

Understanding by Design (UbD) Unit Plan

Title: The Theatre of Ancient Greece **Subject/Course:** Theatre

Topic: Theatre History **Grade:** 10-12 **Designers:** Lucy Kania

Stage 1 – Desired Results (PLAN)

Established Goals: (What do students need to learn and be able to do?)
 Essential or Common Core Standards

Demonstrate understanding of the history and elements of Greek theatre, research Greek playwrights, and stage and perform scenes from Greek plays OR create and present production concepts for Greek plays

Standards:
 A.T.P.04 – Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
 A.T.P.05 – Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
 A.T.P.06 – Convey meaning through presentation of artistic work.
 P.T.R.07 - Perceive and analyze artistic work.
 P.T.R.08 - Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
 A.T.Co.11 - Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

Understandings:
Students will understand that...

- Greek theatre is an important/foundational part of Western theatre history
- The stories and themes of Greek plays still resonate today
- Theatre played an important role in Ancient Greek society

Essential Question/Big Idea:

- Why is Greek theatre important to theatre history?
- Why do we still perform Greek theatre today?
- What were the thematic and social concerns of Greek plays/playwrights?
- How can we bring Greek theatre to life for modern audiences?

Students will know....

- The role of theatre in Ancient Greek society
- The dramatic structure of Greek tragedies and comedies
- The major Greek playwrights and their plays
- How Greek plays were staged in Ancient Greece
- How contemporary directors and playwrights stage or adapt Greek plays

Students will be able to....

- Read and analyze Greek plays – apply concepts of dramatic structure
- Independently research and present historical and literary (i.e. theme and content of plays) information on Greek playwrights
- Independently rehearse and perform scenes from Greek plays OR create and present a production concept for a Greek play

Be sure to include both language and content objectives.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence (STUDY)

Performance Task (How will we know if they learned it?)

Summary in GRASPS form

Here is where you will develop a scenario for the activity/project.

This section is for you to develop a guide for the students on what to do.

Performance/Production Project:

Goal(s):

- Learn about and experience the theatre of Ancient Greece by researching a playwright, and performing a scene from or creating a production concept for one of their plays
- Work in groups toward common goal of performing scene or creating production concept

Role:

- With group, research playwright and their works, select play to focus on
- Option 1: Read the whole play and select a scene to be performed by the group
- Option 2: Read whole play and formulate production concept
- Both Options: Research chosen playwright and create short presentation

Audience:

- Teacher and classmates

Situation:

- Students will work in groups of 2-4 (depending on class size)
- Students will express preference in either Option 1 or Option 2 and teacher will formulate groups and assign playwrights accordingly

Performance:

- Research Greek playwright, select one of their plays to work on (either Option 1 or Option 2)
- Both Options: Work as a group to create and present brief presentation on playwright – their biography, body of work, any prevalent themes, interests, messages of their work, their impact
- Option 1: Work as a group to stage and perform a scene from a Greek play. Assign roles and build characters, create a ground plan and staging, rehearse and perform the scene.
- Option 2: Work as a group to create and present a production concept for a Greek play. Decide on a setting, directorial vision, design vision – and create a presentation demonstrating the overall vision, giving a sense of the scenic, costume, and lighting design (optional: other pertinent design/production elements, i.e. sound, projections), and describing how the chorus will be portrayed.

Standards:

- Playwright presentation: includes playwright's biography, full list of works, describes playwright's salient qualities and cultural/literary impact
- Scene: fully memorized and staged/blocked, clear establishment of character, relationship, situation that reflect understanding of the text
- Production concept: presents a coherent vision for production that reflects understanding of the text, includes ideas for costumes, scenic, lighting design, and performance style (in particular, the use of the chorus)

Key Criteria: to reflect Performance Tasks: *Examples: Rubric, Checklist, etc.*

See attached document containing Project Timelines, Rubrics, and Reflection Prompt

Other Evidence (How will we know if they learned it?)

Summarized (tests, essays, work sample(s), etc.

- Performance/Production Project
- One paragraph reflection on their process: How did you work together as a group? What challenges did you face, and how did you deal with them? What part of your project are you most proud of?

Stage 3 – Learning Plan (DO)

Learning Activities (How will students learn it?)

Consider the WHERETO elements

These questions are/can be directed as....

What the teacher and/or the student do in regards to the WHERETO.

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

DAY ONE – BEGIN READING ANTIGONE:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Get a hands-on introduction to Greek drama by reading an important play together. Expected that we will read a significant portion of the play as a group, students will get an initial sense of the feel of a Greek tragedy.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Give a brief intro to the Theban Plays and summary of Oedipus Rex.

Give some cultural/historical context – specifically to the Theban civil war, Creon, Antigone and her brothers, religion and burial rites.

Ask students to pay attention to themes and situations that they might find relatable.

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Every student will get a copy of the play to ensure everyone is working from the same version. Roles will be assigned from volunteers at the beginning of each scene, but every student will be expected to read in at least one scene.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Students might get restless from sitting and reading for a whole period, so start with a physical/high energy warm-up to expend some energy and then a focus warm-up to bring the energy down. Cast each scene from volunteers and have them try the scene on its feet in front of the class so everyone stays engaged and gets the chance to get up and read. Emphasize that no one is going to be graded on performance, it's just a chance to get a feel for the

play.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

The next classes will involve discussion on the play and include opportunity to reflect on the experience of reading the play.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Energy and focus warm-ups, and breaks if necessary, to help students who might have trouble sitting still.

Students who struggle with reading or speaking should be encouraged to read at least once and may be assigned a smaller role. If a student is unable to read aloud they can listen along, and if a student is unable to hear the reading they can follow along in the text.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Warm-Ups: 1 energy/physical, 1 focus – 5 min

Teacher Introduction – 5 min

Read Play – 35 min

DAY TWO – FINISH READING ANTIGONE:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Get a hands-on introduction to Greek drama by reading an important play together. Expected that we will finish reading the play as a group (if for some reason play isn't finished, students will finish it for homework), students will get an initial sense of the feel of a Greek tragedy.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Review what we read so far – what do you remember, what made an impression on you, where do you think it will go next?

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Every student will get a copy of the play to ensure everyone is working from the same version. Roles will be assigned from volunteers at the beginning of each scene, but every student will be expected to read in at least one scene.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Students might get restless from sitting and reading for a whole period, so start with a physical/high energy warm-up to expend some energy and then a focus warm-up to bring the energy down. Cast each scene from volunteers and have them try the scene on its feet in front of the class so everyone stays engaged and gets the chance to get up and read. Emphasize that no one is going to be graded on performance, it's just a chance to get a feel for the play.

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Students who struggle with reading or speaking should be encouraged to read at least once and may be assigned a smaller role. If a student is unable to read aloud they can listen along, and if a student is unable to hear the reading they can follow along in the text.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Warm-Ups: 1 energy/physical, 1 focus – 5 min

Review – 5 min

Read Play – 35 min

DAY THREE – GREEK CHORUS:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Provide a hands-on introduction to Greek drama by having students embody the Greek Chorus. Students will engage in physical and devising exercises to work on moving and speaking in unison.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Give some background on the Greek chorus and their role both as a precursor to Greek drama and a fundamental part of the plays.

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Start with low-pressure group exercises that get everyone working as a unit before assigning more complex individual and collaborative work. Students will receive written copies of the text that they will be working with.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Some students may struggle coming up with movements and line readings and/or working within the time constraints. Use side-coaching while students are devising to remind them to use their whole body, explore levels, experiment with pitch, volume, emphasis. Remind them that their movement should be something that everyone else in the group can replicate (in case there are any trained dancers/movers). Tell the students you are giving them less time than you actually give so that they work quickly. Remind them halfway through that if they have only worked on their line reading they should move on to their movement or vice-versa.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Time at the end of class for discussion/reflection.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Students should create movement that everyone in the class is capable of replicating. If there is a student with a physical disability students should have an adaptation prepared for that student when they teach their movement to the group.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Intro – 5 min

- Teacher introduces the concept of a Greek chorus – start by asking the class what their idea is of a Greek chorus. How did they picture it when we read *Antigone*? Explain that the choruses predate Greek drama itself and come from ritual and worship. Explain that choruses play a major role in Greek plays, can represent different groups of people and even animals or objects, but most commonly the common people of a city or state. Explain that Greek choruses were groups of 12-24 (male) performers who moved/danced and spoke/sang in complete unison.

Warm-Ups – 15 min

- Space Walk – group walks the space at a neutral pace, trying to maintain soft focus & equal amounts of space between people. Group should stop and start based on group impulse.
- School/herd – whoever is in the front of the group is the leader, dictates the movement until the group changes direction and whoever ends up in front takes over leadership. Once the group gets a feel for this the teacher can start sidecoaching them with prompts to help create the movement – levels, parts of the body to use, tempo, build up to mood
- Vocal Warmup – tongue twister poem like To Sit in Solemn Silence or Proper Cup of Coffee – emphasis on diction & rhythm as a group

Devising Chorus – 15 min

- Split class into two groups and give each group a chorus speech
- Each member of the group is assigned one line from the speech – they have 5 minutes to create a line reading and a movement/gesture/motion to accompany that line
- Once everyone has perfected their line reading and movement, they have 10 minutes to work as a group to teach one another their line readings and movements and practice performing them in unison

Performance & Reflection – 5 min

- Each group will perform their choral speech for the class
- In the last few minutes, students will be asked to reflect on the experience

DAY FOUR – DISCUSSION & HISTORY:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Having read an example of Greek drama and explored the Greek chorus, we are going to learn about how and why that play would have been performed originally – using it as a window into the practice of theatre in ancient Athens.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

How did you picture this play looking when you read it? What kind of set/costumes/staging, etc.? Why do you think the playwright wrote this play?

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Remind students that class participation is a big part of this class so everyone is expected to participate in discussion of the play. Encourage students to take notes during history/vocab portion of the lesson.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Students could get bored with the lecture portion of the lesson – keep them involved by asking questions, bringing discussion back in the play they just read, other knowledge they may have of the period and mythology from other classes.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Students will be given many opportunities to ask questions or make comments.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Energy and focus warm-ups, and breaks if necessary, to help students who might have trouble sitting still.

Lecture portion of the lesson will include a powerpoint with visuals and key terms written out, and students will have access to the powerpoint afterwards.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Warm-Ups – 5 min

Review & Intro – 5 min

- Any last thoughts/impressions – reminding students that we will continue to discuss the play throughout the next few classes
- How did you picture this play looking when you read it? What kind of set/costumes/staging, etc.? Why do you think the playwright wrote this play?

History & Vocab Lesson – 25 min

- 1. Role of theatre in community/society:
 - Mythology, ritual, worship, festival – City Dionysia
- 2. How theatre was made:
 - Roles (playwrights, archon, choregoi, actors, chorus)
 - Tragedy vs. comedy (& satyr plays)
- 3. Physical theater:
 - Akropolis – theatron, orchestra, skene, visual effects
 - Costumes, props, & masks
 - Show video of Agamemnon production that recreates ancient masks, costumes, acting style (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7sdZQ1BDs0&frags=pl%2Cwn> starting around min 19 – show about 5 min)

Game with vocab words – 10 min

- Theatron = upstage, Orchestra = downstage
- Students work in pairs to come up with poses/movement for other terms (can be for an individual, a pair, or a larger group): Skene, Mechane, Mask, Chorus, Archon, Choregos, Dionysus
- Once poses/movements are determined and taught to the group, instructor calls out instructions and students must move to the appropriate area of the stage or do the pose/movement

DAY FIVE – DISCUSSION & HISTORY: TRAGEDY:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Continue learning about the history of Greek drama – with an emphasis on Greek tragedy and Aristotle’s poetics.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Tie-in to *Antigone* – how can we apply these concepts and terms to the play we just read?

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Remind students that class participation is a big part of this class so everyone is expected to participate in discussion of the play. Encourage students to take notes during history/vocab portion of the lesson.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Students could get bored with the lecture portion of the lesson – keep them involved by asking questions, bringing discussion back in the play they just read, other knowledge they may have of the period and mythology from other classes.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Students will be given many opportunities to ask questions or make comments.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Energy and focus warm-ups, and breaks if necessary, to help students who might have trouble sitting still.

Lecture portion of the lesson will include a powerpoint with visuals and key terms written out, and students will

have access to the powerpoint afterwards.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Warm-Ups – 5 min

History & Vocab Lesson – 25 min

- Quick reminder of genres: Tragedy, Comedy, Satyr Play (more on the last two next week)
- Introduce Aristotle/Aristotle's poetics & his structure of tragedy:
- Plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song
- Hamartia (fatal flaw), peripetea (reversal of fortune), anagnorisis (moment of recognition)
- Discussion: can we identify Aristotle's poetics in *Antigone*? Can we identify the poetics in any other plays we know – or books, movies, etc.?

Game with vocab words – 10 min

- Add terms (same student-creation process as last time): Tragedy, comedy, satyr play, hamartia, peripetea, anagnorisis
- Before end of class, give quick intro to the final project so that students can send their preference for scene-work or production concept to the teacher before next class

DAY SIX – DISCUSSION & HISTORY: COMEDY:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Continue learning about the history of Greek drama – with an emphasis on comedy and Aristophanes' *The Birds* (students will have read for homework).

Introduce the final project and familiarize students with options.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Ask for thoughts on *The Frogs*. How did it compare/contrast to *Oedipus*?

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Remind students that class participation is a big part of this class so everyone is expected to participate in discussion of the play. Encourage students to take notes during history/vocab portion of the lesson.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

Students could get bored with the lecture portion of the lesson – keep them involved by asking questions, bringing discussion back in the play they just read, other knowledge they may have of the period and mythology from other classes.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Students will be given many opportunities to ask questions or make comments.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Energy and focus warm-ups, and breaks if necessary, to help students who might have trouble sitting still.

Lecture portion of the lesson will include a powerpoint with visuals and key terms written out, and students will have access to the powerpoint afterwards.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Warm Ups – 5 min

History & Discussion – 20 min

- Role of comedy in festivals – the Lenaia & w/in the City Dionysia

- Satyr Plays vs. Comedy – Satyr Plays as comic relief following tragedy (and written by tragedians) vs. comedy as a separate genre focusing on contemporary political commentary and written by comedians
- Content of comedy vs. tragedy – contemporary political & social issues, parody of tragedy
- Discussion:
- How does this play differ from Greek tragedies?
- How does this play seem to parody Greek tragedies?
- What social or political themes does this play seem to address?

Project Intro –15 min

- Introduce scene/production concept project, distribute rubrics
- Show some short videos of modern/non-traditional productions to give ideas/sense of how to adapt or modernize: *Antigone* at the National Theatre – start at 1:19 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjrcNUOS2bc&t=48s&frags=pl%2Cwn>) *Oedipus Rex* at Court Theatre (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5uhzIYvANw&frags=pl%2Cwn>), *The Birds* at Theatre Organization of Cyprus (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smviNzW_mX0)
- Assign groups and playwrights

Vocab Game – 5 min

DAY SEVEN TO TEN – REHEARSAL/GROUP WORK:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Students will begin rehearsing their scenes and putting together their production concepts.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Students will have been introduced to the projects in the previous class, as well as shown some examples of different interpretations of Greek plays.

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Rubrics for these projects will have been given out when the projects were introduced, and the teacher will check in regularly with each group over the course of the project. On the first day of group work, the teacher will also distribute a suggested timeline for the project so that the students can stay on track, and the whole class will check in at the beginning of every group-work class.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

The four classes allotted to group work could end up being either too much or too little. A detailed project outline has been created to help structure independent group work and the teacher should meet with groups regularly, as well as having group check-ins every class.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Every group will give an update on their progress at the beginning of each group work class, which will give them a chance to reflect on their work so far. There will be further opportunity for reflection during the individual group check ins with the teacher.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Students will have been given the option to either perform a scene or create a production concept for a play – so if they are more physical, hands-on learners they will be able to perform, and if they are more visual or conceptual learners (or uncomfortable with performance) they will be able to do a production concept.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Group Check-ins – 5-10 min

Independent Group-Work w/ Teacher Checking In – 30-35 min

DAYS ELEVEN & TWELVE – PRESENT & PERFORM PROJECTS:

W

Where are we going? What is expected?

Students will present and perform their projects for this unit to the rest of the class, who will observe and offer constructive observations & feedback.

H

How will we hook (Introduce this to) the students?

Students will have been working on these projects for two weeks and prepared to present them to the class.

E

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Rubrics and timelines for these projects will have been given out when the projects were introduced, and the teacher will have been checking in regularly with each group over the course of the project.

R

How will you rethink or revise? What are likely or predictable student misunderstandings and/or performance weaknesses in this unit? What do the research and teacher experience say we can expect the greatest difficulties to be? What suggestions can you offer about how to troubleshoot these issues?

The two weeks allotted to group work could end up being either too much or too little. A detailed project outline could be created to help structure independent group work and the teacher should meet with groups regularly.

E

How will students self-evaluate and reflect on their learning?

Audience members will give constructive observations & feedback to their classmates on their projects. All students will also hand in a one paragraph reflection on their project & how they worked as a group at the next class.

T

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

Students will have been given the option to either perform a scene or create a production concept for a play.

O

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

Project Presentations – 15 min each

Resources

What print and web resource best support the unit? Also provide additional resources used in planning for activities or during instruction.

Assigned readings:

Antigone by Sophocles

The Birds by Aristophanes

Sources used in planning (& potentially sources for assigning readings):

Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre by Peter D. Arnott

A Short Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theatre by Graham Ley

Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction by David Wiles

Greek chorus warm up exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLJgBmjHpqgs4s6c0MrG->

Reflection (ACT)

Were the lessons successful? How do you know? What would you do differently next time?

Intervention (What will we do if students don't learn it?)

Enrichment (What will we do if students don't learn it?)