English & Drama
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

Instructor: Martin Revermann

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Course Number: DRE420H5F

Course Title: 20th-Century Responses to Greek Tragedy

Course description: Greek tragedy matters - not least because it continues to inspire top-notch artists of all kinds and from all cultural backgrounds to the present day. More Greek tragedy has been performed in the 20th century than at any point in history since Graeco-Roman antiquity. The main focus of this course will be on *how* (and, to a lesser extent, *why*) artists continue to respond so often and so interestingly to an art-form that is 2500 years old. It will turn out that tragedy's concern with the human condition, its reflections on gender-roles, its concern with politics and modes of social organization and, not least, its embeddedness in ritual have exerted an attraction that few of the greatest creative minds of the 20th century were able to resist.

The following artists will be discussed in detail: Brecht (*Antigone*), Beckett (*Play*), Grotowski (*Akropolis*), Peter Stein and Peter Hall (as the directors of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*), Steven Berkoff (*Greek*), Yukio Ninagawa (as the director of Euripides' *Medea*), Richard Schechner (*Dionysus in 69*), Tyrone Guthrie (as the director of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*) and Sarah Kane (*Phaedra's Love*).

The course is suitable for anyone with a keen interest in 20th-century theatre and cultural history. No Classics-background is required. The first sessions will take the form of a "crash course" on Greek tragedy which will bring anyone without prior knowledge of ancient Greek culture in its historical context up to speed. Reading material will be provided by the instructor.

Required Reading:
Poole, A. (2005), Tragedy: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford.

First Authors to be Studied: Aeschylus *Oresteia*, Sophocles *Antigone*, Sophocles *Oedipus the King*

Method of Instruction: Lecture/In-class discussion

Method of Evaluation: Participation: 20%; Mid-term: 20%; Paper: 30%; Final Exam: 30%