Tragedy Project

CLA 278 Tragedy and Catharsis

**Assignment**

Compose and perform an original Athenian-style tragedy for our time. That is, write and present a play or scene from a play that follows the genre rules for Attic tragedy and that participates in a contemporary discourse.

**Purpose**

The assignment is designed to help you figure out how tragedies work through creativity and emulation, rather than through analysis and argument. Since most of our sources, and certainly all plays, were originally designed to be encountered in a spoken format, as well, the project provides an experience of performance on many levels. Finally, the best way to appreciate how flexible Greek myth can be is to craft a version of one yourself.

**Practical Advice and Details**

I recommend assigning specific tasks to group members, perhaps an organizer who arranges meetings and keeps everyone on track, a couple or three writers, and a director who is in charge of the performance. Everyone will evaluate their own contribution to the group, as well and the work of other members (see evaluation guidelines below).

A work of written script should be submitted on the day of your performance with the name of every group member. Performances should be about 15-20 minutes. Actors do not have to memorize their lines- scripts can be used, but a smooth delivery is important. Costumes are not required, but may be useful in creating the desired effects and keeping characters straight for the audience.

**Evaluation**

Your grade for the tragedy project will be a combination of your contribution to the team and the quality of the performance and script.

Criteria for evaluation the performance and script include how well the genre rules of Attic tragedy are observed, selection and creative use of the myth or myths, clarity and insightfulness of the exploration of a contemporary issue, and success of the performance.

Your grade for group work will be based on a self-evaluation and a set of peer-evaluations.

**These are due in class the first day after the groups perform.**

*Self-evaluation*

Describe your participation in the project. Identify your role in the group, and spend a page discussing and evaluation, in specific and concrete detail, the contribution you made to your group’s project. Describe the things you did well, and also describe the areas in which you could have done better. At the conclusion of your self evaluation, give yourself a score on your participation in this project, using the following guidelines:

5 extraordinary; far exceed the basic requirements for group work

4 good work; met the basic expectation

3 met some obligation, but let the group down in other ways

2 fell below the basic requirements for group work, but participated in someway

*Peer-Evaluation*

Write the name of each member of your group, and beneath each person’s name identify their role and provide three to four sentences describing in more detail their participation in and contribution to the project. Provide each person a score using the above criteria.