

Academic Writing

Justice in Classical Athens

Grades 9–12 | In-person | Thursdays, 3–4 PM | Semester 1: September 2026 – January 2027

Instructor: Zeph Scotti | zephscotti@gmail.com

Course site: Canvas Lite, canvaslite.instructure.com/courses/3476

What this course is about

This is first and foremost a course in academic writing. We will use ancient Greek literature, philosophy, oratory, and rhetoric to practice careful reading, clear thinking, and effective writing. Our recurring theme is justice: What makes an action just or unjust? What do we owe our families, our communities, the law, and the divine? What happens when those obligations conflict?

What you will learn to do

1. Read challenging texts carefully and identify central ideas, arguments, and important passages.
2. Accurately summarize and respond to another writer's ideas.
3. Develop a clear thesis and organize an essay with focused paragraphs and effective topic sentences.
4. Support claims with relevant textual evidence and explain how that evidence supports the larger argument.
5. Analyze how speakers and writers persuade an audience through ethos, pathos, and logos.
6. Write and revise a literary analysis essay using close reading and textual evidence.

Major readings

Tentative sequence. Readings marked “Semester 2” move to the spring. I will post a link to each reading on Canvas, or give you a handout in class.

Text	Author / Edition	Question it raises
Antigone	Sophocles (Fagles translation)	Family, the gods, and the city
Agamemnon	Aeschylus (Taplin translation; digital copy linked on Canvas)	Revenge, justice, and the curse on a family
Socrates (excerpts) · Semester 2	Barilli & Ranghiasi	Background: who was Socrates?
Apology · Semester 2	Plato (Hackett)	The citizen jury and conscience
Against Eratosthenes (excerpts) · Semester 2	Lysias	Revenge, law, and memory
Republic, Book I · Semester 2	Plato (student-friendly Hackett edition)	What is justice?

How your grade works

Category	Weight	What it includes
Major Essays	50%	Semester 1: an argumentative essay, a text-based analytical essay, and a literary analysis. More essays follow in Semester 2.
Writing Practice & Course Work	30%	Weekly writing, reading and homework, participation, peer work, and revision activities
Portfolios	20%	A light midyear portfolio in January, with a chance to revise your work, and a year-end portfolio of selected and revised work, with a reflection on your growth as a writer

Where to find course materials

Our course site is Canvas Lite. Log in at canvaslite.instructure.com. If you need the join instructions again, ask me.

Everything for class is posted at canvaslite.instructure.com/courses/3476. Each week has its own module with:

- the in-class slides
- readings, handouts, and optional review videos
- that week's homework and what to prepare for next class

I will also email a short note after each class with the link and the homework. If you miss class, the week's module is where to catch up.

Course expectations

- **Deadlines & extensions.** Homework is due on Wednesday at 7:00 PM, the evening before class, unless the assignment says otherwise. This gives me time to read your work before Thursday's class. If you need more time, ask for an extension at least 48 hours before the due date; I'm glad to work with you when you plan ahead. For illness or emergencies, contact me as soon as you can. Late work without an extension loses one letter grade per week.
- **Submitting work.** Submit all work on Canvas Lite. Depending on the assignment, you will answer in Canvas, upload a file, or paste a Google Doc link.
- **Revision.** Good writing is rewritten. Revision will be a regular part of the course, and you will have generous opportunities to improve major writing after feedback.
- **Choosing what to write about.** You may write your major essays about a text from your British Literature class. Ask me to approve your question first.
- **Attendance.** Because we meet only once each week, attendance matters. If you miss class, check that week's module on Canvas and follow up with me about what you missed.
- **AI and writing.** Do not use generative AI (including ChatGPT or similar tools) to produce, rewrite, or revise course writing unless I specifically assign or authorize its use.
- **Work outside class.** Plan for approximately 3–5 hours per week of reading, writing, and revision, although the workload will vary.
- **Questions.** Email or text me any time. I try to respond within 24 hours; if you haven't heard back by then, please follow up.
- **Accommodations.** If you have a documented disability or any condition that may require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible so we can plan the support you need.

Tentative Semester 1 calendar

This schedule is tentative. It shows our class meetings and planned weeks off. Reading pace, writing topics, and major assignment dates may be adjusted to the needs of the class; the course site always has the current week.

Date	Topic / Reading	Writing Focus	Major Assignment
Sept. 10	Opening Day: What Is Justice?	Introducing the class; justice; paragraph and essay overview	
Sept. 17	Before Antigone: Sophocles and Greek tragedy	Writing review	Diagnostic Essay (in class)
Sept. 24	Antigone I	Objective summary; accurately representing another writer's ideas	
Oct. 1	Antigone II	Comparing positions; identifying meaningful points of disagreement	
Oct. 8	Arguments and Rhetoric	Paragraph review; premises and conclusions; ethos, pathos, and logos	
Oct. 15	The Argumentative Essay; Before Agamemnon (video)	Thesis statements; counterarguments and responses	Argumentative Essay assigned
Oct. 22	NO CLASS — Rest Week		
Oct. 29	Agamemnon: The Opening	Peer review; revising an argument	Argumentative draft due Wed. 10/28
Nov. 5	Agamemnon I: Iphigenia and the Tapestry Scene	Reconstructing an argument: claim, premises, evidence	Argumentative Essay due Wed. 11/4; Analytical Essay assigned
Nov. 12	Agamemnon II: Cassandra and Clytemnestra's Defense	Evaluating an argument; integrating quotations	
Nov. 19	Antigone and Clytemnestra	Comparative thesis statements; literary analysis	Analytical Essay due Wed. 11/18; Literary Analysis assigned
Nov. 26	NO CLASS — Thanksgiving		
Dec. 3	Writing Workshop and Holiday Party	Drafting and peer review	Literary Analysis draft due Wed. 12/2
Dec. 10–31	NO CLASS — Winter Break		
Jan. 7	Revision Workshop	Revising for argument and evidence	
Jan. 14	Looking Back: Portfolio Workshop	Reflective writing; optional revision	Literary Analysis due Wed. 1/13
Jan. 21	Bridge to Semester 2: From Revenge to the Courtroom	The trial in Aeschylus' Eumenides; looking ahead	Midyear Portfolio due Wed. 1/20