English 390A/ Classical Studies 300A Fall 2014

**Greece and Gender: Ancient Texts and Modern Versions**

Tuesday and Thursday 2:20-3:50 in East College 115

Meryl Altman DePauw University 218 Harrison Hall x1038 maltman@depauw.edu

office hours Wednesdays 2 - 4 and by appointment.

When we look into depictions of gender and sexuality in the Ancient Greek world, much seems strange to us. Still, much is also familiar, even foundational to how we think about gender and sexuality today. In law, education, and cultural life, we appeal to ancient models even as we rework them; and much important twentieth-and twentyfirst-century literature has been closely entwined with understanding, translating, rewriting the legacy of Ancient Greece.

This course will take a seminar/ discussion approach to exploring some connections and disconnections in the social construction of gender then and now. We’ll read many primary ancient literary texts in various genres: comedy, tragedy, epic, lyric, even a little philosophy; then we’ll turn to modern and contemporary writers who draw on ancient inspirations for new gender stories. All readings will be in English, though those who know Greek are encouraged to read along in the original; the course may be counted toward a major or minor in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, as well as within the English department or Classical Studies. But no particular background in any of these fields is necessary. Be prepared to read a lot, to write frequently, and to take responsibility for raising questions and issues that seem important to you.

Please buy (or otherwise acquire) the following books, which are available from Eli’s.

*Staging Women: Three Plays by Aristophanes*, translated by Jeffrey Henderson

(Routledge, 2010).

*Women on the Edge: Four Plays by Euripides*, translated by Ruby Blondell, Mary Kay Gamel,

 Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, and Bella Zweig (Routledge, 1998).

Sophocles, *Antigone*, translated by Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal (Oxford, 2007).

Euripides,  *Bacchae*, translated by C K Williams (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1990).

Plato, *Symposium*, translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford World’s Classics, 1994).

E M Forster, *Maurice* (Penguin Classics, 2005).

Mary Renault, *The Mask of Apollo* (Vintage 1988).

Christa Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays,* translated from the German by[Jan Van Heurck](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Ddp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&field-author=Jan+Van+Heurck&search-alias=books&text=Jan+Van+Heurck&sort=relevancerank)

 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux,1988).

Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red* (Vintage, 1999).

 I also ordered (as “recommended”) Richard Lattimore’s translations of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in case you’d like to have them. Other readings will be available over Moodle.

For the ancient texts, it’s important that we all have the same edition, because translations differ so widely, and because I’ll also be asking you to read the introductions. *It’s very important to have your own physical copy of the reading* to bring and use in class as well as in writing the weekly papers. If you have a serious financial hardship, please speak with me privately *now*: there are things we can do.

*Students who don’t have the books don’t do well in this class.* Taking a literature class without getting the books is like taking a tennis class without a tennis racket.

**Schedule of readings and assignments**.

(some modifications may be made)

8/28 Introductory

9/2 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (411 BCE) (and Henderson’s Introduction);

 “Women in the Athenian Agora” (moodle) pp. 1-44.

9/4 *Homeric Hymns* to Aphrodite and to Demeter (moodle)

9/9 Homer, *Iliad* (selections)

9/11Homer, *Odyssey* (selections)

9/16-9/18 Sappho (moodle: a range of translations)

9/23-9/25 *Woman on the Edge* pp. 5-89 and Euripides *Medea* (431 BCE)

9/30-10/2 Sophocles, *Antigone* (441 BCE)

9/7 Euripides, *Trojan Women* (415)

9/9 Euripides, *Bacchae* (405 BCE)

 *First portfolio due September 10*.

Niall Slater (Emory), “The Greatest Anti-War Poem Imaginable':

Granville Barker’s Trojan Women in America.”

4:15-5:45pm, Oct. 13 (Monday), Peeler Art Center Aud.

9/14-9/16 Plato, *Symposium* (360 BCE)

[October 18-26 Fall Break]

10/28-10/30 E.M. Forster, *Maurice* (1914, published 1971).

11/4-11/6 Mary Renault, *The Mask of Apollo* (1966)

11/11-Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (1944);

11/13 Jean-Paul Sartre (1944) *The Flies* (Les Mouches),

(recommended: Sophocles, *Electra*)

11/18-11-20 Cocteau, *Orphée* (1949, film); Sarah Ruhl, *Eurydice* (2003)

11/18-11/20 Christa Wolf, *Cassandra* (1984)

11/25 Simone Weil, “The *Iliad* as the Poem of Force”

-Thanksgiving-

12/2-12/4 Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red* (1998)

*Final (cumulative) portfolio due December 5.*

12/9-12/11 in-class presentations.

*Final paper due December 12.*

*Final exam due on Tuesday December 16*.

**Requirements of the course.**

Active, prepared, thoughtful class participation. (25%)

Weekly 3 page response/analysis papers, due either Tuesday or Thursday--your choice—but *before* we’ve discussed what you’re writing about. See below for further instructions. I’ll gather these up as a portfolio at the middle of term and again at the end. (30%)

Longer paper (8-10 pages) incorporating an additional work or outside source (25%), due at end of term. (You’ll spend the last week of class presenting these to one another.)

Take-home final (20%) due on the scheduled exam date.

All students must turn in all assigned written work to receive a passing grade.

Turn in all written work *both* in paper copy *and* though Moodle. Late papers will result in lowered grades (half grade lower per day) and repeated unexcused absences will result in a lowered participation grade.

There will also be little in-class writing exercises, some of which I’ll collect and count toward class participation. (These can’t be made up.) I strongly encourage you to keep a reading journal as well.

**Criteria and Policies.**

In all the writing you do for this class, and in oral discussion too, what I most want to see is evidence of close reading and serious thinking; clarity, logic, and organization (remember the reader); support for what you say. Keep close to the text, and try to meet the writers on their own terms first, even if in the end you find you disagree with or dislike them. Say something true about an issue that matters, and show me why you think what you think.

Short papers are due \*before we have discussed what you’re writing about—this keeps your response fresh and makes for better discussions. So, they won’t be accepted late except in rare and serious circumstances. You need to bring a copy of your paper to class, to have in front of you during class and then turn in to me, and you also need to upload it to the moodle site before class. Rewrites will be accepted and may occasionally be required.

 I make lots of individual comments along the way, and I hope you’ll feel free to talk with me any time with questions or comments or to go over work. As a rough guide, though, I’ll also mark the short weekly papers as follows:

check: satisfactory, clear, makes sense, shows you were thinking and understanding;

check plus: something special, original ideas, particularly well-expressed;

check minus: something missing, misunderstood, unclear -- spend more time on the next one.

Rewrites will always be accepted and may occasionally be required. Response papers won’t be accepted late except in rare and serious circumstances. I give lots of comments along the way, and I am especially happy to see signs of careful reflection and improvement. I hope you’ll feel free to talk to me any time with questions or comments or to go over work.

You’re expected to know and follow University policies about **plagiarism and academic integrity**. I take these policies seriously and I enforce them. Citations should follow MLA form. See

http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/policies/integrity/

for the policy, and there are good handouts about form, “avoiding plagiarism,” etc. on the W-center page at

http://www.depauw.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-resource-center/w-center/w-center-handouts/

If you have questions about any of this, please *ask in advance*. You will be held responsible for understanding how to use sources correctly: this is, after all, an upper-level class.

**No Devices.** Technology can be our friend—sometimes—but we can only have a real discussion/conversation when we’re looking at each other, plus many people (like me) find it really hard not to check their email etc. . Plus, recent research shows that students who use laptops don’t understand the material as well, even when they think they do, and end up with lower grades.[[1]](#footnote-1) So, close the computer and the phone and put them away. You’ll need to bring a paper notebook and an actual pen, and print out ahead of time what you need to have with you.

**Attendance.** Even if you feel underprepared, or are in a rotten mood about something, it’s always better to come to class. If you have to be absent, it’s your responsibility to get notes from a classmate and check if you missed any instructions. Frequent unexcused absences will hurt your participation grade, and more than three may lead to your being dropped from the course.

**Self-reliance.**

Since we’ll be reading texts lots of people have read and discussed before, you may need some self-discipline in order to *think for yourself*. But remember, some of what you can find on the web is wrong, and lots of it is pretty boring. *Trust yourself*, and develop your own ideas as much as you can before you turn to secondary sources.

It’s fine to email me with ideas and questions, but before you do, please first check that the answer is not on a piece of paper I’ve already given you (like this one), or on the moodle site, or in your notebook, or might actually be common sense.

Save your work frequently! and keep back-up copies. If there’s something you don’t understand, ask. And even if everything else messes up … *come to class.*

**ADA statement**. “DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university administered activities with reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Director of Student Disability Services and ADA Compliance for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Contact information for Student Disability Services is: 408 S. Locust Street, Suite 200, in The Memorial Student Union Building (765-658-6267). It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.”

**Classics department events for Fall 2014**

--**Joel Street** (DePauw Alum)

“Metaphor in Plutarch's Theseus-Romulus”

September 2, 11:45-12:30, Harrison 102.

(Classical Studies will feed you lunch if you RSVP).

--**Greg Aldrete** (U Wisc-Green Bay)

 “Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome: The Eternal City Goes Under”

Sept. 30 (Tuesday), 5:30pm, Peeler Art Center Aud

--**Niall Slater** (Emory)

--“The Greatest Anti-War Poem Imaginable':  Granville Barker’s Trojan Women in America”Oct. 13, 4:15-5:45pm, (Monday), Peeler Art Center Aud

--“Speculating in Unreal Estate in the Mostellaria: Locution, Locution, Locution 7:30-Oct. 14 (Tuesday), 8:45pm, Watson Forum

1. <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)