

GENRES: TRAGEDY

ENG 205

CRN: 22045

TR: 2:15-3:45 pm

canvas.uoregon.edu

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. **4 Credits; fulfills ENG lower division genre requirement.**

REQUIRED TEXTS (@Duck Store)

Sophocles, *Oedipus The King*, trans. David Grene (U Chicago P)

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Folger Shakespeare Library)

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: 1818 text* (Oxford World Classics)

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Dover)

Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (W. W. Norton)

Brian Vaughan & Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad* (Vertigo/DC)

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Paul Peppis (he/him/his)

ppeppis@uoregon.edu

Communicating with Me

Outside of our scheduled synchronous (real time) remote class discussions, all announcements and general emails will be made via Canvas. These will be automatically forwarded to your UO email. (Check and adjust your settings under Account > Notifications if you would also like to receive announcements via text.)

Remote Office Hours: W 12:00-3:00 pm via Zoom

Email me at any time to make an appointment for a Zoom call during normal office hours.

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.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

20% First paper (3-4 pp)

25% Discussion Posts (at least 5)

35% Second paper (5-6 pp)

20% Final exam

REMOTE LEARNING PLAN

This is a REMOTE course: that means that, unlike WEB courses, we will regularly meet during scheduled class meeting times. I'll make the most of these live sessions to build community and interaction, while providing make-ups for students who need them.

REMOTE LEARNING RESOURCES

- Online tutoring will be available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm through UO's Online Writing Lab (OWL), a free service that allows all UO students to submit work via an online portal and receive detailed feedback within 24 hours. Log in at <https://owl.uoregon.edu/>.
- UO loaner laptop program for students with limited resources: go to <https://is.uoregon.edu/remote> and click on loaner laptop request form
- UO's coronavirus webpage: <https://www.uoregon.edu/coronavirus>
- UO's FAQ page for remote learning and coronavirus information: <https://www.uoregon.edu/coronavirus-faq>

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>.

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Note: If your work with the AEC determines you may need accommodations, **please communicate with me** within two weeks of meeting with the AEC to discuss details of the accommodations.

COURSE CONTENT WARNING

You should be aware that the texts we will read this term deal with adult themes and subject matter, and contain beliefs and opinions that are different from our own. Some of the texts portray incidents of racism and sexual violence. Please consider whether the content of the course may be disturbing to a degree that interferes with your learning. The ability to encounter unfamiliar and even disturbing ideas with an attitude of critical distance is fundamental to the work of majoring in English. I hope you are willing to approach these texts with an open mind, even if you ultimately decide that you do not agree with or even object to the values they sometimes express. I believe that the cultivation of such open-mindedness is good practice not merely for scholars of literature and culture; it can also help prepare students to live as tolerant, ethically-minded members of a diverse and inclusive society.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT 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. To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-SAFE [7244], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. 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.

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

As the university community continues to adjust to teaching and learning remotely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. I will be mindful of the many impacts the unfolding events related to COVID-19 may be having on you. During this unusual time, I encourage you to talk with me about what you are experiencing so we can work together to help you succeed in this course.

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 live synchronous discussions, discussion posts on class readings, two papers, and a final exam. Due dates are listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 grade for every day they are late. Students taking the class should expect to devote approximately twelve hours per week to class work (readings; live Zoom sessions; discussion postings)

Readings and Class Participation

Please read/review all assigned materials for the day in question prior to signing on for online discussion. For synchronous (real time) discussions, please be sure to sign in on time, have appropriate materials on hand (course readings, paper and pen for taking notes), and be ready to focus on the day's discussion. Although I will not be penalizing students for non-attendance of live Zoom sessions, I will continue to reward students who take an active and engaged role in Zoom discussions by contributing

respectfully, thoughtfully, and constructively to our in-class dialogue. Remember, participation can take several forms: asking questions, offering your own analyses and insights (based on the evidence of the text), asking others to elaborate further on their own comments or questions. In addition, please bear in mind that non-attendance will likely diminish your understanding of the required texts and compromise your performance in written assignments.

Zoom Group Participation

We will meet live via Zoom throughout the entire term. I have divided the class into two groups (A & B); during a number of class sessions, we will meet live as a full class to discuss the assigned material; during some other sessions, only one group will meet live (for more details see the course schedule below). If you aren't able to meet during a scheduled live session, that's fine; you'll just need to watch the recorded conversation. I recommend that you come prepared to our Zoom sessions with a question, a comment, and a passage/scene you'd like to discuss. I'll post recordings of our Zoom meetings so that everyone else can watch them afterward.

Discussion Posts

Whenever you are not scheduled to meet for a live Zoom discussion, you will post to your group's discussion board. Over the term, you should contribute at least 5 posts. You can post questions and responses on the day's assigned reading, responses to other people's questions about those readings, or reflections on the readings or on posts of others. Posts should run between 250-500 words and should avoid plot summary or description. You're writing to the rest of your group, so there's no need to recap the plot. These posts should make arguments or claims about the assigned material, ask questions, and note points of connection and threads running through the materials. As you respond, practice your close reading skills, paying attention to specific details, passages, and techniques, and then reflecting on the effects of those details/passages/techniques. These posts are due by 5pm on the day they are assigned. Please also read others' posts. Students who contribute 5 clear and thoughtful posts over the term of at least 250 words will earn a B for your discussion post grade; students who post fewer than 5 times over the term, whose posts are shorter than 250 words and less clear or thoughtful, will earn lower grades; students who post more often, write longer and more analytically probing and ambitious posts will earn grades higher than B for discussion posts (25% of final grade).

Papers

You will write two papers: the first will be a 3-4 page close reading paper due on W 1/27 by 5pm via Canvas (20% of final grade); the second will be a 5-6 page analytical paper due on F 3/11 by 5pm via Canvas (35% of final grade). All papers must be titled. You should proofread carefully; spelling, punctuation, and grammar count. Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade 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).

Extensions

You may ask for an extension if the due date is more than 72 hours (3 days) later, and the earlier the better. When you contact me, please let me know how long an extension you are requesting. In case of a looming or unexpected disaster, consideration will be given if you keep me in the loop and communicate in advance — i.e. even if the assignment is due in less than 3 days. Above all, stay in touch.

Final Examination

The Final Exam is timed (2 hours) and must be taken within a two-hour window between Monday, 3/15 at 9am and Wednesday 3/17 by 5pm. The exam is comprehensive and requires you to write brief essays

based on four quotations from the course texts (20% of final grade). Make up exams are given only in case of documented medical condition or documented university obligation.

Grading Scale:

A+ 100	A 93-99	A- 90-92	
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82	
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72	
D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62	F 0-59

You should also bear in mind that a grade of **C or better** is required in the course for English major credit.

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."

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, GUIDANCE, AND BEST PRACTICES

The primary platforms that we will be using for this online course are Canvas and Zoom. If you have questions about accessing and using Canvas, visit the [Canvas support page](#). Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone or live chat: Monday–Sunday | 6 a.m.–12 a.m.

[541-346-4357](tel:541-346-4357) | livehelp.uoregon.edu

Specific guidelines for best practices using Canvas Discussion:

1. Use subject lines that clearly communicate the content of your post.
2. Write clearly and concisely and be aware that humor or sarcasm often doesn't always translate in an online environment.
3. Be supportive and considerate when replying to others' posts. This means avoiding inappropriate language, disagreeing with respect, and providing a clear rationale or evidence to support your different view.
4. Keep focused on the topic and cite readings and other class materials to support your points.
5. Proofread your submissions, and try to use correct spelling and grammar and. After submitting, use the edit feature to make corrections and resubmit (don't create a new or duplicate post that corrects your error).
6. Contribute and interact regularly!

Specific guidelines for best practices using Zoom:

You will be sent an invitation prior to each Zoom meeting via email. If you do not already have the Zoom app on your device, you will be prompted to download it the first time you click on the URL inviting you to the meeting. We recommend downloading the Zoom app **now** at

<https://service.uoregon.edu/TDClient/2030/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=101628>

1. Please test your video and audio prior to joining a live class session. You can learn more about testing your audio and video by visiting the Zoom Help Center at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>
2. Please make the same effort to join the meeting on time that you would make to arrive on time for class. It can be distracting to have participants join late. We will try to schedule things so that people can join the meeting up to ten minutes prior to the officially scheduled start of discussion.

3. Be mindful that others can see you and your surroundings if your video is on. If you prefer to use a static image instead of video, you can keep your video off.
4. Try to find a quiet setting without lots of noise or background activity. Please do not eat or multitask during the meeting; instead, treat our time online as if it were a regular class session, and conduct yourself accordingly.
5. If the Zoom meeting is set up to include audio options for you, **please mute your audio when you are not actively contributing**. When contributing, avoid making other noises such as typing or eating or having side conversations with others that might be present with you. (You can conveniently unmute while speaking simply by pressing the spacebar of your keyboard.)
6. **When you wish to speak**, use a microphone or speak closely to your computer microphone so that others can hear you. If you have video on, try to look at your camera, not the screen, when you are contributing.
7. While others are contributing, you can chat **by text** to pose questions or offer insights “on the side.”
8. For help and troubleshooting with Zoom, visit the Zoom Help Center at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

Students experiencing low connectivity on Zoom should consider turning their video off or might consider selecting “phone call” rather than “computer audio” when joining a meeting (dial in using the number that appears, with passcode and participant ID; it will link your audio and video seamlessly, but you'll be using your cell network for audio rather than your internet bandwidth).

If you face Internet access challenges: computer labs are currently open for students at the Eugene campus. Some companies are offering free access during this challenging time. To learn more about options visit Information Services’ [web page on going remote](#).

SCHEDULE

Due to the experimental nature of these adaptations to the remote format, **the following schedule may be subject to revision**; I will announce all changes as far as possible ahead of time via Canvas.

Module 1 Welcome & Introduction

T (1/5) On Genre & Tragedy
 Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
 Complete: Student to Instructor Survey (Canvas)

Module 2 Classical Tragedy: Sophocles, Oedipus The King (c. 429 BCE)

R (1/7) Read: Oedipus The King (ll. 1-678; pp. 11-40)
 Read: Handout on Aristotle’s Theory of Tragedy (Canvas)
 Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

T (1/12) Read: Oedipus The King (ll. 679-1530; pp. 40-76)
 Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

Module 3 Renaissance Tragedy: Shakespeare, Hamlet (c. 1599-1601)

R (1/14) Read: Hamlet, Act I (pp. 3-69)
 Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

T (1/19) Read: Hamlet, 2.1-3.2 (pp. 73-161)
Group A: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)
Group B: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (1/21) Read: Hamlet, 3.3-4.5 (pp. 163-219)
Group A: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
Group B: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)

T (1/26) Read: Hamlet, 4.6-end (pp. 220-287)
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

W (1/27) First Papers Due by 5pm via Canvas (3-4pp)

Module 4 Romantic Tragedy: Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (1818)

R (1/28) Read: Frankenstein, Appendix I: 1831 Intro (pp. 192-97); Vol. I (pp. 1-68)
Group A: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
Group B: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)

T (2/2) Read: Frankenstein, Vol. II (pp. 69-123)
Group A: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)
Group B: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (2/4) Read: Frankenstein, Volume III (pp. 124-91)
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

Module 5 Modern Tragedy: Nella Larsen, Passing (1929)

T (2/9) Read: Passing, Part One: Encounter (pp. 1-36)
Group A: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)
Group B: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (2/11) Read: Passing, Part Two: Re-Encounter (pp. 37-65)
Group A: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
Group B: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)

T (2/16) Read: Passing, Part Three: Finale (pp. 66-94)
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

Module 6 (Post) Colonial Tragedy: Wole Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman (1975)

R (2/18) Read: Death & the King's Horseman, Authors Note & Act 1 (pp. 5-23)
Group A: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
Group B: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)

T (2/23) Read: Death & the King's Horseman, Acts 2-3 (pp. 23-45)
Group A: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)
Group B: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (2/25) Read: Death & the King's Horseman, Acts 4-5 (pp. 45-76)
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

Module 7 Graphic Tragedy: Vaughan & Henrichon, Pride of Baghdad (2006)

T (3/2) Read: Pride of Baghdad [pp. 1-29]
Group A: Post to Discussion Board on today's reading (by 5pm)
Group B: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (3/4) Read: Pride of Baghdad [pp. 30-87]
Group A: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm
Group B: Post to Discussion Board on today's readings (by 5pm)

T (3/9) Read: Pride of Baghdad [pp. 88-end]
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

R (3/11) Conclusion
Full Class: Live Zoom Meeting at 2:15pm

F (3/12) Second Papers due by 5pm via Canvas (5-6pp)

Week 11 Final Essay Exam (on Canvas)
2 hours, can be taken at any time between 9am on Mon. (3/15) and 5pm on Wed. (3/17)