Spring, 2003: POWR, 3020: TOPICS IN WRITING, sec. 064
TRAGIC DRAMA: OEDIPUS REX, ANTIGONE, HEDDA GABLER, A DOLL'S HOUSE

The aim of the course is to help you to write clearly, forcefully, and coherently, and to develop your skills in critical thinking. During this semester you'll write two full essays (one analysis, one argument) and several shorter assignments, first on the topic of Oedipus the King and Antigone, then on the Ibsen plays.

All your work should be typed. The class will be conducted mainly as a workshop where discussion will focus on the best ways to develop and improve paragraphs and papers overall. Be prepared to participate! One assignment will be writing critiques of your classmates' drafts, which will help you to become good constructive critics of your own work as well as that of your classmates. Shorter assignments, peer reviews and class participation make up one-third of your grade, and the two longer essays make up the remaining two-thirds.

Usually we’ll discuss the papers of one half of the class each session. As I’ll need to see your work in advance, you must hand it in before it’s scheduled to be discussed; i.e. if your work is to be discussed on Tuesday, put a copy in my mailbox in TB1 (Temporary Building, next to Clare) by Monday afternoon (3 P.M.) or early Tuesday and bring copies to class. If it is to be discussed on Thursday, hand a copy to me and the rest of the class on Tuesday. Leave plenty of time for making copies, as it’s essential not to distract the rest of the class by being late.

Please regard attendance as mandatory, since more than three unexcused absences (for any reason) will affect your final grade. If you must miss class because of extended illness, you'll need to provide medical evidence, and please let me know in advance if you need accommodation for religious observances. You can inform yourself about the honor code at www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode and about appropriate classroom behavior at www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html. In particular, be careful not to plagiarize the work of another student or another source; otherwise, you could fail the course. I encourage you to consult with me in my office hours on Tu/Th, 11 - 12.20, in TB1, room 9 (ext. 3821). Should you need to contact me outside these hours, you can call me at 443-9717, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., and leave a message there rather than on the office voice mail. You can also e-mail me at hallj123@juno.com, rather than using the campus e-mail address. Students who need academic accommodations because of disabilities should provide me with a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible. You can contact them in Willard 322, at 303-492-8641, or access www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

WHAT YOU NEED
A notebook, which you should bring, with the text we're working on, to class time every time, for taking notes and for in-class writing assignments.

Occasions (student essays); view online at at www.colorado.edu/pwr/occasions
Diane Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000)

I recommend the movie version of Antigone (1988), and of Hedda Gabler (1980), both in Norlin.
Week 1 (Jan 11 - 13)
Introduction to the course and discussion of Oedipus the King (Worksheet provided)
Jan 13: Hand in answer (1-2 pages) to a question on the Worksheet.

Week 2 (Jan 18 - 20)
Jan 18: Continue discussion of Oedipus the King, also in relation to Aristotle's definitions of tragedy.
Jan 20: Assignment on critical interpretation of the play (handout supplied for guidance on constructing opening paragraphs).

Week 3 (Jan 25 - 27)
Jan 25: Continue to workshop assignment on critical interpretation of Oedipus the King; begin discussion of Antigone.
Jan 25: Hand in 1-2 page answer to one of the questions on the Worksheet on Antigone.

Week 4 (Feb 1 - 3)
Feb 3: Hand in revised version of Week 3's assignment, plus your original version (for a grade).

Weeks 5 - 9 (Feb 8 - March 10)
Workshop the first paper (ANALYSIS). Beginning with the opening paragraph, develop your own analysis (an interpretation with a strong thesis) of a particular issue arising from our discussion of tragedy. For this paper, you may concentrate exclusively on Oedipus the King or Antigone as the text for analysis, or develop a thesis that encompasses both plays. You might, for example, analyze the function of the Chorus in one or both of the plays, or compare the role of tragic determinism (the impact of circumstances outside the control of the protagonist) in the two plays.
Feb 10: Hand in the revised version of Week 4's assignment, plus your original version.

March 15: Hand in 1-2 page answer to one of the questions on the Worksheet on Hedda Gabler.
March 17: Analysis paper due (two copies).

SPRING BREAK

March 29--Hand in 1-2 page answer to one of the questions on the Worksheet to A Doll's House.
March 29--Discuss the first part of A Doll's House and strategies and topics for ARGUMENT.
March 31--Continue discussion of A Doll's House and the argument paper. You may concentrate on Hedda Gabler or A Doll's House for this paper, or compare one of these plays with Antigone (or Oedipus the King). Choose a controversial topic and be sure to deal with counterarguments. One possible topic would be to argue that A Doll's House is as much a tragedy as a play about social issues; that Hedda and Nora are too self-centered to qualify as tragic heroes, or that Nora faces a tragic predicament as significant as that of Antigone.

Weeks 12 - 15 (Apr 5 - 28)
Continue to workshop the argument paper. This replaces a final exam; two copies must be handed in on or before noon on Monday, May 2.
As you revise and add to your papers, please attach the immediately preceding draft to the copy of the new version that you give to me.
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http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/