



Instructor: Justin Blum

~ justin.blum@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Number: DRE/ENG121H5F (L0101)

Course Title: Traditions of Theatre & Drama

Course description: This introductory course surveys plays and performance techniques from the Ancient Greeks to the late 18th century. We will study plays by Euripides, Shakespeare, Molière, Aphra Behn and others, with a focus on situating the works in their historical contexts. We will consider the theatrical and social environments in which the plays were originally performed and the theatrical conventions that informed their writing and staging. We will also discuss their contemporary significance to explore how and why they continue to be produced and adapted today. Special emphasis will be placed on developing critical thinking and close reading skills. Students will also participate in staged readings of excerpts from the plays, providing us with a further opportunity to consider the plays in performance then and now.

Required Reading:

The required textbook for this course will be *The Norton Anthology of Drama, Volume One: Antiquity Through the Eighteenth Century* (2009). It will be available at the UTM campus bookstore. Other readings will be distributed as photocopied handouts in class or electronically through Blackboard.

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First Three Texts/Authors to be Studied:

Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*;
Seneca, *Thyestes*.

Method of Instruction:

For each play we will have lectures, pair or small group exercises, and class discussion. We will also do staged readings of scenes from the plays and presentations about past performances, with the aim of honing close reading skills and considering staging possibilities.

Method of Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of a written Close Reading assignment (15%), a Midterm Test (10%), a Final Paper (20%) and Final Exam (35%), a group Stage Reading assignment (10%), and Participation/ Attendance (10%).