

GREEK DRAMA: ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Write an
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Write an analytic essay on one of the following topics **or** choose one of your journal entries to develop into a longer paper (approved by me):

1. How is the conflict between personal morality and public morality resolved? Explore this question by examining the characters that emphasize personal morality and public morality. What are their positions? What is the result of their debate?
2. What happens when tradition and the rule of law conflict with the practice of religion? Examine how this question assumes flesh in *Antigone*. How do the characters personify this conflict? How is this conflict addressed in the play?
3. Write an essay discussing the tragic character in *Antigone* or *Oedipus Rex*. Begin by explaining which character you believe to be tragic and give examples to support your position. Consider these questions in writing your essay: What defines the tragic character? What is tragic about the character and how does that aspect of the character affect the outcome of the play? How does the concept of Fate affect the tragic character's actions?
4. "Conceit is incompatible with understanding." Leo Tolstoy. Write an essay in which you relate this quote to the themes in *Antigone* or *Oedipus Rex*. Which characters demonstrate this quality? What effect does it have? How does one reach real understanding?
5. In *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus is the individual who both causes and then removes the curse in Thebes. In *Antigone*, Antigone challenges the governance of society even when others refuse to help her. What are these plays saying about the role of the individual in the fate of society? How does the individual affect the larger community?
6. Blindness is a motif in both of *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*. Show how this motif is woven through the fabric of the drama and how it is related to the concept of irony. What role does perspective play in the outcome of these tragedies?

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Your paper can be longer than a standard five paragraph essay, containing an introductory paragraph with clear thesis statement, a body (at least three paragraphs) that includes textual support of your points (quotations from the text), and a concluding paragraph that summarizes the discussion of your paper as well as exploring the implications of that discussion.

Your essay should have a title and you should follow the physical format as described in *The Pingry Manual of Style*. Please email the final draft of your essay to me. You must write a note at the end of your essay indicating that you have reviewed my comments on your last analytic essay and have made corrections in this essay. This will be worth a third of a letter grade.

Do not consult or cite outside sources for this paper. I am interested in your interaction with the texts.

Due dates:

Introductory paragraph and topic sentences:

Revised introduction / body paragraph:

Final draft: