

Ambedkar University Delhi
Course Outline
Monsoon Semester (August-December 2018)

School: School of Letters

Programme with title: MA English

Semester to which offered: I and III

Course Title: Classical Greek Literature

Credits: 4 Credits

Course Code: SOL2EN347

Type of Course:

Compulsory:

Elective: Yes

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)
4. Discipline (Elective)
5. Elective

Course Coordinator and Team: Bodh Prakash

Email of course coordinator: bodh@aud.ac.in

Pre-requisites: None

Aim: The objective of the course is to familiarize students with the diverse expressions within early Greek literature, with a view to taking critical positions on these expressions both from our present locations as well as from within their own times and society.

Literary forms in Greek Classical literature like the epic, tragedy, and comedy, laid the foundations for modern European literatures and their continuities and discontinuities have been observed and studied. Hence a close familiarity with the Classical texts and their poetics is important for any student of modern European literatures. Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is regarded not only as an example of early historical writing but also as a work of literature in its organization of events and their development. Hesiod's epic *Cosmogony*, on the origins of the gods, was a major influence on subsequent Greek philosophical systems. Many of the Greek myths of origin, the myth of succession and other significant characters like Sisyphus find their place in this extremely important work. The tragedies are philosophical elaborations of Greek conceptions of divinity and the essence of mortality and its paradoxes, the significance and insignificance of human beings. The comedies (Old and New Comedy) are satires on contemporary public personalities like (Socrates, in *The Clouds*) or social and political concerns of the day like war, public order, and political institutions.

The origins of Greek classical literature in oral, folk and performative narrative traditions is another area that the course will explore. This will also help in resituating the classical works within the non-canonical oral traditions that predated them. The overlaps between different forms of writing like history, epic, tragedy and comedy also reveal the malleable nature of these forms and students will be able to recognize elements of hybridity in Greek literary culture.

A second objective of the course would be to introduce students to Greek literary criticism. A study of older critical traditions will be useful for students in their engagement with aesthetic concepts and tools by locating them within the philosophical ethos from which they emerged.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

Module 1: Greek Classical Traditions: Histories, Poetics and Philosophy

1. Herodotus, *The Histories* (Book 1) Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (Penguin Classics, 2003)
2. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Book 1, The Funeral Oration of Pericles) Trans. Rex Warner (Penguin Classics, 2001)
3. Aristotle, *Poetics*. Trans. Malcom Heath (Penguin, 1996)
4. Plato, *Symposium* trans. by Seth Benardete, (Chicago, 2001)
5. Plato, *Phaedrus* Trans. by Nehamas and Woodrull (Hackett Publishing, 1995)
6. Plato, *Ion* Trans. by Benjamin Jowett (CreateSpace, 2015 (internet edition))

Module 2: The Epic, Texts and Conventions

1. Hesiod, *Cosmogony*. Trans. Athanassakis, Apostolos N., in *Theogony; Works and Days; Shield* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983)
2. Hesiod, *Works and Days* (from edition mentioned above)
3. Homer, *Iliad*. Trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin, 2003.
4. Homer, *The Odyssey*. Trans. E.V. Rieu and revised by D.C.H, Rieu (Penguin Classics, 2003)

Module 3: Tragedy

5. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*. Trans. F Storr (*The Three Theban Plays: Antigone - Oedipus the King - Oedipus at Colonus*, Penguin Paperback, 2014)
Antigone Trans. Ruby Blondell (Focus Classical Library, Hackett Publishing, 2012)
Oedipus at Colonus Trans. Ruby Blondell (Focus Classical Library, Hackett Publishing, 2015)
6. Euripides, *Medea*. Trans. John Harrison (Cambridge University Press, 1999) (online edition at: http://education.cambridge.org/media/652931/euripides_medea.pdf)
7. Euripides, *Trojan Women*. Trans. Alan Shapiro. Oxford University Press, 2009
8. Aeschylus. *Persians*. Trans. Janet Lembke and C.J. Herington. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981

Module 4: Comedy

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata and Other Plays*. Trans. Alan H. Sommerstein (Penguin Classics, 2003) (3 plays from this collection will be taken up for detailed study: *The Clouds*, *Lysistrata* and *The Archanians*)

Recommended readings (Modules 1 to 4)

1. Edith Foster and Donald Lateiner eds. *Thucydides and Herodotus* (OUP 2012)
2. P.E. Easterling & B.M.W. Knox (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature I: Greek Literature*, (Cambridge University Press, 1985. Online edition 2008)
3. Tim Whitmarsh, *Ancient Greek Literature* (Polity, 2004)
4. Francois Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece* (University of Chicago Press, 2001)
5. M. I Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (Penguin, 1954)
6. Mark W. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)
7. Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (OUP, 1980)
8. Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (1986)
9. Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977)
10. R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (1980)
11. D.J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (1967)
12. James Robson, *Aristophanes* (2009)
13. Erich Segal (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes* (1996)
14. *The Origins of Greek Thought*, Jean-Pierre Vernant (Cornell University Press, 1962)
15. “Illiad, Or the Poem of Force”, Simone Weil (1940)
16. Paul Ricoeur *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 chapter 1 (University of Chicago Press, 1988)
17. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Penguin, 2003 [1872])
18. Joshua Billings, *Genealogy of the Tragic: Greek Tragedy and German Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, 2014
19. Simon Bailey, *Greek Philosophers: The Lives and Times of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle* (2015)
20. G. Kirk, J. Raven, M. Schofield, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1984)
21. R. Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge, 1992)
22. (2nd ed., Berkeley, 1986)
23. A. A. Long (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999)
24. R. Martin, ‘The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom’, in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (eds.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece* (Cambridge, 1993)
25. M. C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness; Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Princeton, 1998)

26. R. Fowler, *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge, 2004)
27. M. Griffith, "Personality in Hesiod", *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983) 37-65
28. R. Janko, 'The Homeric Poems and Oral Dictated Texts', *Classical Quarterly*, 48 (1998), 1-13
29. I. Morris, 'The Use and Abuse of Homer', *Classical Antiquity*, 5 (1986), 81-138
30. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1979)
31. R. B. Rutherford, *Homer, Greece and Rome new surveys in the Classics*, 26 (Oxford, 1996)
32. P. Cartledge, *Aristophanes and his Theatre of the Absurd* (Bristol, 1990)
33. P. Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1997)
34. E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989)
35. J. Herington, *Poetry Into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and London, 1985)
36. J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (eds.), *Nothing to do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in Social Context* (Princeton, 1990)

2. **Assessment structure** (modes and frequency of assessments)

- Writing assignments(including seminar presentation if required) – 20%
- Mid semester exam 40 %
- End semester exam - 40 %