History of Punishment

Required Texts:

**Course Reader**: Available at Bob’s Copy Shop in University Square. (Please note: this is the only Bob’s Copy Shop location that will carry the text.)

*Aeschylus*, *Prometheus Bound*. Any translation you wish to use is acceptable for purposes of this course. ([http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/prometheus.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/prometheus.html))

*Aeschylus*, *Oresteia* (which includes three separate plays *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*). There is a popular translation by Richmond Lattimore (The University of Chicago Press, 1953), but you may use another if you wish.

(These texts are available online: [http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/](http://classics.mit.edu/Aeschylus/))

*Sophocles*, *Oedipus at Colonus* recommended translation, Robert Fagles

(texts also available online: [http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/](http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/))

(NB: If you choose to use internet editions, please print the text. This will make it possible for you to consult the text in class.)

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

*Beowulf*, recommended translation by Burton Raffel; others are widely available as well

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, art and philosophy. Through the semester we will examine ancient, medieval and modern traditions.
Examinations:

Over the course of the semester there will be three examinations, two mid-term examinations and a final examination. The midterm examinations will account for 25% each of your final grade, the final will account for 40%. The exams will be composed of short take-home exams. They will be based on the readings and the lectures.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance and classroom participation will account for 10% of your final grade. In addition, anyone missing more than 4 class meetings (that is, more than 2 full weeks of the 15 week semester), regardless of reason, will be unable to pass the course.

A word about the format of the course:

Throughout the course, Tuesday meetings will be devoted much more to lecture than classroom discussion. Thursdays, on the other hand, will provide much more time for classroom discussion. Thoughtful questions are welcome at any time, of course. But for purposes of course management, Thursdays will be given over much more to questions, discussion and interaction. Please keep this in mind, and always come to class prepared.

Syllabus

Week 1

January 18\textsuperscript{nd}  Introduction to the course; distribution of syllabus; exams, grading and attendance policies

Crime and Punishment in the Medieval World

January 20\textsuperscript{th}  Taking measure of the distance between then and now

Reading:  Singleton v. Norris (in the course Reader).

Week 2

January 25\textsuperscript{th}  Revenge as an organizing principle of the medieval social order

Reading:  Excerpts from the Deeds of Louis the Fat (in course Reader)  
Decretum on revenge (handout)  
Excerpts from medieval law codes (in course Reader)  
Excerpts from medieval liturgy (in course Reader)  
Read Psalm 109 (from your own copy)

January 27\textsuperscript{th}  cont’d.

Week 3

February 1\textsuperscript{st}  Sin, Penance, Intercession; Flight and Sanctuary

Reading:  Augustine’s letters #152 and 153  
Translated materials on sanctuary in Course Reader
Week 4

February 3rd  con’t

February 8th  Beowulf: Feud, Wrongs and Gifts
Reading:       Beowulf:
               Sichar’s Feud (in course Reader)
               Saga of Egil Skalla-Grimsson

February 10th con’t

Week 5

February 15th  Sin, Sanction and Pain in Dante’s Divine Comedy
Reading:       Selections from the Inferno and Purgatorio (in course Reader)

February 17th  con’t; 1st Take home exam distributed; Due Feb. 22nd.

Week 6

Crime, Punishment, and the Ancient Greek Polis

February 22nd  Crime, the Birth of Mankind, and the Birth of the Polis
Reading:       Prometheus Bound;
               Also, begin reading The Oresteia

February 24th  con’t

Week 7

March 1st      The Oresteia continued
Reading:       Genesis 12:1-20; 20:1-18

March 3rd      con’t

Week 8

March 8th      Oedipus at Colonus
Reading:       Oedipus at Colonus

March 10th     con’t

Week 9

Crime, Punishment and the Biblical Fall

March 15th     The Birth of Man as a Great Sin
Reading:       Genesis 1:1-3:24

March 17th     con’t

Week 10

March 29th     Divine and Human Punishments
And Exodus 32:1-35; 20:19-23:33

March 31\textsuperscript{st} con’t; \textbf{2\textsuperscript{nd} Take-home exam distributed (due April 5\textsuperscript{th})}

\textbf{Week 11}
\textbf{Crime, Punishment, and Modernity}

April 5\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{Enlightenment and the New Understandings of crime}

Readings: Excerpts from Hugo Grotius and Cesare Beccaria (in course Reader)

April 7\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{con’t}

\textbf{Week 12}

April 12\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{The calculus of pleasure and pain}

Readings: Excerpts from Jeremy Bentham (in course Reader)

April 14\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{con’t}

\textbf{Week 13}

April 19\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{Hegel on the Greeks on Punishment}

Reading: Excerpts from Hegel, The Philosophy of Right (in course Reader)

April 21\textsuperscript{st} \quad \text{con’t}

\textbf{Week 14}
\textbf{Punishment and Community Identity}

April 26\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{The Cherokee Nation Cases and the Death of Comity}

Readings: Cases in Reader
Excerpts from Hobbes, Leviathan (in course Reader)

April 28\textsuperscript{th} \quad \text{con’t}

\textbf{Week 15}

March 3\textsuperscript{rd} \quad \text{Review of Themes}

March 5\textsuperscript{th} \quad \textbf{Final Exam (take-home) distributed; Due May 9\textsuperscript{th} by 3pm (in my office).}