Battle of the Sexes: love, desire, and war on the stage and beyond.

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The theme of love is possibly one of the oldest in world literature. This course examines the ways this theme has been manifested on the stage and in poetry, spanning the period from antiquity to today. From the classics onwards, what we may today consider as primarily a private expression and activity transpires as deeply embedded in broader historical and political narratives. The course looks at the constitutive relationships between private desire and public politics. The family unit and all its multiple manifestations acts as a microcosm that at once mirrors but also challenges dominant power structures. The relationships between the genders, between siblings, between parents and children all provide a fertile ground that helps to shape our personal subjectivity, but also our civic identity. This course looks at the ways great plays and poems have approached the theme of love in both its private and public dimensions, and also examines the formal and aesthetic experiments that resulted from this engagement. Authors covered will include: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, W. B. Yeats, and Tony Kushner.

Learning Objectives: students will develop

- Knowledge of the ways this theme features in the different genres covered
- An awareness of theatrical styles and conventions
- An awareness of poetic forms
- Different writing and communication skills
- An awareness of how themes and forms feature through different chronological periods

Mode of Delivery: each class will combine the following:

- Brief lecture
- Group discussion
- Group presentations
- Group activities
- Close readings
- Short Clips from performances

Assessment:

1. A short written assignment. 3-4 pages, early March, 30%
2. Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, after Mid-term break, 20%
3. Final written assignment or portfolio. 10-12 pages (3,000 words), end of term, 40%
4. Class participation / Group presentations, 10%
Office Hours: 2 hours weekly or by arrangement with student.

Weekly Syllabus.

Each week will require 100 pages of reading (approx.) Students are required to read all plays listed in the Syllabus.

Unit 1: Weeks 1-4: Happy Families

  Week 1: Introduction
  Week 2: Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House*
  Week 3: August Strindberg, *Miss Julie*
  Week 4: Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*

Unit 2: Weeks 5-9: Love, War and Empire

  Week 5: Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*
  Week 6: Sophocles, *Ajax*
  Week 7: Euripides, *Medea*
  Week 8: Spring Break
  Week 9: W. B. Yeats, ‘Leda and the Swan’ (1928),
          Judith Kazantzis, ‘Queen Klytemnestra’.
          Poems to be distributed in class.

Unit 3: Weeks 10-12: Brothers and Sisters/ Sons and Daughters

  Week 10: Sophocles, *Antigone*
  Week 11: Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*
  Week 12: Anton Chekhov, *Three Sisters*

Unit 4: Weeks 12-15: Queer Love

  Week 13: Tony Kushner, *Angels in America Part I*
Week 14: Tony Kushner, *Angels in America Part II*

Week 15: Revisions / Conclusions

All editions of the plays are acceptable; for the Greek plays please select a recent translation.

**Disability Disclosure Statement:** Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

- **Academic integrity and plagiarism statement.** The recommended statement is as follows:

  **Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating (adapted from the website of the College of Arts & Science, [https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html](https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html):**

  Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).

OLGA TAXIDOU is Professor of Drama and Performance Studies at the University of Edinburgh, and since 2015 she has been a Visiting Professor in Hellenic Studies at NYU every spring semester. She works on the relationships between “the ancients and the moderns” and the ways this dialogue has helped shape modernity. She has written extensively on modernist theatre and on theories of tragedy. Her books include *The Mask: A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig; Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning*; and *Modernism and Performance: Jarry to Brecht*. She has co-edited *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents; The Edinburgh Dictionary of Modernism; Post-War Cinema and Modernity*. She is Series Editor of the *Edinburgh Critical Studies in Modernism, Drama and Performance*. She also writes adaptations of Greek tragedies, some of which have been performed.