“The ‘ancient quarrel between the poets and the philosophers’, as Plato's Republic... calls it, could be called a quarrel only because it was about a single subject. The subject was human life and how to live it.” --Martha Nussbaum, Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature (New York: Oxford UP, 1990), 15.

“As Plato argued, the ‘ancient quarrel’ is the manifestation of an eternal quarrel within the psyche itself.” --Thomas Gould, The Ancient Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), 85.


In Plato’s day, a “quarrel” existed between philosophy and poetry, a rivalry for the ethical education of citizens. We will examine this tension by focusing on key works of tragedy, comedy and philosophy. How do Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides confront ethical dilemmas in their tragedies? Why does comic poet Aristophanes satirize Socrates in The Clouds? Why does Plato banish the poets from the ideal city in The Republic, yet write poetically in his own dramatic dialogues? Why does Aristotle in the Poetics defend the beneficial catharsis of the tragic emotions? Finally, we will examine Nietzsche's interpretation in Birth of Tragedy: Socratic rationalism deals the fatal blow to tragedy, yet Plato transforms Socrates into a tragic figure.

PHL, EUR

**Primary texts** (required; at College Store & on reserve at Davis Library):

- Aeschylus, Sophocles & Euripides, Greek Tragedies, vols. I & II, eds. Grene & Lattimore
- Aristophanes, Four Plays, trans. Arrowsmith, Lattimore & Parker
- Plato, Five Dialogues, trans. Grube
- Plato, Ion, trans. Woodruff
- Plato, Symposium, trans. Nehamas & Woodruff
- Plato, Republic, trans. Bloom
- Aristotle, Poetics, ed. Janko
- Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, trans. Kaufmann

**Background guide** (recommended; at College Store & on reserve at Davis Library):

- M. I. Finley, The Ancient Greeks (Viking)

**Course guidelines:**

This is a writing-intensive seminar. We will devote class time to the elements of expository writing and to workshops on your papers. You will write frequent papers of different lengths and kinds, and you will each meet with your peer writing tutor to work on drafts and revisions. Your final project will be a longer paper on a topic of your own choice that incorporates selected secondary literature and grows out of library research. You will also improve your public speaking skills by giving oral presentations in class.
**Course guidelines (continued):**

Your presence in class and punctual submission of work are both crucial. Class attendance and participation will contribute to your final grade. You should do the assigned reading at least twice: once carefully before coming to class, and again before writing about it. If you have to miss a class, you are responsible for making up what you missed and turning in any work due. Assignments submitted late without an extension or a Dean’s excuse subject to lower grades.

You will learn how to take responsibility for your own work. Familiarize yourself with the College’s Honor Code. Intellectual honesty demands that you acknowledge someone else’s ideas, whether from a book, a conversation, or any other source. We will discuss how to use quotations and footnotes so as to avoid plagiarism.

**Assignments:** all are required to pass the course:

- 2 short explication papers (2-3 pp. each)
- 1 medium-length comparative paper (4-5 pp.)
- 1 longer paper with library research (7-8 pp.)
- Socratic dialogues
- Writing workshops, response papers, drafts & revisions
- Class presentations; overall attendance & participation
- Meetings with peer writing tutor & librarian

**Writing manuals:**

These highly recommended guides are available at the College Store, on reserve at Davis Library, and in the Philosophy Department Common Room (Twilight 308):

- Bedau, *Thinking and Writing about Philosophy*
- Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*

**Learning goals:**

- Interpreting classic philosophical and literary texts from ancient Greece
- Reflecting critically on poetry and art in both ancient and modern contexts
- Writing clear, expository essays of various types and lengths
- Engaging in revisions of papers, writing workshops and library research

**FYSE 1081 Resource Team:**

Peer writing tutor & mentor: Jamie Lee ’15, cell phone 678-267-5931

Research & Instruction Librarian: Steven Bertolino ‘00, x5818, Davis Library 206

Dean of Ross Commons: Dr. Ann Hanson, x3340, Laforce Hall

Faculty Heads of Ross Commons: Profs. Pavlos Sfyroeras & Maria Hatjigeorgiou, x3340

**First readings:**

Week 1: Sept. 8, 10, 12: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* & translator’s introduction. Grene & Lattimore  
Recommended: Finley’s chapter V on tragedy & Goldhill’s “The Question of Tragedy”

Recommended: Finley’s chapter V on tragedy & Goldhill’s “The Question of Tragedy”