

Classical Civilisation Bridging Unit

Most important is that you have a good holiday and return rested, refreshed and ready for what will be a full-on year of academic study. Nonetheless, to ensure that you hit the ground running, please complete these three simple tasks –

1. There are four set texts you will need for the course. You will write notes in these, so must possess your own copy. It is probably cheapest and quickest to buy them online. If you genuinely cannot afford them, have your parents/guardians apply to the school hardship fund – some money will probably be available for you. Alternatively, find us and we will be able to squirrel up a second-hand copy. One way or another, have these texts:

- ‘Oedipus the King’, translation by Fagles, in *The Three Theban Plays*, Penguin, ISBN-13: 978-0140444254
- ‘Bacchae’ by Euripides, *Cambridge Translations from Greek Drama*, ISBN-13: 978-0521653725
- ‘Frogs’ by Aristophanes, *Cambridge Translations from Greek Drama*, ISBN-13: 978-0521172578
- ‘The Odyssey’ by Homer (trans. E.V. Rieu). Penguin Classics ISBN: 9780140449112

You need to have these actual editions so that we are all working from the same translations, which are the translations you will encounter on the examination paper.

2. A simple research task. Look up the myths relating to:

- Oedipus
- Pentheus and Agave

Familiarise yourself with the narrative details of these stories. Then, find at least one black-figure or red-figure vase painting that depicts an aspect of these myths. You could just use the internet, but the library is full of relevant texts on myths and Art and Architecture books.

You will be expected to use the material you research here in your first piece of writing on Greek theatre.

3. You will need to show knowledge of these Greek terms in both modules of the course, so find (and write) definitions for the following:

- kleos
- xenia
- nostos
- oikos
- tîmê
- homeophrosyne (homophrosune)
- katabasis
- hamartia
- deus ex machina
- peripeteia
- anagnorisis

Summer wider reading (and watching and listening)

Read and you will think quicker, write better. You might start here:

Greek Theatre

- Love, Sex & Tragedy: how the ancient world shapes our lives – Simon Goldhill
- Antigone Rising: The Subversive Power of the Ancient Myths – Helen Morales

World of the Hero: Homer's 'Odyssey'

- Troy, Mythos, Heroes– Stephen Fry
- The Mighty Dead: Why Homer Matters – Adam Nicolson
- War Music – Christopher Logue

Class Civ inspired fun

- The Secret History – Donna Tartt (of all the books on all the lists, start here!)
- Pandora's Jar – Natalie Haynes
- Mythos – Stephen Fry
- Song of Achilles - Madeline Miller (or start here; everyone seems to like this one!).
- Silence of the Girls - Pat Barker
- Home Fire - Kamila Shamsie

Films

The following films touch upon themes of the course, some more obviously than others. Be guided by the age ratings, of course (although there's nothing over a 15 here).

- The Vanishing (The European original, NOT the American remake) - useful for 'Oedipus the King'
- 300 – gory, over-the-top fun!
- Some Like it Hot - useful for Old Comedy
- Chi-raq - Useful for Old Comedy; this is Spike Lee's musical adaptation of Lysistrata

YouTube

- Fate, family and Oedipus Rex - [Fate, Family, and Oedipus Rex: Crash Course Literature 202](#)
- John Green - [A Long and Difficult Journey, or The Odyssey: Crash Course Literature 201](#)

Podcasts

Stand up comedy by Natalie Haynes. Seven series of performances, all available as podcasts via the BBC. All are 28 minutes.

Here are some picks for our course, but do go on and explore the rest -

- Medusa - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000w4s2>
- Helen of Troy- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000j7qp>
- Jocasta - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000wjpz>
- Sophocles - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b03z9gmm>
- Euripides - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bf56gp>
- Aristophanes - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b076bz3h>
- Sappho - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08zd8gy>

All the **In Our Time** broadcasts are worth listening to and you will find one on every subject you are about to study. Start here -

- Homer's 'Odyssey', the epic story of the Greek hero Odysseus' journey back from Troy, and its foundational position in the history of western literature and ideas. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y297> 45 minutes
- Euripides' 'Bacchae' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000t6kp> 52 minutes
- Comedy in Ancient Greek theatre <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003c1d3> 45 minutes