

History 426 – Fall 2011
Professor Shoemaker
Lectures: **T-Th 4:00-5:15**
Office hours: **Weds 1:30-3:30**

History of Punishment

Description:

Among the most evocative aspects of human history is the way we have fined, shamed, exiled, imprisoned, pained, maimed, dismembered or killed those deemed to be in violation of the laws of gods and men. This course examines punishment across a vast range of historical traditions, examining how wrongdoing and punishment have been figured in law, literature, and philosophy. Through the semester we will examine ancient, medieval and modern traditions.

Required Texts:

(Note: Where possible, I have noted texts that are available online. The specified links are only a recommendation. Many of these texts are widely available online at many sites. However, published texts are preferable, mainly because, unlike most online versions, they contain line numbers that will make certain portions of some lecture easier to follow.)

Aeschylus, **Prometheus Bound** (trans. by Philip Vellacott (Penguin Classics, 1961)

Aeschylus, **The Oresteia** (which includes three separate plays, all required, **Agamemnon**, **The Libation Bearers**, and **The Eumenides**) (trans. W. B. Stanford and Robert Fagles (Penguin Classics, 1984)), <http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/>).

Sophocles, **Oedipus at Colonus** (Robert Fagles and Bernard Knox (Penguin Classics, 2000)

(texts also available online: <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/>)

Sophocles, **Antigone** (David Grene and Richard Lattimore, University of Chicago Press, 1991).

The Bible (Obtain your own copy. We will be reading portions of the book of Genesis.)

Beowulf (trans. Burton Raffel and Roberta Frank, Signet Classics, 2008) (an electronic version of the text is available online: <http://www.heorot.dk/>)

Michel Foucault, **Discipline and Punish** (trans. Alan Sheridan, Vintage, 1997) (Used copies widely available.)

Examinations:

Over the course of the semester there will be three examinations, two mid-term examination and a final. The midterm examinations will be administered in class and will account for 20% each of your final grade. The final exam will be administered as a take-home exam and will account for 40%. Lecture and section attendance and participation will account for the remaining 20% of your final grade. All exams will be essay/short answer format.

Syllabus

Week 1

Introduction of the course

I. Punishment in the Ancient Greek World

Theme: The birth of man as a great crime
Reading: Prometheus Bound

Week 2

Theme: Crime and obligation in Greek tragic thought
Reading: Aeschylus, The Oresteia (read: the first play of the Oresteia, Agememnon)

Week 3

Theme: The cycle of vengeance
Reading: The Libation Bearers

Theme: Punishment, sanctuary, and the birth of the polis
Reading: The Eumenides

Week 4

Theme: Punishment as Grace
Reading: Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus

Theme: Punishment, law and power
Reading: Sophocles, Antigone

1st midterm Exam (October 4th)

Week 5

II. Crime, Punishment and the Biblical Fall

Theme: The Birth of Man as a Great Sin
Reading: Genesis 1:1 - 3:24

Theme: Divine Punishments
Reading: Genesis 12:1-20; 20:1-18
Reading: Genesis 18:16 - 19:29

Week 6

Theme: Human Punishments
Reading: Exodus 32:1-35
Reading: Exodus 20:19-23:33

Week 7

III. Punishment in the Medieval World

Theme: Sin, Penance, and Pain
Reading: Augustine's letters 152 and 153.

Week 8

Theme: Wrong and Punishment in the Age of Blood-feud
Reading: Gregory of Tours: Sichar's Feud (in course reader)
and Saga excerpt (in reader)

Week 9

Theme: Crime and Punishment in Early Medieval Legislation
Reading: selected medieval legal texts from Course Reader.

Theme: The decline of the blood-feud and the rise of royal punishments
Reading: TBA

Week 10

Theme: Sin, Sanction, and Pain in Dante's Divine Comedy
Reading: Selections from the Inferno and the Purgatorio

2nd midterm exam (November 10th)

Week 11

IV. Crime, Punishment, and Modernity

Theme: The end of Sanctuary and the emergence of modern criminal law
Reading: to be distributed electronically

Week 12

Theme: The Spectacle of Suffering, Punishment in the Early Modern World
Reading: Discipline and Punish, 1-32.

Week 13

Theme: The decline of dismemberment and death in punishments
Reading: Discipline and Punish, Chapters 2 and 3.

Week 14

Theme: The rise of the prison
Reading: Discipline and Punish, remaining chapters.

Week 15

Theme: Punishment and Community Identity

Reading: The Cherokee Nation Cases, in Course Reader

Final Exam (Due December 23rd)