You will be setting the parameters of the analysis; you may choose a film scene (from the 2004 film *Troy*, for instance) or a song (like Suzanne Vega's "Calypso" from her 1987 album *Solitude Standing*) or a film like Spike Lee's *Chi-raq* (2015) or the Coen Brothers' *O Brother Where Art Thou?* (2000).

A creative adaptation of a scene for a course text, with a narrative explaining methodology (~5-8 pages; 20-30% of final grade depending on complexity of adaptation)

This option could involve writing a scene from a course text from the perspective of a minor character (for instance, the Cyclops episode in *The Odyssey* from the point of view of one of Odysseus' men) or transposing a scene from a course text to a different time and/or place (for instance, one of Jason and Medea's arguments in *Medea* as a modern American couple's argument), or creating a mash-up in which you combine a course text with another genre (for example, a battle from *The Iliad* as a slapstick comedy.) Choose one option, and include a narrative explaining your methodology and the goals of your adaptation.

An analysis of the evolution of the classical epic, based on *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Aeneid* (~7-8 pages for 25% of final grade; 30% with a research component)

Implicitly, this assignment is a comparative analysis of at least two of these works, and preferably all three. Given the length of the assignment, you should focus on one aspect of the epic, such as character development; plot structure; poetics; etc. and write a thesis-driven analysis.

An analysis of the evolution of classical drama, based on the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and/or Aristophanes (~7-8 pages; 25% of final grade; 30% with a research component)

Implicitly, this assignment is a comparative analysis of at least two plays, and preferably three. Given the length of the assignment, you should focus on one aspect of the play, such as character development; plot structure; use of the chorus; etc. and write a thesis-driven analysis.

A critique of classical literary criticism, focusing on either Aristotle, Horace, or Longinus (~7-8 pages; 25% of final grade; 30% with a research component)

A thesis-driven close reading of one of the pieces of literary criticism on the syllabus.

An annotated bibliography for a course text (~4-5 pages; 25% of final grade)

Choose six recent scholarly articles about *one* of the texts on the syllabus. (You can find recent scholarship through the library databases, such as JSTOR, Project Muse, etc.) Read and evaluate the articles. Then write brief analyses of each, in which you identify the author's argument, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of that argument based on your knowledge of the text.

A conference paper (~8-10 pages; for 35% of the final grade)

A thesis-driven essay in which you make an argument about some aspect of classical literature. You will set the parameters of the analysis; research will be expected, as it is for conference presentations.

There are other possibilities; I am open to suggestions that we can discuss in conference, and determine a final assignment plan. You will choose assignments that add up to 100% to determine your grade.

Submission of Assignments:

Your papers should be typed (11- or 12-point font), with sufficient space in the margins for comments. (One-inch margins will do). Papers should be double-spaced.

Your papers should reflect careful reading and thinking about your subject. Do not summarize a work, or subsume your voice to another scholar.

You may use either *The MLA Handbook* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* for formatting and documentation—but whichever one you choose, please use it consistently.

It is highly recommended that you keep a back-up of every assignment that you hand in.

Hand in your work on time. Late submissions will receive a lower grade unless the student has a viable reason (such as illness, familial emergency) for his/her lateness, **and** has notified me within 24 hours of the original due date. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).

Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engage with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B (80-89) – Good work; the assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) – Average work; the assignments for the course have been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignments for the course have not been completed. Written assignments, when submitted, show a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

Academic Dishonesty Statement

(<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/enrollmentandregistration/#academicdishonestytext>):

Students are expected to adhere to the academic standards set forth by West Virginia University, and to avoid academic dishonesty in all its forms. West Virginia University defines academic dishonesty as follows:

1. **Plagiarism** means the theft or unauthorized use of work, typically created by another. It includes but is not limited to:
 - a. the use of another's words, ideas, or media – whether published or unpublished, partial or complete, by paraphrase or direct quotation – without complete and accurate acknowledgement;
 - b. the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another individual, including an individual engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; or
 - c. repeated submission of one's own work, specifically submission of the same material in multiple courses or iterations of a course, without the instructor's express permission.
2. **Cheating** means reliance on unauthorized resources, in connection with examinations or academic assignments. It includes but is not limited to:
 - a. collaboration with peers beyond that authorized by the instructor in the completion of an examination or academic assignment
 - b. cheating on an examination or academic assignment, by either (i) utilizing unauthorized physical or technological resources (e.g., cheat sheets, online resources), or (ii) receiving unauthorized personal assistance (e.g., copying from another student); or
 - c. the acquisition or use, without permission, of examinations or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff.
3. **Fabrication or Falsification** means acts of misrepresentation, forgery, or fraud as they relate to academic or educational matters. It includes but is not limited to:
 - a. fabricating or falsifying citations, data, or other records;
 - b. wrongfully fabricating or falsifying attendance or participation records for a University course or in an experiential or clinical setting;
 - c. wrongfully fabricating or altering an educational record (e.g., admission, grade, or attendance record) after it has been created;
 - d. use of University documents or instruments of identification for fraudulent purposes (e.g., impersonation of another student); or
 - e. knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.
4. **Other Prohibited Academic Conduct** means:
 - a. engaging in behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus; or
 - b. violating other departmental, college, or university academic standards, and/or legal or professional standards.
5. **Facilitation** means:
 - a. providing unauthorized materials or personal assistance to another student when such assistance allows them to commit academic dishonesty; or
 - b. compelling someone else to commit academic dishonesty on one's behalf.

Information on all associated procedures are found in the [West Virginia University Academic Integrity Policy](#). Please note that, to the extent there is any inconsistency with the language in the catalog and the [Board of Governors Rules and Policies](#) or the WVU Policy on Student Academic Integrity, the BOG Rule and the WVU Policy govern; please refer to the BOG Rule and WVU Policy for the most current language.

The following University Policy Statements are available on the WVU Teaching and Learning Commons Syllabus Policies and Statements Page (<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements>):

WVU Academic Integrity Statement:

“The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, instructors will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of their courses. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University [Academic Standards Policy](#) (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification>). Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.”

WVU’s Sale of Course Material Syllabus Statement:

“All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other course materials provided to students for their courses are protected intellectual property. As such, the unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the [Student Conduct Code](#). (<https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/policies-and-procedures>)”

Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement:

“Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will provided by your instructor.”

Inclusivity Statement:

“The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](#). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>)

More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well.”

Sexual Misconduct Statement:

“West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [[BOG Rule 1.6](#)]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](https://titleix.wvu.edu/staff).(https://titleix.wvu.edu/staff)

If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).”

Appropriate Use of Technology Statement:

“Use of technology in the classroom should always be directly related to class activities and/or course learning outcomes. Inappropriate technology use can be an impediment to learning and a distraction to all members of the class. As such, inappropriate use of technology in the classroom may be considered a disruption of the class and constitute a violation of the [WVU Student Conduct Code](#) and could potentially result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Use of technology in the classroom when specifically prohibited by the instructor may also constitute a violation of WVU’s [Academic Integrity](#) policy.”

Adverse Weather Statement:

“In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if your instructor(s) are unable to reach the class location, they will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible, using agreed upon methods to prevent students from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, instructors will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.”