

# Sophocles

CLGR 30053/60053  
Spring 2019  
M/W 12:30 - 1:45 pm  
DeBartolo Hall 347

## What is this class?

This course will introduce you to Greek dramatic conventions as well as some particular features of Sophocles' tragedies. We will read the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (sometimes called the *Oedipus Rex*) and the *Trachiniae*, two very different plays which will give us two very different ideas of what "Sophoclean tragedy" is, if that phrase even means anything.

You should leave this course with an improved understanding of the Greek language (including the distinctive elements of tragic dialect and diction) and you should be comfortable with the meter and conventions of Greek tragedy.

Classes will consist of translation, grammatical analysis, and discussion of primary and secondary readings. You are expected to attend class regularly, to be prepared for each day's lesson, and to participate actively in discussions during class.

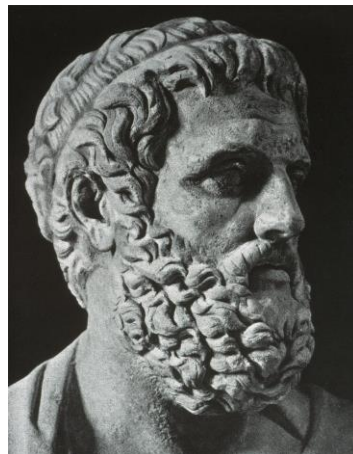
## Required Texts

There is only one required text for this course.

*Sophocles: Trachiniae* (ed. Patricia Easterling)  
ISBN: 9780521287760 (\$45.50 in the campus bookstore, \$38.12 new on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com))

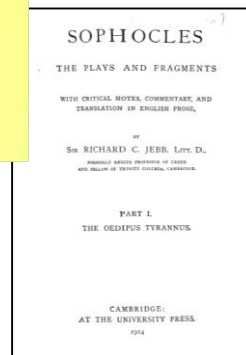
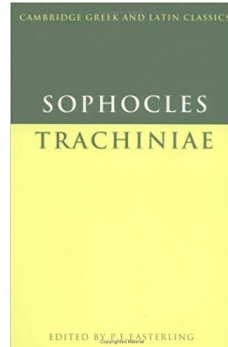
This text will be on reserve in the library. If you cannot afford the text but would like to have your own paper copy, please talk to me and we will work on an arrangement.

We will be using Richard Jebb's 1914 commentary on the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which is still very good. Also, it's in the public domain, so it's freely available, and the PDF is on Sakai.



**Who am I and how  
can you come talk to  
me?**

Dr. Amy Pistone  
[apistone@nd.edu](mailto:apistone@nd.edu)  
**Office:** 336 Decio Hall  
**Office Hours:**  
M/W 2-3pm and  
by appointment



## Grading

Attendance, preparation, and participation	20%
Essays	20%
Quizzes	20%
Creative translation project	15%
Short writing assignments	10%
Presentations	10%
Meter project	5%



**Essays:** You will have a choice between 3 short essays (500-1000 words each) or one large research paper. If you plan to write the research paper, you need to speak with me no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise, I will assume you plan to write the 3 short essays.

**Quizzes:** We will have lots of quizzes, and they will take the place of a big exam. The quizzes will primarily be on Greek that you have prepared for that day's class, but on occasion they will be on more focused grammatical topics. You will not be able to get less than an 80% on any of these quizzes (assuming you perform at a basic, acceptable level), so these should not be stressful, but should be a nice, low-stakes way to assess what you know and what you need more work on!

**Creative translation project:** In class, we will primarily focus on understanding the grammar and syntax of the Greek, at the expense of creating a nice, polished translation (which often requires departing from a strictly literal translation). For this assignment, you will pick a passage (shoot for approximately 20-50 lines) and produce a more polished translation. Full assignment information will be provided separately.

**Short writing assignments:** These will be short responses to the reading we have done for that class or for that week. They will ask you to reflect on bigger themes or criticize some of our secondary readings. You will have 1 week to complete each of these, before the writing assignment closes. These will be graded on a done/not-done basis.

**Presentations:** Throughout the term, you will be asked to lead 1-2 short (5-10ish minute) presentations on either a theme or a piece of secondary scholarship we've read. This is a very useful exercise for learning how to synthesize and present content to your colleagues, and you are encouraged to pick topics that are of particular interest to you. These are graded primarily on a done/not-done basis.



**Meter project:** An important part of Greek tragedy (and Greek drama more broadly) is the meter. There are a *lot* of different meters that are used in tragedy, and these can be complicated and even daunting. To try to make these less daunting, we will divide and conquer these meters! Each student will pick some element of tragic meters (either a particular meter, or some other element of metrical analysis that applies more broadly across different meters) and be responsible for presenting this in some accessible way to the rest of the class. This could be a handout, a presentation, a video, or anything else you can think of!

### **Classroom Contract**

I think of our classroom as a reciprocal relationship. Below are the ground rules that I expect from myself and from you. You can and should feel free to add to either column!

#### ***My responsibilities:***

- Return your writing assignments promptly and provide feedback of how to improve your writing.
- Provide grade updates intermittently (and when requested).
- Solicit feedback and adjust my teaching accordingly, to address your needs.



### **Due Dates!**

#### **Quiz dates**

Who knows? I will give you some advance notice about big quizzes, but most of these will be short and unannounced.

#### **Short essay due dates**

Prompts will be given no less than 2 weeks in advance of the due date

Essay 1: March 1

Essay 2: April 12

Essay 3: May 7 (final exam date)

#### **Meter project**

Meter projects will be spread out over the course of the semester. We will assign topics and schedule presentations (if applicable) as a class.

#### **Creative translation project**

Translation and reflection paper will be due by the final exam date, May 7

#### ***Your responsibilities:***

- Arrive on time and be prepared for class. Adequate preparation means you have done the reading and thought carefully about any discussion questions or additional assignments for that day's class.
- Bring the relevant books (and any other relevant texts) to every class meeting.
- Keep your cell phone on silent and away during class.
- Participate in class discussions. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you need to talk to me as soon as possible. I will gladly work with you to find ways to make participation easier, but participation is a critical element in this class.
- Check your email at least once a day. I will send out notifications and specific instructions for section via email.

## Schedule

This schedule will be tweaked from week to week, as we decide (as a class) where we want our discussions to go. This is a rough idea of where I would like us to go this semester!

Week 1 (1/16): Introduction to tragedy and Sophocles!

Read: Ruth Scodel (2005), "Sophoclean Tragedy" in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*

Week 2 (1/21 and 1/23): Starting *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Thebes and Athens

Froma Zeitlin (1986/1990), "Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama."

Week 3 (1/28 and 1/30):

Week 4 (2/4 and 2/6):

Week 5 (2/11 and 2/13): The Chorus

Week 6 (2/18 and 2/20):

Week 7 (2/25 and 2/27):

Week 8 (3/4 and 3/6): Finish *Oedipus Tyrannus*; Freud

Read: Miriam Leonard (2013), "Freud and Tragedy: Oedipus and the Gender of the Universal"



### Spring Break! Have fun and be safe!

Week 9 (3/18 and 3/20): Start the *Trachiniae*;

Why didn't people like this play?

Week 10 (3/25 and 3/27):

Week 11 (4/1 and 4/3):

Week 12 (4/8 and 4/10):

Week 13 (4/15 and 4/17):

Week 14 (Easter break on 4/22, class 4/24):

Week 15 (4/29 and 5/1):



Images: 3 works titled *Hercules and Omphale*. Top: Luigi Garzi (c. 1700); middle: François Lemoyne (1724); bottom: François Boucher (c. 1730)



## Course Policies: The Fine Print

**Attendance:** Reading the texts on your own is not sufficient to perfect your Greek. Your success will depend on prior preparation and in-class reinforcement and refinement of your translations. Thus, you will be expected not only to do the assigned reading and homework beforehand but also to attend class and to be prepared to answer questions and translate in class. **You are allowed three (2) unexcused absences.** Any unexcused absences beyond that limit *may* reduce your attendance grade by one point per absence (talk to me about why you're absent and we will discuss if it is a reasonable/appropriate absence). If you miss class due to an *excused* absence, I will be happy to meet with you during office hours to review the material for that day.

**Translations:** I will (at least temporarily) allow you to bring in your notes to class. But please do not bring in a complete translation that you have written out. We will intersperse sight reading as well. The goal here is for you to (eventually) be able to look at a Greek text and translate it, so we will be slowly removing the scaffolding, so to speak, so you can be a free-standing Greek reader.

**Religious Observances and Service to the University:** If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays or a commitment that you have to a university group (athletics or other contexts in which you are representing Notre Dame), please notify me so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but in accordance with university policy on religious/academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** I am **fully committed** to ensuring the full participation of all students, and to making learning as accessible as possible for all of my students. If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please contact Sara Bea Disability Services to obtain documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.

Students who have questions about Sara Bea Disability Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Sara Bea Disability Services for a confidential discussion in the Sara Bea Center for Students with Disabilities or by phone at 574-631-7157. Because the University's Academic Accommodations Processes generally require students to request accommodations well in advance of the dates when they are needed, students who believe they may need an accommodation for this course are encouraged to contact Sara Bea Disability Services at their earliest opportunity. Additional information about Sara Bea Disability Services and the process for requesting accommodations can be found at [sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu](http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu).

## More Fine Print!

**Mental Health Accommodations:** As a student, you may experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug problems. I am deeply committed to working with you to address these issues in a way that will allow you to perform as well as possible in this class. If you are experiencing mental health issues, please discuss this with me as you feel comfortable, so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations and support.

**Email:** I encourage conducting most correspondence over email, using professional and respectful language. In the case of illness (mental or physical) or family emergency, please only feel obligated to provide the most relevant details. If it is easier to discuss your reasons in person, please come to office hours or make an appointment. I will do my best to respond to all student emails within 24 hours (48 on weekends).

**Technology:** Laptops can be a powerful tool, but they can also be a serious distraction. There will also be many ways that we will be using technology as a part of this course, to help promote discussion. Laptops are not banned, nor are they generally discouraged, but I reserve the right to remove laptop privileges if you are not using your laptop for course-appropriate purposes.

**Preparation and Honor Code:** Building on others' words and ideas is an essential element of effective scholarship. However, we must give credit to those whose words and ideas we incorporate into our writing. Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper attribution is plagiarism, and such an act is considered a serious ethical violation within the university community. If you complete an assignment for one course and then submit that same assignment as original work for a different course, you are also committing plagiarism. If you have additional questions about how to reference material that you find in books or online, please let me know.

You, as students, and I, as your professor, are required and expected to abide by the University Academic Code of Honor, under which each of us pledges, "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty." You will find more information at <http://honorcode.nd.edu>. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions you may have.