

Paul Peppis  
PLC 154 (Oregon Humanities Center)  
W 12:00-3:00  
[ppeppis@uoregon.edu](mailto:ppeppis@uoregon.edu)  
346-7017

ENG 205  
26987  
300 Villard  
MWF: 10:00-10:50  
[canvas.uoregon.edu](http://canvas.uoregon.edu)

## **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, unless otherwise noted)

Sophocles, *Oedipus The King*, trans. David Grene (pdf; canvas)  
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Pelican Shakespeare)  
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: 1818 text* (Oxford World Classics)  
Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Dover)  
Eugene O'Neill, *A Long Day's Journey into Night* (Yale UP)  
Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (W. W. Norton)  
Brian Vaughan & Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad* (Vertigo/DC).

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1**

M (1/9) Introduction  
W (1/11) *Oedipus The King* (1-8, to l. 592)  
F (1/13) *Oedipus The King* (8-14, to Pt 2)

### **Week 2**

M (1/16) MLK Day; No Class  
W (1/18) *Oedipus The King* (14-23, to end)  
\*F (1/20) *Hamlet* (I.i-I.ii)

### **Week 3**

M (1/23) *Hamlet* (I.iii-II.i)  
W (1/25) *Hamlet* (II.ii-III.i)  
\*F (1/27) *Hamlet* (III.ii-IV.ii)

### **Week 4**

M (1/30) *Hamlet* (IV.iii-IV.vii)  
W (2/1) *Hamlet* (V); **Papers due (3-4 pp.)**  
F (2/3) *Frankenstein*, Apx I: 1831 Intro (192-97); Vol. I to ch. IV (1-38)

### **Week 5**

M (2/6) *Frankenstein*, Vol.I, chs. IV-VII (38-68)  
W (2/8) *Frankenstein*, Vol. II (69-123)  
\*F (2/10) *Frankenstein*, Volume III (124-48)

### **Week 6**

M (2/13) **Mid-Term Exam;** in class  
W (2/15) *Passing*, Part 1  
F (2/17) *Passing*, Part 2

### **Week 7**

M (2/20) *Passing*, Part 3  
W (2/22) *Long Day's Journey into Night* 1  
\*F (2/24) *Long Day's Journey into Night* 2

### **Week 8**

M (2/27) *Long Day's Journey into Night* 3  
W (3/1) *Long Day's Journey into Night* 4  
\*F (3/3) *Death & the King's Horseman* 1

### **Week 9**

M (3/6) *Death & the King's Horseman* 2-3  
W (3/8) *Death & the King's Horseman* 4  
\*F (3/10) *Death & the King's Horseman* 5

### **Week 10**

M (3/13) *Pride of Baghdad*  
W (3/15) *Pride of Baghdad*  
F (3/17) *Pride of Baghdad*; **Papers due (5-6 pp.)**

### **Week 11**

F (3/24) **Final exam;** 10:15, 300 Villard

## **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. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on which they are due. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 grade point 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>

**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 W 2/1 in class (20% of final grade); the second will be a 4-6 analytical paper due F 3/17 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:** Writing Associates are available to help students with any aspect of their writing for this course. They are peer tutors who can work with you one-on-one on your writing assignments. They are advanced English majors who have been trained to tutor writing. They can help you understand the process of writing about literature and media and show you how to make your written work for this class more clear, coherent, and convincing. To make an appointment with a Writing Associate, go to <http://english.uoregon.edu/writingassociates/>

**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 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. I will collect these most Fridays (marked with an asterisk \* on the syllabus). You choose which available Friday 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. Both question/responses must be completed and submitted at the start of class to receive credit (10% each; 20% of final grade).

**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.* Please notify me if there are any 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 (<http://aec.uoregon.edu>) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155, 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.

**Mandatory Reporting Policy.** *The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment.* All UO employees (other than designated confidential resources) are required to report credible evidence of prohibited discrimination. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or state or federal law, I have to share the information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (<http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/>). If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website for more information (<https://safe.uoregon.edu/services>). Each resource is clearly labeled as either “required reporter,” “confidential UO employee,” or “off-campus agency,” to allow you to select your desired level of confidentiality.

**Academic Integrity.** *Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this course or at this university.* All work submitted must be your own and written exclusively 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, come talk to me or see UO’s *Student Conduct Code*: <http://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct>. 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 (<http://www.uoregon.edu/>) displaying information about delay, cancellation or closure decisions for the Eugene campus. The [UO Alerts blog](#) will be updated with the latest updates and bulletins. 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 see: <https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/inclement-weather>.