**GENRES: TRAGEDY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Genre courses focus on particular genres and forms crucial for the study of English, American, and Anglophone literature and culture and are aimed primarily at English majors. So structured, these courses explicitly align with the first three of the English Department’s core competencies in literary and cultural analysis, critical understanding of conventions and forms, and attention to cultural and historical contexts. This course on tragedy traces the historical development and transformation of the genre and places strong emphasis on close reading and critical analytic skills. The course studies a variety of examples of and responses to tragedy across literary history from ancient Greece to the present. It aims to help students develop the ability to read tragedies with discernment and comprehension and to understand their conventions and perform critical formal analyses of tragedies as writers adopt and adapt the genre across time. The course assumes that any history of tragedy is at root a history of forms and conventions rather than a comprehensive survey of canonical works and authors. Without denying that all texts reflect in some fashion both the commitments and desires of their authors and the cultural contexts in which they are produced, the course emphasizes the idea that each tragedy can also be approached as an encounter with previous tragedies, whose formal patterns and assumptions it repeats, modifies, or rejects. The course is not intended to present comprehensive historical coverage of tragedy, though it does operate with a historical through-line appropriate to the genre.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students completing this course should be able to:

1) read tragedies and tragic texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions, both formal and thematic;
2) situate individual tragedies and tragic texts within the larger development of the genre through literary history and identify particular innovations and adaptations of the genre common to particular literary historical periods and movements;
3) perform critical, formal analyses of a variety of tragedies and tragic texts;
4) present persuasive written interpretations of individual tragedies and tragic texts using methods of formal analysis and clear and convincing argumentation;
5) write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
6) employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce thoughtful, persuasive arguments.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (@Duck Store)**

Sophocles, *Oedipus The King*, trans. David Grene (U Chicago)
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Pelican Shakespeare)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: 1818 text* (Oxford World Classics)
Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Dover)
Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (W. W. Norton)


**ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT**

This course offers a variety of assignments by which your performance is ultimately assessed so that your final grade is not dependent upon a single skill or performance. These include short writing assignments, two longer papers, and two exams. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class on which they are due. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 grade for every day they are late. Students taking the class should expect to devote eight hours per week to class work outside of class meetings. Grades will be assigned in accord with competencies and performance levels outlined in the English Department’s Undergraduate Grading Policies: [http://english.uoregon.edu/resources/attachment/english-dept-u-g-grading-policies-6](http://english.uoregon.edu/resources/attachment/english-dept-u-g-grading-policies-6)

**Attendance:** At the start of every class, you must sign the attendance sheet (if you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make sure the sheet is signed). I consider attendance in your final grade: for every absence beyond two, your final grade will be reduced by a third of a grade.

**Daily Reading Assignments:** *Read each assignment before class.* Read all texts slowly and carefully.

**Class Participation:** Although I do not give a participation grade, I expect you to contribute actively to class discussions (borderline final grades will benefit).
**Grading:** A final grade of C or better for the course is required for English major credit. *No incompletes will be granted, except in case of documented emergency.* **Grades:** First paper (3-4 pp), 20%; Question/Responses (2), 20%; Second paper (4-6 pp), 30%; Midterm exam, 15%; Final exam, 15%

**Papers:** You will write two papers: the first will be a 3-4 page close reading paper due on T 4/24 in class (20% of final grade); the second will be a 4-6 analytical paper due R 6/7 in class (30% of final grade). All papers must be titled. You should proofread carefully; spelling, punctuation, and grammar count. *Late papers lose 1 step per day (A to A-, B+ to B, C to C-, etc.) including weekends/holidays. After a week, late papers will not be accepted; they will count as missed assignments (F).*

**Writing Associates:** The Writing Associates Program offers free, one-on-one peer tutoring for students in 100- and 200-level English and Composition classes. Writing Associate tutors are advanced English majors who have been trained to tutor writing. They are available to help students with any aspect of their writing for this course, from learning how to write about literature and media to crafting clearer and more effective arguments. To make an appointment with a Writing Associate, go to https://writingassociates.uoregon.edu.

**Examinations:** The in-class Midterm Exam covers the first half of the course. It will consist of short answer and multiple-choice questions and a close reading essay based on key passages from the course texts (15% of final grade). The Final Exam covers the second half of the course. It will consist of short answer and multiple-choice questions and a close reading essay based on key on key passages from the course texts (15% of final grade). *Make up exams are given only in case of documented medical condition or documented university obligation. University policy forbids the giving of make up exams before the scheduled exam time.*

**Question/Response assignment:** Twice during the term, each student will formulate and answer a question in response to the course readings. These are due by email to ppepps@oregon.edu on most Wednesdays by 4pm (on weeks marked with an asterisk * on the syllabus). You choose which available Wednesday you will turn in your question/response, but you must turn in two: the first during the first five weeks of class, the second during the second five weeks of class. Your question should be thoughtful and require a substantial response; your response to the question should be 2-3 sentences long and engage critically with the text's form and content, and you should come to class ready to discuss your questions and responses (10% each; 20% of final grade).

**Discrimination and Harassment Reporting:** Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at safe.uoregon.edu. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to Callisto, a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, more information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment is available at http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/content/discrimination-harassment. For details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees go to: titleix.uoregon.edu. As a Student Directed Employee, I will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). I am required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the administration.
Incomplete Policy: Undergraduate students have one calendar year to make up an incomplete mark assigned by a UO faculty member. Failure to make up the incomplete at the end of one calendar year will result in the mark of "I" automatically changing to a grade of "F" or "N." *No incompletes will be granted, except in case of medical or personal emergency.*

Students Needing Accommodation: *UO strives to create inclusive learning environments.* If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations, please notify me and the Accessible Education Center (164 Oregon Hall; [http://aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu)), so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Use of Electronic Devices. Laptops and tablets for taking notes are permitted, but cell-phone use during class is forbidden. Texting or surfing the web during class time is distracting and disrespectful to your instructor and classmates. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave class and marked as “absent (unexcused)”; final grades will be impacted negatively.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this course or at this university. All work submitted must be your own and written for this course. The use of sources—ideas, quotations, paraphrases; from papers, articles, books, or websites—must be properly acknowledged and documented. If you have any doubts or questions about plagiarism or the University’s policy on it, go to: [http://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-3-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code](http://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-3-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code). In accordance with English Department policy, cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating will result in a final course grade of “F,” and all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. In cases of a second offense, plagiarism or cheating can result in dismissal from the University.

Inclement Weather. In the event of inclement weather, a banner will appear on the UO homepage displaying information about delay, cancellation or closure decisions for the Eugene campus. The latest updates and bulletins will be here: [https://alerts.uoregon.edu/](https://alerts.uoregon.edu/). Local television and radio stations will also broadcast delay and cancellation information. I will use canvas to communicate information specific to the course. For more information on UO inclement weather policies go to: [https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather](https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather).