

**First-year Foundation Course 100:**

**The Tragedy in Morality:  
Greek Drama and the Birth of Law and Ethics**



**CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY**

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**COURSE SYLLABUS**

FFC.100-37

The Tragedy in Morality: Greek Drama and the Birth of Law and Ethics

Fall 2018

MW 4:00-5:15pm Wilkinson Hall 221

Office hours available via appointment.

## Course Description

The Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, as well as the comedies of Aristophanes explore the moral complexity of human life. The Orestes series of plays by Aeschylus (the *Oresteia*) shows how the search for justice, without the structure of law, leads to violence and disorder. The Theban plays of Sophocles, especially *Oedipus Rex*, show how bad luck and too much information can make a moral mess—Oedipus (spoiler alert) unluckily and unwittingly ends up married to his own mother. *Antigone*—perhaps the most famous of these plays in our contemporary times—examines the destruction that can result from a clash between positive law and traditional norms. In this class, we will explore several of the themes that the Greek tragedians wanted us to consider, and we will do so through engagement with the dramas themselves together with complementary philosophical writing on these same topics. The aim is to understand how the Greeks thought about complex moral issues and to reflect on what lessons we can take from their presentation of those problems in the tragedies. 3 credits.

## Catalogue Course Description

This course engages students in interdisciplinary, university-level critical inquiry and reflection. The FFC course focuses more on critical engagement, exploration, and communication related to complex issues than on mastering a body of material. The section topics vary, and students select a topic according to their academic and personal interests. Must be taken for a letter grade. (Offered every semester.) 3 credits.

## Program Learning Outcome

Students will be able to critically analyze and communicate complex issues and ideas. They will engage with questions and problems in a variety of formats, including philosophical prose and dramatic plays, working both collaboratively and independently to explore the continuing impact of ideas and themes that are seminal in the Western tradition.

## Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and understand the nature of conflicts between differing and often opposing moral and social norms.
2. Comprehend the underlying social, moral, and/or political ideas conveyed by literary texts (specifically, dramas) and engage with those ideas critically.
3. Formulate clear, incisive, thought-provoking questions about ideas presented in both literary and academic texts.
4. Develop skill in constructing and presenting arguments about social and moral norms.

## Attendance Policy

Because of the interactive nature of the class, attendance is an essential component. Excessive tardiness constitutes an absence; six absences may result in failure (Undergraduate Catalog 2017-2018 “[Academic Policies and Procedures](#)”). Please keep this in mind.

## Required Texts

### *Primary Sources*

1. *The Greek Plays*, edited by Mary Lefkowitz and James Romm
2. *Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito*, by Plato trans. F.J. Church

### *Secondary Sources*

1. *The Greeks and the Irrational*, by E.R. Dodds
2. *Shame and Necessity*, by Bernard Williams
3. *The Birth of Tragedy*, by Friedrich Nietzsche trans. Walter Kaufmann

Students are expected to bring the relevant text to each discussion. Additional readings will be made available via Blackboard and are identified below under “Bibliography.”

## Instructional Methods

This course uses a combination of hands-on learning in Socratic roundtable discussions of readings, engagement with the tragedies in theatrical settings, short-essay writing exercises, a mid-term written examination, and a final essay.

## Evaluation

	<u>Grade Scale</u>
Class Participation (10%)	A 94-100
Short Responses (30%)	A- 90-93
Mid-semester Examination (25%)	B+ 87-89
Final Essay (35%)	B 84-86
	B- 80-83
	C+ 77-79
	C 74-76
	C- 70-73
	D+ 67-69
	D 64-66
	D- 60-63
	F 0-59

### **Class Participation (10%)**

Participation in this course offers the opportunity to experiment with and practice formulating questions and responding to other students. You will develop skill in articulating your ideas, developing support for your positions, and submitting your views to rational scrutiny. The seminar-style conversation in the classroom will facilitate constant engagement and practice.

Missed in-class work cannot be made up. Specific aspects of participation include:

- *Class discussion*—You are expected to enter discussion in each and every meeting of the class. Your comments and questions are expected to be about or grounded in the texts we are reading together. We expect you to develop skill in utilizing passages from the texts as evidence for your arguments and interpretations.
- *Co-curricular productions*—This course will offer opportunities to engage with the literary texts not only on paper, but at the theater. Through watching or acting out the plays, you will gain a fresh and quite different relationship to the texts.

### **Short Responses (30%)**

Each student will submit short papers of ~300 words (roughly 1-2 pages) six times through the course of the semester. Drafting short papers is practice in writing concisely. Limits on how much you can say force you to be efficient in your writing. Additionally, short papers help you think carefully about how to craft and present your argument. We expect you to practice these two skills (concision and argumentation) in your “shortys.” You are responsible for submitting your short responses on Blackboard (under “Shorty Submissions”) by 10:00am on the due date established for each shorty. The schedule of due dates for shortys is included in Class Schedule.

### **Mid-Term Examination (25%)**

At the mid-semester point in the course, all students will sit an in-class examination. You are welcome to utilize relevant texts in order to cite passages that support your answers. In that sense, the exam is “open book.” The exam will cover only the material we have studied in the first half of the semester. Questions posed to the students will pertain to the subject matter of the course, including, but not limited to, the themes of the Greek dramas we have covered and the positions of philosophers in the academic writing we have covered. We expect students to demonstrate the following abilities:

- Critically analyze and communicate complex issues and ideas.
- Understand how the Greek tragedians conceived of some conflicts between various social and moral norms.
- Understand how the philosophers (the ones we read in the course) characterize those conflicts and how they seek to resolve the problems.
- Utilize examples and positions in the texts (both literary and philosophical) to support your interpretations.

Demonstrate developed skill in articulating positions and constructing relevant, concise arguments that are well-supported.

### **Final Essay (35%)**

Each student will submit a final paper of  $\leq 1,200$  words at the end of the semester, due at the final class meeting. These papers are your opportunity to demonstrate the skills that you have acquired writing efficiently and constructing well-supported, well-articulated arguments in relation to the topics we are covering in the class. You will develop these skills through writing your shortys. Final papers are read and graded only by the course instructors.

Before you will be allowed to submit your final paper, you will be required to submit an essay plan and to briefly meet with the professor to discuss your essay plan. Details on the final essay and the essay plan will be available after the mid-term.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Disability Services serves as the clearing house for all requested accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student requesting accommodations to make these needs known in a timely fashion and to provide proper documentation and medical evaluations as required ([www.chapman.edu/disabilities](http://www.chapman.edu/disabilities)). Summaries and references to these policies are provided in the University's application and admissions materials and its student handbook. Individuals can also obtain information about these policies, services, documentation requirements, etc. from Disability Services at (714) 516-4520. It is recommended that the student provide these materials prior to the beginning of the academic year or semester so that the University may better serve the student's needs and the student may avoid any irreversible academic consequences. Once notification has been made the University will engage in an interactive process in order to identify our obligation to provide reasonable accommodations. Services provided will be based on the individual needs of the student and may include extended test time, notetakers, etc. **The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.**

### **Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy**

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the University's Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions up to and including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at [www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity](http://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity).

## **Equity and Diversity**

Chapman University is committed to providing an environment which is free from any form of harassment and discrimination based upon an individual's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by applicable state or federal law, so that all members of the community are treated at all times with dignity and respect. It is the University's policy, therefore, to prohibit all forms of such harassment or discrimination among University faculty, students, staff, and administrators.

View a copy of the entire policy at ([Harassment and Discrimination, https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/files/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/files/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.pdf)) In keeping with its policies, Chapman University not only fully complies with all local, state, and federal laws concerning harassment and discrimination, but also provided a means to assure fair treatment to any student, employee or member of the University community who believes the policy prohibiting harassment, and discrimination has been violated. For further information, concerning Chapman University's Harassment and Discrimination Policy ([Harassment and Discrimination, https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/files/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/files/harassment-and-discrimination-policy.pdf)), please contact the University's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Officer at (714) 997-6847.

## Class Schedule and Readings

		Readings
<b>Week 1</b>		
Introduction	Mon. 8/27	No Reading
	Wed. 8/29	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i>
<b>Week 2</b>		
<i>The Oresteia</i>	Mon. 9/3	<b>Labor Day—No Class</b>
	Wed. 9/5	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i>
<b>Week 3</b>		
	Mon. 9/10	Nietzsche, BOT §1-6 <b>Shorty 1</b>
	Wed. 9/12	Dodds, “Agamemnon’s Apology”
<b>Week 4</b>		
	Mon. 9/17	Aeschylus, <i>The Libation Bearers</i>
	Wed. 9/19	Williams, “The Liberation of Antiquity”
<b>Week 5</b>		
	Mon. 9/24	Aeschylus, <i>Eumenides</i>
	Wed. 9/26	Aeschylus, <i>Eumenides</i> <b>Shorty 2</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
	Mon. 10/1	Library Information Session
	Wed. 10/3	Williams, “Recognizing Responsibility”
<b>Week 7</b>		
The Theban Plays	Mon. 10/8	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i>
	Wed. 10/10	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> <b>Shorty 3</b>
<b>Week 8</b>		
	Mon. 10/15	Dodds, “From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture”
	Wed. 10/16	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>
<b>Week 9</b>		
	Mon. 10/22	Sophocles, <i>Antigone</i>
	Wed. 10/24	Williams, “Recognizing Responsibility”
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mantic Ritual	Mon. 10/29	Euripides, <i>Bacchae</i>
	Wed. 10/31	Euripides, <i>Bacchae</i> <b>Shorty 4</b>
<b>Week 11</b>		
	Mon. 11/5	Nietzsche, BOT §7-11
	Wed. 11/7	Dodds, “The Blessings of Madness”

<b>Week 12</b>		
The Tragedy of Socrates	Mon. 11/12	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
	Wed. 11/14	Plato, <i>Apology</i> <b>Shorty 5</b>
<b>Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 19-24)</b>		
<b>Week 13</b>		
	Mon. 11/26	Nietzsche, <i>BOT</i> §12-15
	Wed. 11/28	Plato, <i>Crito</i> <b>Shorty 6</b>
<b>Week 14</b>		
	Mon. 12/3	Dodds, "Rationalism and Reaction in the Classical Age"
	Wed. 12/5	Conclusion