ENGL 2279

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This course is taken in conjunction with A&S 1119, and we will spend most of our time discussing the readings and lectures for that class, in which each student should also be enrolled.

**Learning Objectives:**
After taking this course, students will be able to:
T Identify significant figures in ancient Greek society
T Define key concepts in ancient Greek culture
T Explain the cultural importance of selected events in ancient Greek history
T Analyze the meaning of selected passages from ancient Greek literature and philosophy
T Synthesize, in coherent English essays, central aspects of the ancient Greek world

**Attendance and Punctuality:** As UNO’s Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog states: “Students are expected to attend all classes regularly and punctually. A student who is not present when attendance is checked in a class is considered absent.” The Attendance Policy of the Department of English is as follows: “When a student has missed a total of ½ weeks of classes (3 T/H, 5 MWF), the instructor may request that the student’s dean put the student on attendance probation.... Continued absences from any English class will subject the student to full penalties ... including failing the course....” To be excused, absences require prompt reporting and appropriate documentation. Do not come to class late. Interruptions are inconsiderate and disrespectful to both classmates and teachers. Arriving late, leaving early, or going in and out of the classroom during the period, constitute partial absence. Plan ahead to allow for traffic, restroom needs, etc., so you can arrive on time and stay for the duration. Participation counts for 10% of the final grade, and you cannot participate in class discussion if you are not present. However, merely being physically present does not count as participating. Effective participation presupposes being prepared to discuss the material constructively.

**Electronic Intrusions:** Both courtesy and intellectual effectiveness require that you attention be focused on class material. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced before class begins: not only should they not ring, but you should neither read nor send text messages during class. If you are using a computer, you should not be surfing the web during class time, or playing video-games, etc. You should not be doing homework for another class during the period, with or without electronic assistance. Such behavior constitutes a form of absence. If you feel the need for entertainment, you are not paying enough attention.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu [This section is quoted from mandated University language.]

**Disability Accommodations:** It Is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information please go to http://www.ods.uno.edu [This section is quoted from mandated University language.]

**Grades:** In ENGL 2279, you will write five papers, each of which is worth 18% of the final grade. Participation counts for 10% of the final grade. Acceptable topics and due dates are indicated below. If none of the suggested topics inspires you, you may propose an alternative, but it must be approved in advance. Papers for 2279 should be approximately five pages (circa 1250 words) in length. One of the last two essays (i.e., on either Plato or Aristotle) must be a research paper. This paper does not have to be longer than the others, but it does have to demonstrate that you have done some research on the issues you are discussing. Operational definition: I will expect to see at least three pertinent, accurate, and well-integrated quotations from the secondary literature on Plato or Aristotle (that means relevant citations from three different books or articles in print—just being on the Internet is not enough). Note: This does not mean three quotations from the same source. Caution: Do not cite secondary literature to make trivial or obvious points easily seen from a casual inspection of the text.
Paper #1

The first paper will be due in our section meeting on Friday, 11 September.

1. Discuss Odysseus’ personality. What contradictory qualities make it up and how are these contradictions reconciled (if they are) by Homer’s art?

2. Who is responsible for what happens in the Odyssey? Odysseus? Zeus? Athena? Poseidon? Someone else? Discuss the case for various alternatives and do what you can to clarify, if not resolve, the question of “responsibility.”

3. What is the meaning of Odysseus’ wanderings?

4. What are Odysseus’ values and how do they differ (if they do) from “our” values? If you could meet Odysseus, and he could speak in English (as he conveniently does in our translation), what would the two of you talk about? Would you be able to understand each other?

5. Who is more “faithful”—Odysseus or Penelope? What is the meaning of fidelity in this work? Are these characters well suited to each other? How large a role does Penelope play in Odysseus’ motivation to return to Ithaka?

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Paper #2

Your second paper will be due on Monday, 25 September.

1. Why does Agamemnon step on the carpet? How does his character, as portrayed in the Odyssey (and the Iliad, if you have read that) prepare us for this action? Why does Aeschylus make this action so important?

2. “The Oresteia charts the progression of the Hellenic world from an irrational, dark, animalistic society of never-ending revenge, where retribution is in the hands of blood kin, to a fifth-century Athenian world, where justice is the prerogative and responsibility of a rational and enlightened city-state capable of liberating man from his animalistic condition.” Discuss, making detailed references to Aeschylus’ text.

3. Is there a single reason why Klutaimestra (= Clytemnestra) kills Agamemnon? If there is such a reason, identify it and support your claim with detailed references to the text. If there is not, explain what role her multiplicity of motives plays in Agamemnon. How do The Libation Bearers and The Eumenides affect our view of her character?

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Paper #3

Your paper on Antigone will be due on Monday, 2 October.

1. One of the features of Sophocles’ play that is surprising to a modern audience is the fact that it does not include a scene in which Antigone and Haimon speak together alone, before their deaths. Write this missing scene, making it consistent----as far as you can (not being Sophocles)—in style and especially in content, with the rest of the play.

2. Explain, in detail, why Antigone is better without a dialogue between Antigone and Haimon.

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Paper #4

Your essay on Plato will be due on Monday, 20 November.

1. Compare Sokrates’ attitude toward death, immortality, and the afterlife in the Apology with his attitude toward these things in the Phaedo. (What similarities and differences are there? What is the best explanation for the differences?)
2. Compare the doctrine of recollection in the *Meno* with what Plato says in the *Phaedo*.
3. Compare the theory of forms in the *Phaedo* with the search for essence in the *Euthyphro*.
4. Compare the account of immortality in the *Phaedo* with what Plato says about immortality in the *Symposium*. Explain the relevance of the theory of forms.
5. Compare Plato’s presentation of the theory of forms in the *Politeia* (that is, the *Republic*) with his presentation of that theory in the *Phaedo*.
6. Discuss Plato’s attitude toward women in the *Politeia*.
7. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Plato’s employment of the principle of specialization.
8. Summarize and evaluate Sokrates’ criticisms of Thrasymachus’ views in Book 1. What role do these criticisms/views play in the overall argument of the *Politeia*?
9. Does Plato’s argument in the *Politeia* (especially in Book 9) manage to establish that it is better to be just than to be unjust? Discuss.

**Paper #5**

*Your essay on Aristotle will be due on Friday, 4 December.*

1. Explain Aristotle’s theory of *akrasia* (“weakness of will”). What are the facts that need to be explained and how does Aristotle explain them? How successful is his account?
2. Discuss Aristotle’s criticisms of Plato’s theory of forms—especially the form of the Good. How would Plato defend his theory against Aristotle's criticisms? Who has the better case? Explain.
3. What differences are there, according to Aristotle, between the intellectual virtues (of thought) and the moral virtues (of character)? Are both virtues in the same sense?
4. Discuss the five “ways in which the soul grasps truth.” How do they differ? Are they all genuinely distinct?
5. Discuss the role of *phronesis* in Aristotle's theory.
6. Discuss Aristotle’s theory (or theories) of pleasure.