

Introduction to Drama: First Essay Assignment

Due Tuesday, February 25, by the beginning of class on WesternOnline. Length: approximately five double-spaced pages. Please speak to me, or email, if you have questions about document design (i.e., margins and other format issues), or about how to meet the length requirement without padding.

Gender in Greek Tragedy



Clytemnestra Kills Cassandra, c. 430 B.C.E.

Choose one female or male character from one of the Greek tragedies we've read. Drawing on specific passages from the play, analyze how the character's gender is articulated by the character herself or himself, by other characters, and by the structure of the play. If the character breaks with gender norms, is that transgression celebrated, heroicized, punished, condemned, or met in some mixed way? If the character conforms to gender norms, how does the play treat that conformity?

In defining classical Greek gender norms, you are welcome to draw from the other plays from Aristotle, and/or from Freud, though you may find all you need in the play you've chosen.

Your task is not to provide a comprehensive reading of the play, but to create a thesis-driven argument about how gender is articulated through one of its characters.

Always imagine an intelligent reader who may have no knowledge of our class and no special understanding of drama; in other words, write for a general audience. You are welcome to elaborate your personal reactions to the play, but keep in mind that opinions do not replace interpretation.

I would rather that you *not* use outside sources to write this essay because you'll learn more if you do it all by yourself. But if you must consult an outside source—be it Wikipedia, a website, a critical article, or something else—you have to document it properly, in order to avoid plagiarism. I have not taught you how to do this; so if you don't know how, you will need to speak with me directly.