

## **Module 3**

### **For FLCL 271H (Classical Mythology: Honors Section)**

### **Viewing a Production of an Ancient Drama**

#### **Course**

Classical Mythology: Honors ■ FLCL 271H ■ 3 semester hours

The honors component of Classical Mythology is intended to give students a deeper understanding of the subject and its relationship to other academic areas such as art, music, and psychology. Each student must complete a project that involves reading one or more pieces of Ancient Greek and/or Roman literature in translation.

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#### **Module 3: Description**

This module gives students an opportunity to view a production of an Ancient Greek or Roman drama on a mythological subject through the use of a videocassette or DVD. It can also give students practice in various computer skills.

Many Ancient Greek and Roman myths are the subjects of dramas, especially of tragedies. Since the dramas were written for performance at religious festivals of the god Dionysus, students gain a deeper understanding of the plays when they see a performance. The availability of videocassettes and DVDs makes this quite easy.

As a mythology project, students must (1) read in translation an Ancient Greek or Roman drama, annotating as they read; (2) view a performance of the play; and (3) take part in the required discussions. All the students could read the same translation, or each could read a translation of his or her choice. To find a translation, the student may wish to search the school library's catalogue for a printed version or search the World Wide Web for an online version (see Module 1). Some sites allow printing. A good source for translations is the *Perseus Project* ([www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)). As the student reads, he or she notes personal reactions, questions about the text or about ancient culture, and similarities to other works of literature with which the student is familiar. The student must be careful to note the pages and/or lines to which he or she is referring. A device like a *C Pen* ([www.cpen.com](http://www.cpen.com)) that allows an individual to scan lines to be input into a computer is ideal for annotating since it allows immediate viewing of the passage being discussed. Students could annotate in the margins of books that they have purchased or in the margins of computer printouts of plays.

To create an annotation from an online text, the student would do the following:

- Open an online translation of the text in a word processor.
- Open a new, blank document in the word processor.
- Read through the translation; when a portion of interest is found, copy it onto the blank document. Italicize the copied portion.
- Add annotations to the blank document.

- Print out the document with copied text and annotations to hand in to the instructor or attach it in an e-mail.

When the students have finished the annotations, the teacher should read them, answer all questions, and comment on any misperception. Then, the students meet for a group discussion of their reactions and questions as well as of important themes in the play.

Next, with the class, view a video of the play (even better, attend a live performance if that is possible and affordable). The choice of the video version of the drama will depend largely on what is available in the school library's audiovisual collection or in the collection of a local public library. Videocassettes and CD-ROMs on subjects pertaining to classical studies can be rented or purchased from *Films for the Humanities & Sciences* ([www.films.com](http://www.films.com)). A production with little adaptation and with masked actors in period costumes affords the students the opportunity to experience ancient drama as closely as possible. An adapted production, especially one featuring the setting and clothing of another era, allows students to note changes from the ancient version.

Rather than viewing a video of the drama or in addition to seeing the video, the students could do readings from the play or put on their own production. Using a video camera, a student or the teacher could film the performance.

In connection with this unit of work, the students might enjoy viewing Woody Allen's comedy, *Mighty Aphrodite*, which features a chorus and employs several themes found in *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles.

### **Transferability**

This module could be used in a drama course. Since an Ancient Greek tragedy involves at least one major moral or ethical issue, the module could be used in an ethics class. For example, Sophocles' *Antigone* focuses on a belief of protesters throughout the ages—the right to engage in civil disobedience if one is following a higher law. In addition to or in place of readings, the students could be assigned to visit pertinent websites or to do an online search for such sites. Using the search engine Google, the student types in key words such as civil disobedience protesters. One link to legal resources is the public legal database *FindLaw* ([www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)). If the school library subscribes to either *Lexis-Nexis* or *Westlaw*, the teacher or student could request a librarian to do an online search on a particular legal question. Since *Antigone* features a woman who is acting against stereotype, the tragedy is often discussed in Women's Studies courses. An excellent online source for material on Ancient Greek and Roman women is *Diotima* ([www.stoa.org/diotima/](http://www.stoa.org/diotima/)).

### **Faculty Technology Skill**

- Ability to use videocassette player, DVD player, or film projector
- Ability to search the Internet

### **Student Technology Skill**

None for the basic module if there are no sessions in a language resource center.

**Faculty Equipment**

- Videocassette player, DVD player, or film projector
- Television set
- Computer (preferably with printer) with Internet access

**Student Equipment**

None for the basic module if there are no sessions in a language resource center.

**Student Activity Required**

Viewing the video (If there are sessions in the language resource center, various computer skills—depending on the assignments given—will be required.)

**Benefits of Technological vs. Traditional Presentation**

Without technology, students could only view a live presentation of a drama (ideal but often not possible). Using a videocassette player or DVD player and a television rather than a film projector makes the showing of films much easier. Still, viewing a film on a large screen in a theatre setting is more like being present at a live performance. If videos can be checked out of a school's collection or a library, each student or a group of students could view the video at a time of choice and meet only for the discussion session. In the case of a drama of which several different productions are available, different students could view different versions and report their reactions at the discussion session.

**Language Resource Center Usage**

In the language resource center, the students could be assigned to visit various websites that pertain either to Ancient Greek and Roman drama in general:

- [www.usask.ca/antharch/cnea/theater/bkgnd.html](http://www.usask.ca/antharch/cnea/theater/bkgnd.html)
- <http://didaskalia.berkeley.edu/stagecraft/greek.html>

or to a particular drama:

- [http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/study\\_guide/antigone.htm](http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/study_guide/antigone.htm)
- [www.temple.edu/classics/antigone.html](http://www.temple.edu/classics/antigone.html)

or to one of the themes of the drama (see “**Transferability . . .**” above). To determine what sites are currently available, the teacher will need to do an online search, using a general search engine, such as Google.com, or for more scholarly material, a specialized search engine such as the following:

- <http://Argos.evansville.edu/>
- [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)

If the teacher has his or her own website, he or she could create his or her own online study guide.

**Note:** If sessions in a language resource center are required, it may be necessary to add an extra class session each week to make sure that all of the basic course material is covered and in order to spend time helping students with technical problems. In addition, there is often a sizeable fee for the use of the language resource center.

### **Internet Resources**

*Perseus Project*

[www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)

*C Pen*

[www.cpen.com](http://www.cpen.com)

*FindLaw*

[www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)

*Diotima*

[www.stoa.org/diotima/](http://www.stoa.org/diotima/)

*Introductions to the Ancient Stage*

[www.usask.ca/antharch/cnea/theater/bkgnd.html](http://www.usask.ca/antharch/cnea/theater/bkgnd.html)

### **The World Wide Web**

*Introduction to Greek Stagecraft*

<http://didaskalia.berkeley.edu/stagecraft/greek.html>

*Antigone*

[http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/study guide/antigone.htm](http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/study_guide/antigone.htm)

*Antigone*

[www.temple.edu/classics/antigone.html](http://www.temple.edu/classics/antigone.html)

*Argos*

<http://Argos.evansville.edu>

*Films for the Humanities & Sciences*

[www.films.com](http://www.films.com)