**Syllabus**

**CLAS 294-02: Trauma and Drama (First-Year Course)**

**Dr. Brian V. Lush (Writing Assistant Lanie Kohn)**

**Fall 2017**

Course Time: TR 9:40 – 11:10 AM Instructor Office Hours: Thursday 1:45 – 3:15 PM

Location: Old Main 003 Friday 9:00 – 10:30 AM

Contact Information: Old Main 316

(651) 696-6820

blush@macalester.edu

Statement of Intention and Learning Goals:

This course will draw upon a powerful array of ancient Greek poetry and modern perspectives in order to foster an open-minded, empathetic engagement with traumatic experience. We will use rich Greek texts as a lens to approach modern psychological injury, as well as deploying modern observations and narratives that will provide a crucial point of entry to the challenging works of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

The texts and performances that we absorb and discuss will be difficult, not only in their unfamiliar contexts and literary styles, but in their direct confrontation with violence, injury and psychic turmoil. You will be asked (even expected) to attempt to understand (intellectually and, as far as possible, emotionally) the challenges and agonies of unfamiliar people, many of whom impose violence on others in addition to suffering catastrophic injuries themselves. Your core beliefs about justice and basic fairness may be challenged, and it is the course instructor’s sincere hope that this experience will provide a basis for humanely responding to others’ pain and suffering.

As a first-year course at Macalester College, this class will also seek to familiarize you with the College’s many resources and opportunities. Invited panels, class visits and lectures by guest speakers will therefore be frequent occurrences.

Stated categorically, our learning goals will be:

1) pursuit of an empathetic and transferable understanding of traumatic experience, in both

ancient Greek texts and in modern narratives of combat injury

2) building a basic familiarity with Greek tragedy through rich course discussion, focused

reading and an array of composition assignments

3) honing your ability to formulate and convey your ideas in writing

4) introduction to the academic, professional and support services and resources available at the

College

Course Texts:

Doerries, Bryan. 2016. *The Theater of War: What Greek Tragedy Can Teach Us Today*. Vintage.

O’Brien. Tim. *The Things They Carried*.

Homer. *Iliad*. translated by Richmond Lattimore. U Chicago Press.

Shay, Jonathan. 1994. *Achilles in Vietnam*.

Volumes from *The Complete Greek Tragedies* series published by University of Chicago Press:

*Aeschylus I: The Persians, The Seven Against Thebes, The Suppliant Maidens,*

*Prometheus Bound* (2013)

*Euripides III: Heracles, The Trojan Women, Iphigenia among the Taurians, Ion* (2013)

*Sophocles II: Ajax, The Women of Trachis, Electra, Philoctetes, The Trackers* (2013)

McLaughlin, Ellen. 2011. *Ajax in Iraq*. New York.

Composition of Course Grade:

Preparation and Participation: 35%

MacVitae Pilot Project: 5%

Reflection Dialogue: 5%

Paragraph Assignment: 5%

1st Essay Draft: 5%

Annotated Bibliography: 5%

Peer-Review Essay: 5%

Final Essay: 15%

Collaborative Performance Project: 20%

Course Policy around Attendance, Lateness and Absences:

Unexcused absences and lateness are disruptive and inconsiderate, and therefore cannot be a part of our course. Learning in the college classroom is not done individually, but dialogically, in groups whose participants contribute to their peers’ engagement with the course material. Your active participation is a necessary component of our course, and we cannot succeed in the above-stated goals without your consistent and earnest contribution.

Lateness (even a minute or two) will result in loss of participation credit for the day. Two instances of lateness will constitute an absence. Since our course meets only twice a week, each absence results in missing a significant portion of the course, and for this reason three unexcused absences may result in a failing grade (an “NC” or “no credit”) for this class. On evenings when course events are planned, you will be expected to attend just as if it were a regular course meeting, unless circumstances rigidly preclude you from attending (in which case, you must consult the course instructor well in advance). *Leaving early for holidays will not be counted as an excused absence and will furthermore be frowned upon by the course instructor.* Course meetings before Fall Break, Thanksgiving and Winter Break are just as important as our other meetings, and you should therefore plan to attend them.

Unless it’s absolutely necessary, please do not leave the room during class, since this can disrupt the flow of productive discussion and generally seems dismissive of the efforts and contributions of others in our class. Likewise, eating during class is not appropriate, since it is noisy, often messy, distracting and potentially disruptive to our work. Drinks (and especially coffee) are, however, welcome in our class, and you will rarely see your course instructor without a cup of coffee in hand.

Course Accommodations for Wellness, Disabilities and Individual Challenges:

I am committed to ensuring access to course content for students.  Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities.  Contact the Disability Services Office at (651) 696-6874 to schedule an appointment and discuss your individual circumstances.  It is important to meet as early in the semester as possible; this will ensure that your accommodations can an implemented early on. The Director of Disability Services, Allie Quinn, coordinates services for students seeking accommodations.

Course Discussion and Preparing for Class:

I expect you to be active readers and, when reading course assignments, to take notes upon which you will draw during our course discussions. To this end, I will post “reading prompts” on our course’s Moodle site for use in guiding your preparation for class and making your reading productive. Although I’d like our course discussions to progress organically and to be informed by your interests, we will draw upon the topics addressed in the reading prompts as we work collaboratively through the course material.

I fully understand that individuals have distinct learning and participation styles, and for this reason I will not be keeping a tally or a numerical record of when you speak up. Instead, I will attempt to track the quality and substance of your contributions to discussion, on the understanding that you will make a sincere and consistent effort to take part in and elevate our course discussions. If I’d like you to make a change in your contributions, we’ll meet for a positive, low-stakes chat about strategies for participating more effectively.

You will be expected to bring to class your notes and all texts relevant to the day’s discussion. Without textual evidence, we can have no dialogue nor can we responsibly generate ideas. We will not occupy a text-less ether filled with meaningless platitudes and aimless musings. Rather, we will work together as scholars, collaboratively anchoring our discussion in the text.

Finally, remember that this is *your* course as much as it is mine and your classmates’. Ultimately, the success of our efforts rests with you – your willingness to challenge yourself to articulate your ideas, your sincere and thorough preparation for course meetings, and your decision to leave your comfort zone in adding your ideas and observations to our collective dialogue. Your instructor’s role is not to tell you what to think or reduce your learning to an aggregation of facts, but rather to facilitate productive discussion and to provide a course structure in which we can reach our shared goals.

Policy regarding Technology in the Classroom:

Unless you have an academic accommodation that requires the use of technology in the classroom, you will be expected to take notes the old-fashioned way – by hand. Screens, in your instructor’s experience, can be a tempting distraction and in the case of our day-to-day discussions will do little to enhance your individual experience in class. If you wish to have a digital record of our course discussion, the recursive practice of transcribing hand-written notes into a digital format can be a useful way of revisiting course discussions and processing your ideas.

Opportunities for Student Reflective Practice:

Each student will be required to lead the class in at least one brief reflective discussion. An important consequence of the work that we will do this semester is a heightened awareness of the world around us, and it is incumbent upon socially engaged Humanists to attempt to understand their place and time better. For this activity, you may draw upon a respected and legitimate media venue (for example, National Public Radio, *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*); or material from another of your Macalester courses; or another aspect of your life at the College. You will select a topic, text, image or experience relevant to the course material and lead us in a ten- to fifteen-minute reflective discussion of how what we’re learning in our course can shed light on your subject. Each of you will be required to lead one reflective dialogue this semester. However, a second voluntary reflection will earn you an extra two points on your final grade for the course. Before you undertake leading a reflective dialogue, you must consult with the course instructor at least a few days in advance, in order to get instructor feedback and to allow the relevant material to be distributed to the rest of the class. Only one student may lead a reflection per course meeting, and permission to do so will be granted on a first come, first served basis.

Schedule of Assignments and College-Wide Deadlines:

Friday, Sept. 1 – first FYC meeting – introduction to course and advising – brief

discussion of Doerries, Prologue and Chapter 1 (“Learning through Suffering”)

Monday, Sept. 4 – first day of fall 2017 courses at Macalester College

Tuesday, Sept. 5 – Homer, *Iliad* 1, 6, 9

Thursday, Sept. 7 – Homer, Iliad 16, 21, 22, 24

visit from Denise Ward (Macalester Health and Wellness Center)

Tuesday, Sept. 12 – Shay, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

academic integrity and scholarly ethics primer – Ginny Moran-

Heinrich (Library) – **begin independent work on on-line assignment about scholarly resources**

Thursday, Sept. 14 – Shay, Chapters 3, 5 and 8

Friday, Sept. 15 – last day to register or validate

last day to add/drop/audit a class

Tuesday, Sept. 19 – Shay, Chapters 9-11

Thursday, Sept. 21 – Sophocles, *Philoctetes*

Meineck, Peter. 2012. “Combat Trauma and the Tragic Stage:

‘Restoration’ by Cultural Catharsis.” *Intertexts* 16.1: 7-24. (available on Moodle)

Tuesday, Sept. 26 – Sophocles, *Ajax*

Doerries, Chapter 2 (“PTSD Is from BC”)

Thursday, Sept. 28 – Euripides, *Trojan Women*

**1st draft of paragraph assignment due** – “Write Well” video and

discussion (Brian Lush on topic sentences)

Friday, Sept. 29 – last day to designate a grading option

Tuesday, Oct. 3 – library session with Ginny Moran-Heinrich – bibliography-

building workshop

Thursday, Oct. 5 – Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*

Doerries, Chapter 3 (“Prometheus in Solitary”)

Tuesday, Oct. 10 – Euripides, *Heracles*

**final draft of paragraph assignment due**

Thursday, Oct. 12 – Doerries, Chapter 4 (“Heracles in Hospice”) and Epilogue

visit from Brad DeLong (trauma therapist at North Memorial

Hospital) (possible evening course meeting)

Tuesday, Oct. 17 – Euripides, *Medea*

Thursday, Oct. 19 – Lush, Brian. 2012. “Combat Trauma and Psychological Injury in

Euripides’ *Medea*.” *Helios* 41.1: 25-57.

**annotated bibliography for research essay due**

Thursday, Oct. 19 (**evening**) – attendance of Ten Thousand Things Theater production

of Euripides’ *Electra* (Indigenous Roots Cultural Arts Center)

Monday, Oct. 23 (**evening**) – Michelle Hensley (founder and director of Ten

Thousand Things Theater) campus visit and lecture

Tuesday, Oct. 24 – Gaca, Kathy. 2011. “Girls, Women, and the Significance of Sexual

Violence in Ancient Warfare.” In Elizabeth D. Heineman. *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights*. University of Pennsylvania Press. 73-88 and 273-276.

Tuesday becomes Thursday for Fall Break week

Thursday, Oct. 26 – no class meeting – Fall Break

Tuesday, Oct. 31 – “Write Well” videos and discussion (Beth Severy-Hoven on

revision, Brian Lush on thesis statements)

**initial draft of research essay due**

Thursday, Nov. 2 – Sophocles, *Women of Trachis*

Friday, Nov. 3 – last day to withdraw from a class

Tuesday, Nov. 7 – **peer-review essays due** – small-group discussion of drafts with

help from the MAX Center

visit from Jayne Niemi (Macalester College Registrar)

Thursday, Nov. 9 (**evening**) – no class meeting – evening viewing of *The Hurt Locker*

(dir. Kathryn Bigelow)

Monday, Nov. 13 – Friday, Dec. 1 – Spring 2018 Registration – **schedule a meeting with your**

**academic adviser in advance of registering**

Tuesday, Nov. 14 – discussion of *The Hurt Locker*

Thursday, Nov. 16 – one-on-one check-ins with course instructor about research essays

Tuesday, Nov. 21 – Ellen McLaughlin, *Ajax in Iraq*

Thursday, Nov. 23 – no class meeting – Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, Nov. 28 – **completed Research Essays due in hard copy at beginning of**

**class**

introduction to performance project – visits from Chris McDonald-

Dennis (Department of Multicultural Life) and Ginny

Moran-Heinrich (Library) on humanely and respectfully

representing others’ experiences

Thursday, Nov. 30 – Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

visit from Michael Porter (Internships Program), Jody Emmings

(Entrepreneurship) and Kate Larson (Career Development Center)

Tuesday, Dec. 5 – Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

visit from Kelsey Schultz and Bo-Sung Kim (Office for Study

Away)

Thursday, Dec. 7 – Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Tuesday, Dec. 12 – in-class group reflection of impact of the course

Performance Project collaboration

Wednesday, Dec. 13 – last day of classes for fall 2017 semester

Saturday, Dec. 16 – **Performance Projects** – 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM – Weyerhaeuser

Memorial Chapel

Saturday, Dec. 16 – Wednesday, Dec. 20 – Final Examination Period