

**CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY**  
**University Honors Program**  
**One University Drive**  
**Orange, CA 92866**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Spring 2022**

**Email:** [alafouzos@chapman.edu](mailto:alafouzos@chapman.edu)

**Course Number:** HON-329-01

**Classroom:** Doti Hall Seminar Room 105

**Course Title:** Antigone and I

**Time:** Tu Th 2:30 PM – 3:45

**Credits:** 3

**Course Description**

This course is structured as a series of seminars and takes both a theoretical and a practical approach to *Antigone*. It aims to survey Sophocles' masterpiece through the ages and starts with a script analysis, the basis of which is Socrates' famous quotation, "All I know is that I know nothing."

In today's changing world, it is more vital than ever that both young artists and individuals build emerging voices that are strong, critical, inspiring, and confident. *Antigone and I* aims for students to achieve just this as they become more familiar with a holistic process that is not just plainly intellectual, but one that evokes the senses, emotions, and instincts that will aid in a meaningfully exploration of the inner connections in the play. And then, when the understanding of the play increases, to bring the insight gained so as to not only live authentically but also to bring that understanding to personal creative expression be it through acting, telling a story, or directing a play or a film.

In addition to its focus on strengthening students' ability to analyze *Antigone* and interpret it in the light of past, present and possible future criticism-, the course will also assist in helping students develop their awareness of the political dimension within an artistic work and the power of the message within it.

Above all, students will gain not only a powerful insight and understanding of the Sophocles' play but attain both the theoretical and practical tools to become wise observers, inspiring thinkers, fulfilled artists and successful professionals.

## Learning Outcomes

### 1. GE Learning outcomes

- a. Artistic Inquiry (7AI): Students compose critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a Baccalaureate/pre-professional level.
- c. Social Inquiry (7SI): Students explore processes by which human beings develop social and/or historical perspectives.
- d. Values and Ethical Inquiry (7VI): Students articulate how values and ethics inform human understanding, structures and behavior.

### 2. Program and Course Learning Outcomes

- a. The ability to develop critical thinking and approach with an open mind both the philosophical and ethical issues that arise from *Antigone*.
- b. Explore both authenticity and personal responsibility within the play and, by extension, within one's own life as well.
- c. To critically understand and explore the cultural diversity of the political and social context of the drama and approach the ethical, political, moral and personal issues from an array of ethnic, gender, cultural, national, and global perspectives.
- d. To creatively develop one's use of fantasy, creativity, instinct, impulse, and emotions through studying the text and acquiring practical tools and methods.
- e. Develop public speaking and communication skills by expressing your own views and interpretations of the material studied and through improvisation, scene study, readings and the interpretive performing of scenes.
- f. Improve skills in creative writing, acting, filming, reading, analyzing, and appreciating literature.
  - Students will be given the opportunity to stage a scene for class or film a scene from *Antigone* outside of class time performed by fellow students. Other students will be assigned to adapt part of the play either in prose, stage play or screenplay format.
- g. Explore the contribution of ancient Greek drama to human culture and modern thought.

## Course Content

The course will take both a theoretical and practical approach in exploring the play.

*Theoretically*, the course will examine several facets of the play and aims to provide understanding and explanation of its enduring appeal as one of the greatest Greek tragedies. Such aspects covered include:

- A script analysis of the play.
- An exploration of the meaning and reception of the play through the ages: What did it mean when it was written? How has the play been interpreted at various times? How did audiences receive the play when it was performed? How has it been received in the modern age?
- Contemporary audience reception of the play today: a consideration of the how the play might be received in various countries each with their own unique culture
- Does our modern viewpoint change the way we conceptualize the morality of the play?
- How do actors and directors 'make the play their own' to reflect the times they are living in? How might this influence the actor in their portrayal of Antigone or Creon, for example?
- What does it mean today for the Chorus to say, "I'm having my own doubts about the laws of the land and I no longer restrain a stream of tears when I see Antigone here passing to the room where we all go in the end." What have these words meant at different times in history?
- An exploration of some of the various thematic interpretations of the play. Like any masterwork Sophocles' play is open to multifarious interpretations that will be examined and discussed through the length of the course such as:
  - the fearless journey of a powerful woman who defies state orders and follows what her heart feels is ethical and right
  - the notion of unwritten divine laws versus laws decreed by human governance
  - the story of a sister who values devotion to duty and honoring her dead brothers more than her own life
  - age and 'wisdom' versus youth and the questioning of the accepted order
  - fighting for what the individual believes and thinks is the ethically correct thing to do even though it opposes the law of the state
  - the power of courage and conviction in the face of tragic fate
  - the tragedy of remaining steadfast to one's firmly held opinions when facing "Fate's razor's edge"

The *practical workshop* will follow the script analysis of *Antigone* and be integrated with the theoretical exploration of the play. It will include the following:

- Students will practically explore the main characters of the play through improvisation, readings, scene study, and the interpretive performing of scenes.
- In selected scenes students will be asked to write their own adaptation of one of the play's characters, thus making it more personal and relevant to them. In the first part of the adaptation process they will work individually and then in the second part in collaboration with a scene partner. The final adaptation will be presented in class, as a reading, performance or filmed.

- In the next stage the same students will present the same scene, based on a translation from the original text.

Students will also examine and explore the importance of the Chorus in ancient Greek plays and be asked to form a Chorus group, exploring the Chorus content of *Antigone* that relates to the scenes worked on during the course.

### **Required Texts**

Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: 'Antigone', 'Oedipus the King', 'Oedipus at Colonus'*. Penguin Classics (Translated by Robert Fagles)

Sophokles, *Antigone*. Oberon Modern Plays (Translated by Anne Carson)

Jean Anouilh, *Antigone*. (Any translation)

The Burial of Thebes: A Version of Sophocles' Antigone by Seamus Heaney

### **Instructional Strategies**

The course is not only aimed at theater, film, creative writing or English Literature students but also for anyone who is willing to discover their creativity, new talents and ideas.

The class will be structured as a seminar but has been developed as both a theoretical academic course and a practical workshop. Short lectures will mostly be used to introduce the theoretical agenda of the class, to inspire conversations, ask questions, and express opinions. Students' active participation is vital, especially during the practical parts of the course.

### **Course Requirements**

**Class attendance:** Due to the collaborative practical nature of the course, class participation is vital and you are expected to attend all sessions.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is given through the following:

Class participation

A written mid-term assignment based on the various perspectives of the play covered in the lessons.

A practical assignment will also be given using an extract from the play in the form of either a written stage play or screenplay adaptation, staging, or filming.

A final paper based on both the theoretical and practical aspects of the course.

The final presentation of their practical assignments

## **Course Program**

The course will run from February 1 to May 14, 2022

- February 1    Introductions  
                  Class members introduce themselves  
                  Brief introduction to the course  
                  Review Syllabus: Expectations of the course
- February 3    Script Analysis
- February 8    Script Analysis
- February 10   Script Analysis
- February 15   Script Analysis
- February 17   Assignments for reading, acting, writing and filming of the scenes between Antigone and Creon and Creon with Haemon. First in class scene readings.
- February 22   Exploration of the meaning and reception of the play through the ages.
- February 24   Examination of the cultural diversity of the political and social context of the drama and approaching the ethical, political, moral and personal issues from an array of ethnic, gender, cultural, national, and global perspectives.
- March 1        Performing Antigone. A practical analysis of selected scenes for improvisation and discussion.
- March 3        Antigone in Film. An examination of how Antigone has been interpreted in cinema.
- March 8        Existential Antigone: Authenticity and Personal Responsibility within the play and in life. (I)
- March 10      Existential Antigone: Authenticity and Personal Responsibility within the play and in life. (II)
- March 15      The Chorus and its role in the play.  
                  Creation of the chorus group to work on the “Hymn to Eros” text. and improvisation.
- March 17      First evaluation: Presentation of assignments.

March 22	Spring Break
March 24	Spring Break
March 29	'Antigone and I' (I): an exploration through theatrical games and role play of Antigone's relevance to us and how we choose to lead our lives.
March 31	'Antigone and I' (II) : Using a selected passage or quotation from the play, participants give a short presentation, applying their chosen extract to their own lives or within a wider social or political context.
April 5	Presentation of the personal adaptation. Critique and class discussion.
April 7	Presentation of the personal adaptation. Critique and class discussion.
April 12	The Gender Politics of <i>Antigone</i> - Gender Essentialism and the play's contribution to feminist politics and empowerment.
April 14	'Acting Antigone': Interpreting roles from an actor's perspective using selected passages from the play through improvisation and with attention to body position and voice placement.
April 19	Exploration of some of the various thematic interpretations of the play.
April 21	<i>Antigone</i> and modern politics. A consideration of how the play might be received in various countries with their unique cultures and histories.
April 26	The Chorus – 'Hymn to Eros' – Working as a team: personal contribution in collaborative efforts – Exploring the presentation with instructor guidance.
April 28	The Chorus – 'Hymn to Eros' – Working as a team: personal contribution in collaborative efforts – Exploring the presentation with instructor guidance.
May 3	Antigone through the eye of an observer: the whole picture versus 'a look through a lens.' A summing up for its differing interpretations and perspectives.
May 5	Presentation of assignments: readings, performance, video. Discussion and critique
May 10	Presentation of assignments: readings, performance, video. Discussion and critique
May 12	Final presentation of assignments.

Prepared by: Sokratis Alafouzos, August 2021

Last revised: Sokratis Alafouzos, January 2022