

MUSI 4399 Independent Study Syllabus

Writing a Greek Play

Advisor/Instructor: Michael Ward

Term: Fall 2025 (15 weeks)

Credit Hours: 3

Meeting Schedule: Weekly check-ins (30–60 minutes) + ongoing email feedback

Deliverables: Research portfolio, creative journal, annotated scenes, full-length Greek-style play, final reflection

Course Description

This independent study allows the student to explore classical Greek drama through intensive reading, analysis, and creative adaptation. The student will study major Greek tragedies and comedies, analyze their structure, themes, and theatrical conventions, and apply these elements to write an original full-length play modeled on ancient Greek forms. The project emphasizes both academic research and creative writing.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze key elements of Greek tragedy and comedy.
 2. Demonstrate understanding of historical and cultural contexts of ancient Greek theatre.
 3. Apply classical dramatic structure (e.g., prologue, parodos, episodes, stasimon, exodus).
 4. Compose choral odes in appropriate poetic form.
 5. Develop complex characters and themes reflecting Greek dramatic tradition.
 6. Produce a complete original Greek-style play (~60-90 pages).
 7. Reflect critically on the creative and research process.
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Required Texts

- ❑ *The Complete Greek Tragedies* (Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus), ed. David Grene & Richmond Lattimore
- ❑ *The Poetics* by Aristotle
- ❑ *Aristophanes: The Complete Plays*

- Supplementary scholarly articles (provided by instructor or accessed through library databases)

Weekly Breakdown

| Week | Focus | Assignments / Activities |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Intro to Greek Theatre | Readings: Overview of Greek drama, Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> . Write 1-page reflection on initial ideas. |
| 2 | Greek Tragedy Structure | Read: <i>Oedipus Rex</i> . Annotate plot structure. Begin creative journal. |
| 3 | Themes & Character | Read: <i>Antigone</i> . Journal: explore a theme you might adapt. |
| 4 | The Chorus | Study chorus roles. Read: <i>Agamemnon</i> . Write sample choral ode. |
| 5 | Greek Comedy | Read: <i>Lysistrata</i> . Journal: consider incorporating comedic elements. |
| 6 | Myth & Adaptation | Choose myth(s) or invent one in Greek style. Submit synopsis of proposed play. |
| 7 | Scene Writing I | Begin first draft of prologue & parodos. Feedback from advisor. |
| 8 | Scene Writing II | Write Episode 1 + Stasimon. Submit for feedback. |
| 9 | Dramatic Irony & Conflict | Read: <i>The Bacchae</i> . Journal: analyze use of irony. Incorporate in draft. |
| 10 | Scene Writing III | Continue writing Episodes 2–3. Workshop ideas with advisor. |
| 11 | Structure & Flow | Focus on dramatic arc. Complete rough draft of full play. |
| 12 | Revising Choral Elements | Refine chorus odes. Add musical or poetic rhythm. |
| 13 | Staging Considerations | Reflect on masks, set, unity. Write staging notes. Begin polishing draft. |
| 14 | Final Draft Due | Submit completed full-length play. Include scene breakdown and character list. |
| 15 | Reflection & Presentation | 5-page reflection paper: process, research, evolution of ideas. Optional: table reading or presentation of select scenes. |

Assessment & Grading

| Component | Weight |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Reading & Annotations | 10% |
| Creative Journal | 15% |
| Myth Adaptation/Synopsis | 10% |

| Component | Weight |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Scene Drafts (with Feedback) | 25% |
| Final Play | 30% |
| Final Reflection | 10% |

Policies

- ☐ Weekly meetings are mandatory unless otherwise agreed.
- ☐ Drafts should be submitted on time for feedback.
- ☐ Originality is required. All source inspiration should be cited.
- ☐ The final play may be considered for submission to school festivals or competitions with advisor support.