**English 491 (Senior Seminar in Literary Studies):**

**Shakespeare and the pleasures of tragedy**

Class Meeting: Mondays, 2-4.30pm

Professor: Rebecca Lemon, English Department, THH 429

Email: [rlemon@usc.edu](mailto:rlemon@usc.edu); phone: 213.740.3732

Office Hours: Monday 1-2pm, Wednesday 9.30-11am, or by appointment

**Course Description**

The triumph! again, *put money* after the effect has been fully produced.--The last Speech, the motive-hunting of motiveless Malignity--how awful! In itself fiendish--while yet he was allowed to bear the divine image, too fiendish for his own steady View.--A being next to Devil--only *not* quite Devil--& this Shakespeare has attempted-- executed--without disgust, without Scandal! (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, note in his copy of Shakespeare as he prepares his 1818-19 lectures. In *Lectures 1808-1819 On Literature* 2: 315)

Why do we enjoy tragedy? What are the ethical implications of watching a tragedy unfold from the comfort of a cinema or theatre seat? Are we cold-hearted in paying to see tragic events onstage or onscreen? Or, alternately, are we ostrich-like when we ignore tragedy in favor of sitcoms and rom-coms? This class takes up questions posed by the art of tragedy. We do so by reading classic theories of tragedy by Aristotle, Freud, and Nietzsche; and by encountering Shakespearean tragedy in its various forms. In addition to studying Shakespeare’s four great tragedies (*Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear*) we will also read plays – such as *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter’s Tale* – that follow a tragic trajectory, only to take a radical and arguably problematic turn in the end.

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| **Course Requirements** |

* A short, written response (1 pg) to TWO events – the event might be an EMSI lecture, a departmental lecture, a Visions and Voices event, a dramatic performance (esp. Shakespeare) or whatever else takes your fancy. You are free to choose the two events you would like to attend –options include EMSI (including the Renaissance Literature seminar, the British History seminar, and the Distinguished Lecture series) see (<http://dornsife.usc.edu/emsi>); The Center for Law, History and Culture (<http://law.usc.edu/centers/clhc/home.htm>), Visions and Voices (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/pubrel/visionsandvoices>). You might also consider attending a Shakespeare performance at Theatricum Botanicum, as their season runs through the end of Sept (<http://www.theatricum.com/seasoncal.htm>); or ISA, through Sept 6 (<http://www.iscla.org/griffith-park-festival/>). You MUST hand in one of your written responses by Oct 13. The second response is due by the last day of class.
* Presentation/leading class discussion. Please select one week (any week, from 2-14, is fair game) when you would like to lead discussion for the first hour of class. Here, you might choose to offer discussion questions, circulated ahead of time; or you might like to draw out some of the themes in the text(s) to help provoke discussion – you can approach the presentation-class discussion however you like, but this is not meant to be a formal presentation, but instead a proper discussion which helps spark comments from everyone.
* An article-length final paper (20 pages).
* An abstract and working bibliography due on Mon Oct 27
* Draft due on Mon Nov 10
* Final paper due on Mon Dec 1.
* **OR** two short papers (10-12 pages), due Mon Nov 3 and Mon Dec 1.

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| **Grading Breakdown** |

20% Presentation; and participation, including thoughtful contributions to class discussion

10% Responses to events

10% Abstract/working biblio of final paper

10% Draft of final paper

50% Final paper

[OR if you are writing two papers, the first paper counts for 30%, the second for 40%]

Late papers will be docked 1/3 a grade for each day, beyond the due date and time. You are responsible for getting the paper to me in a form I can read.

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| **Seminar Schedule, Fall 2014** |

**Introductory frame: Tragedy’s origins, theory and practice**

Week 1:

Mon Aug 25 Aristotle, *Poetics*

Selections from Nietzsche, “On the morality of the stage,” *The Dawn of Day,* Translated by John McFarland Kennedy (New York: Macmillan, 1911). [HO]

Week 2:

Mon Sept 1 LABOUR DAY

Week 3:

Mon Sept 8 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*

Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, tr. A.A. Brill (1911), pp. 220-225. (HO)

Week 4:

Mon Sept 15 Euripides, *Bacchae*

Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*

**Shakespearean tragedy: pleasures and horrors**

Week 5:

Mon Sept 22 *Hamlet* and theories of tragedy

Aristotle, *Poetics*

Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, selections on *Hamlet*

Week 6:

Mon Sept 29 *Hamlet* and the pleasures of recognition

Guest speaker: Devin Toohey

Ernest Jones, "The Oedipus-Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery: A Study in Motive," *The American Journal of Psychology*. 21.1 (1910): 72-113 [read pp. 89-103] [jstor] URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1412950>

Janet Adelman, "'Man and Wife is One Flesh': *Hamlet* and the Confrontation with the Maternal Body," *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare’s Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 256-282. (HO)

Week 7:

Mon Oct 6 *Richard III* and the pleasures of morality

Freud, Sigmund. “The Exceptions,” in *Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work,* pp. 311–315 in Strachey, James, ed. *Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. 14. London: Hogarth Press. (Originally published 1916) [HO]

Week 8:

Mon Oct 13 *Macbeth* and the pleasure of the plot

Sigmund Freud, “Those wrecked by success,” in *Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work*, pp. 315-24 in Strachey, James, ed. *Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 14. London: Hogarth Press. (Originally published 1916) [HO]

Week 9:

Mon Oct 20 *Romeo and Juliet* and the pleasure of the text

Nevo, Ruth. “Tragic Form in *Romeo and Juliet,*”*Studies in English Literature* 9 (Spring 1969): 241-58. [jstor; mla bibliography]

Paul Kottman, “Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.1 (2012 Spring): 1-38. [project muse]

Week 10:

Mon Oct 27 *Othello* and motiveless malignancy

Patricia Parker, “Shakespeare's Tragedies: Fantasies of 'Race' and 'Gender': Africa, Othello and Bringing to Light,” in *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, edited by Zimmerman, Susan, 167-193. New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1998. [HO]

Katharine Eisaman Maus, “Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and its Exposure in the English Renaissance,” in *Representations* 43 (Spring 1991): 29-52. [jstor] http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928769

Week 11:

Mon Nov 3 *Winter’s Tale* and the tragedy of redemption

Guest speaker: Megan Herrold

Week 12:

Mon Nov 10 *King Lear* and the horror of tragedy

Stanley Cavell, “The Avoidance of Love,” in *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge UP, 2003), pp. 39-124. [HO]

Week 13:

Mon Nov 17 *Merchant of Venice* and the tragedy of comedy

Freud, “The Theme of the Three Caskets,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works, 289-302 edited by James Strachey. [HO]

David Hillman, “Freud’s Shylock,” *American Imago* 70.1: 1-50. [HO]

* Karen Newman, “Portia’s Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in The Merchant of Venice,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38.1 (Spring 1987): 19-33.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.usc.edu/stable/2870399> [jstor]

Adelman, Janet. “Her Father's Blood: Race, Conversion, and Nation in The Merchant of Venice,” *Representations*81 (Winter 2003): 4-30. [jsor; MLA]

Week 14:

Mon Nov 24 Writing Day

Week 15:

Mon Dec 1 *Measure for Measure* and the tragedy of law

Guest speaker: Dr. Penelope Geng

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| **Required Reading** |

* The articles listed above will be available via dropbox. I will send you a link to our class folder so you can download the materials.
* I have ordered copies of these books into the bookstore at USC. You are also welcome to purchase the books online. Please use the editions (or at least the translations) of the classical materials listed here. I selected the Shakespeare texts for convenience sake (with the exception of the *Merchant of Venice*  in the Arden edition, which is a spurge) – you are welcome to purchase any edition of all of these plays, such as the Folger, Signet, Bedford, etc. The advantage of having the precise course texts is that our line numbers will correspond; this will be especially true in the case of *Hamlet,* and *King Lear* as editions can really vary as there are multiple versions of the plays.
* Aristotle. *Poetics* (Penguin Classics). Trans. Malcolm Heath. New York: Penguin, 1997.

ISBN-13: 978-0140446364

ISBN-10: 0140446362

Euripides. *The Bacchae*, in *Euripides V*. Ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

* ISBN-10: 0226307840

ISBN-13: 978-0226307848

Sophocles. *Oedipus the King.* Trans. David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

* ISBN-10: 0226768686

ISBN-13: 978-0226768687

Friedrich Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music*. Penguin Classics, 1994.

* ISBN-10: 0140433392

ISBN-13: 978-0140433395

*The Norton Shakespeare: The Tragedies,* eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al. NY: WW Norton, 2008.

* ISBN-10: 0393931404

ISBN-13: 978-0393931402

William Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice.* Third Series: Arden Shakespeare, 2011, ed. John Drakakis.

* ISBN-10: 1903436818

ISBN-13: 978-1903436813

William Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure* (Folger Shakespeare Library) 2005

* ISBN-10: 0743484908

ISBN-13: 978-0743484909

William Shakespeare. *The Winter’s Tale* (Folger Shakespeare Library) 2005

* ISBN-10: 0743484894

ISBN-13: 978-0743484893

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| **University Policies** |

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or [http://scampus.usc.edu](http://scampus.usc.edu/)) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**Student Behavior** that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.