

Course: Classical & Renaissance Drama

Semester: 3rd

Course Code: ELL 201

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore the nature, function, and themes of Classical Greek, Roman and Elizabethan drama in their theatrical, historical and social contexts. Through a detailed study of the texts by the selected dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Seneca, Plautus, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Webster the course traces the development of the key features of tragedy and comedy. Ancient opinions on drama, in particular, the views of Plato and Aristotle and their influence on classical drama will also be investigated. A comprehensive and critical background to mythology, drama and society is given in the beginning of the course to prepare students to undertake close reading and analyses of the selected texts.

The first section of the course will focus on representative classical plays which have influenced the development of drama as a genre. It will introduce students to the history of Classical Greek and Roman drama and motivate them to explore how selected texts can be interpreted in a modern context. A comprehensive and critical background to Greek drama and society is given in the beginning of the course to prepare students to undertake a close reading and analysis of the selected texts. Special emphasis will be given in the seminars to examine the role and significance of mythology in Greek drama, the importance of festivals in Greek society, the structure of Greek tragedy, and the difference between tragedy and comedy.

The second section focuses on the selective plays of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and John Webster. Through a critical scrutiny of the recommended plays, students will be made to appreciate the variety and imaginative exuberance of drama written in the age that popularized cultural profundity, humanist tendencies, philosophical excavations and artistic excellence. Qualities such as the poetic richness, absorbing plots, and vivid portrayal of characters will be highlighted to catch the true spirit of Renaissance. Through a selection of plays, this section highlights the characteristic features of various dramatic forms like tragedy, comedy, and history, and their variations.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be taught to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the myths, history, conventions, and major personages of classical theatre through readings of the plays and secondary sources.
- An insight into the culture, society and political events of the classical periods under study.
- An understanding of the main objectives, themes and ideas underlying Classical Drama.
- Sound knowledge of the works of a range of classical dramatists and the ability to relate the primary texts to their socio-cultural and historical contexts.
- The ability to carry out close reading and literary commentaries on the primary texts.
- Critically assess the inherent nature of the human condition - its paradoxes, complexities, and conflicts.

Course Contents

Unit-I

- 1.1 Aeschylus – Prometheus Bound
- 1.2 Sophocles – Oedipus Rex
- 1.3 Shakespeare – King Lear
- 1.4 Marlowe – The Jew of Malta

Teaching and Learning Strategies:

Following teaching strategies to be adopted:

1. Class Discussion
2. Reading and analyzing the text through interactive sessions.
3. Class presentations.
4. Group Discussions
5. Lectures, seminars and tutorials.

Assignments:

Two assignments, one before midterms and one after midterm, to be submitted. The students are advised to get their topics approved by the teacher. And there is a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism. (Please consult HEC policy on Plagiarism).

Assessment and Examination:

Sr. No.	Elements	Weightage	Details
67.	Midterm Assessment	35%	It takes place at the mid-point of the semester.
68.	Formative Assessment	25%	It is continuous assessment. It includes: classroom participation, attendance, assignments and presentations, homework, attitude and behavior, hands-on-activities, short tests, quizzes etc.
69.	Final Assessment	40%	It takes place at the end of the semester. It is mostly in the form of a test, but owing to the nature of the course the teacher may assess their students based on term paper, research proposal development, field work and report writing etc.

Recommended Readings

1. Aeschylus. (1961). *Prometheus Bound, The Suppliants, Seven Against Thebes, The Persians*, translated by Philip Vellacott. Penguin Books.
2. Aristophanes. (1962). *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*. Edited by Moses Hadas. A Bantam Skylark Book.
3. Bloom, Harold. (1987). *John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi*. Chelsea House Pub (L).
4. Bloom, Harold. (1999). *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. London: Fourth Estate.
5. Cheney, Patrick. (2004). *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. Cambridge: CUP.
6. Dover, K.J. (1972). *Aristophanic Comedy*. University of California Press.
7. Eagleton, Terry. (1986). *William Shakespeare*. New York: Blackwell.
8. Erikson, Peter. (1991). *Rewriting Shakespeare, Rewriting Ourselves*. Berkley: University of California Press.
9. Frazer, James G. (1922). *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. MacMillan.
10. Gregory, Justina. (2005). *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*.

- Blackwell.
11. Hackett, Helen. (2012). *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.
 12. Herington. (1986). *Aeschylus*. Yale.
 13. Kitto, H. D. F. (2005). *Greek Tragedy*. London and New York: Routledge.
 14. Kuriyama, Constance B. (2002). *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
 15. Ley, G. (1991). *A Short Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theatre*. University of Chicago Press.