



DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Dialogues on the Experience of War guidelines at

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/dialogues-the-experience-war>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Expanding the Conversation: Catharsis Across Campuses
Institution: Valencia College
Project Director: Sean Lake and Julie Montione
Grant Program: Dialogues on the Experience of War

EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION: CATHARSIS ACROSS CAMPUS AT VALENCIA COLLEGE

With less than one percent of Americans serving in the military, many veterans feel a sense of isolation, returning home to a population disconnected from the realities of war. Recognizing that each veteran story is unique, during our first grant we found a consistent appreciation both from our student veterans in having a space to share their stories, and from our civilian students in processing these stories, while all students made connections to our Humanities curriculum. For the past two semesters, we used our Greek and Roman Humanities course as the preparatory program to train student veteran discussion leaders, then held public events that reached our college's community as well as regional veterans and the general public. Our students demonstrated that they could lead thoughtful dialogues, and we received positive feedback from the full range of participants in our program. To this end, we are now creating a project that builds upon what we have learned and significantly expands our reach by training faculty members to lead ongoing and sustained discussions in their own Humanities courses. Eleven of our colleagues, whose letters of intent are included, have enthusiastically embraced our vision of enhancing their humanities curriculum with sources that highlight the universal experiences of warfare. With careful training, our faculty will learn to engage with the veterans already in their classes. As we already saw in the first grant, the student veterans will serve as brilliant representatives for the United States military, and valuable resources for the discussions of war that, by necessity, occur throughout humanities courses.

INTELLECTUAL RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

"I am not stating that this class is a replacement for therapy, nor am I stating that this course is curing me of any affliction. I am stating that this class has helped me find some understanding and opened my mind up to other concepts." Joshua Bowes, combat student veteran in our Fall 2019 Dialogues on the Experience of War class, and an identified partner in our future grant project.

In 2017, we began teaching a new version of Greek and Roman Humanities, a popular course at Valencia, through the Dialogues on the Experience of War grant. Our class focused on a comparison of ancient and modern experiences of war, and recruited veteran participants for the class and held three public events. Among our goals was to create dialogue within our course and the community at large that spoke to the veteran experience. As a result, we trained student leaders to direct discussions at our events and in class. Over the course of three semesters, we continually refined and improved our class, which drew the interest of our colleagues. Our current proposal seeks to significantly expand and sustain its impact by training eleven committed faculty members to implement one of our lessons and create discussions in their own courses.

To train the faculty members, we have partnered with Valencia's Office of Faculty Development to create four professional development courses linked to one public event each. The courses and events will explore issues largely unchanged for thousands of years: suicide, betrayal of command, grief, atrocities of war, the cost of war on the home front, the struggle in returning home, and finding a sense of common humanity, perhaps even empathy, with individuals from the "enemy's" culture. At the heart of each of our shared lessons is healing and recovery, specifically seeking to what extent Aristotle's theory of catharsis can be effectively applied: can literature, and in particular tragedy, help produce catharsis for veterans? In fact, it has been proposed by Jonathan Shay's *Odysseus in America* that this was largely the point of tragic theater in ancient Athens: his work describes the festivals of Dionysos as "a theater of combat veterans, by combat veterans, and for combat veterans" that offered a form of "cultural therapy" for an audience traumatized by the effects of war (xii and 152-153). Our grant also puts into practice the opinion of Shay (a psychiatrist who has worked with veterans) that the best treatment for PTSD actively encourages communalization of the trauma (*Achilles in Vietnam* 187), and "what a returning soldier needs most when leaving war is not a mental health professional but a living community to whom his experience

matters” (*Achilles in Vietnam* 198). Furthermore, we hope to bring awareness to the civilian population and, as Bryan Doerries suggested in his Theater of War presentation at Valencia, “Can art be used to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable?” This is what our project will do -- provide our returning veterans a space to share and relate *their* stories to the stories that have always been a part of a humanities curriculum.

DESIGN, CONTENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION: PREPARATORY PROGRAM FOR NEH LEADERS

Participating faculty in the preparatory program will receive professional development credit, which is tied to performance and pay. New and previous partners outside of and within Valencia will supplement our own academic specialties, and we will share our own training and experience from the first grant in leading discussions on sensitive topics. Among our new partners is the Orlando Veteran Center and its director Dr. Tyon Hall, who will facilitate in our training program with our faculty participants, as well as continue to publicize and attend our public events. Another new partner is a Valencia graduate and veteran, Marc Brennan, who is leading a project to reach out to veterans through the humanities in his graduate program. Returning partners include Theater of War, which has been received with overwhelming praise from students, faculty, and the public who have attended their readings from ancient tragedy and panel discussions of local veterans. We will also retain the Islamic Center of Central Florida who has hosted a warm and hospitable program that also addresses challenging questions about veterans’ relationships to Islam. John Minbiole will also return to offer his provocative analysis of film and rhetoric in war, this time discussing a different work. These partners will be active consultants in the preparatory program. Our faculty discussions leaders are Karen Styles, Justin Stone, Eric Wallman, Jeremy Bassetti, Travis Rodgers, Vishma Kunu, Bob Warren, Matt Koval, Shawn Grant, Jed Broitman, and Nicole Hill.

Just as we have built upon our first grant in identifying the best new and previous partners, our lessons and sources comparing ancient and modern warfare have been refined with an eye toward identifying which texts and films sparked the most productive conversations. In our first grant, we saw veteran and civilian students, as well as public participants in our events, respond with strong and positive emotional reactions to most of our content; however, certain topics yielded much more fruitful discussions, particularly in regard to civilians understanding veteran issues, and Aristotle's theory of how catharsis works. We target these two issues, seeking to provide our students, and those of our colleagues, with an understanding of the potential for the humanities to produce catharsis, and to increase awareness of issues faced by veterans today; many of our veteran partners noted the latter as an essential priority.

Our project has a potential to impact a large number of veteran and civilian students on campus. Valencia is the second largest state college in Florida, with nine campuses, 1,600 degree seeking veterans, and over 62,000 credit seeking students. The revised academic content of the lessons we share has been designed to be easily incorporated into either Greek and Roman Humanities, Introduction to Humanities, Mythology, or Twentieth Century Humanities. There were thirty-eight sections of Greek and Roman Humanities offered in the Fall of 2018, thirty-five sections of Twentieth Century Humanities, forty-six of Mythology, and one hundred and thirty-nine sections of Introduction to Humanities. Although they vary greatly in the details of their content, we have designed lessons that can be easily adapted into one of more of these classes. We know from our experiences in the first grant that once the issues contained in this material are raised, they will have a lasting impact on course discussions and faculty awareness.

The project directors will continue to teach one section of the course, but the priority of the new grant is to prepare four professional development courses (in Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020). The courses will train our colleagues to include one of the lessons we have tried, tested, and revised in the sections of our first grant class. The course will meet once for three hours,

and then faculty will have access to an online course for the duration of the semester. The online course will have materials they may use for reference, or embed in their own classes. Trained faculty will be required to complete an evaluation at the end of the semester to receive professional development credit and be encouraged to post student work highlighting the success of their project. The evaluation will detail how they have used the materials (outside of our general lesson plan and suggestions), how the lesson was received, and suggestions for improvement. By linking the lesson plans to one of four public events we will magnify their impact, reaching an even wider audience in the Valencia community and Orlando region.

Through the wisdom of our first grant, we realized recruiting students for a veterans *only* class does not have the same impact as including civilians in a class; we also learned it is also highly difficult to fill a class with veterans. Naturally, there is an enormous benefit for veterans to share their experiences with other veterans, and we provide that opportunity to a degree, but we have found that mixing veterans with civilians fosters the dialogue that is crucial for public awareness and understanding. We have also found that our veterans have found satisfaction in sharing their experience with non-veterans, and most have shined as confident discussion leaders who speak humbly, but with impressive knowledge of their work in the military. These veterans have deeply affected the civilian students with their personal narratives, and our civilian students express gratitude for their greater understanding. We have seen civilian students engaging in sincere and sympathetic dialogues, showing genuine respect and curiosity, along with sympathy. Many students admitted this was their first real chance for conversation with someone who has served in the military. It is peer to peer learning that has a far greater potential for transformative moments than the average discussion of a text, extending the learning beyond the facts to the essential nature of their shared humanity. So often, the history of a period is told through the series wars a nation undertakes, but too little of that, if any, directly addresses the individuals who bear the burdens of these conflicts. With eleven of our colleagues teaching sections with units focused on veteran issues,

we will reach many more civilians, and the veterans enrolled throughout our campuses in these classes.

Before discussing the intellectual rationale further, it will be helpful to see an overview that summarizes the academic content of our plan. We leave room for our colleagues to adapt these lessons and add to them, but the following content is meant to provide a solid starting point for a confident execution of the goals of our grant. The particular texts and films vary in each of the four seminars, but the materials we share have the following elements in common:

1. The first **ninety minutes** will be dedicated to a **workshop sharing techniques for leading engaging discussions on sensitive topics** based on our prior work with Valencia's Peace and Justice Institute and our previous use of *Shared Inquiry Handbook for Discussion Leaders and Participants*.
2. A **forty-five minute explanation of Aristotle's theory of catharsis** and a method of analysing plots based on his description of the ideal plot for producing catharsis. This brief summary will be supplemented by online materials available for the entire semester.
3. A **forty-five minute overview and lesson plan** based on the comparison of one ancient and one modern source. Again, faculty will have access to an online course for the semester.
4. **Two video lessons** with the essentials of the face to face seminar that can be used by faculty for their own reference and review, and by students in individual sections. The lessons will be written in a manner appropriate for undergraduates and non-specialist faculty. The first video is dedicated to Aristotle's theory, the second to the specific ancient and modern sources.
5. A **formative assessment** and a **summative assessment** for students in electronic format related to the content. The assessments can be embedded on Valencia's Canvas platform and will help guide faculty in their personal planning through using "backwards design." In these

assessments, we identify the ends toward which the professors should be working. We will collect the results as a means to measure the outcomes and continue refining our project.

ANCIENT SOURCES	MODERN SOURCES	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	SEMINAR FOR FACULTY	PUBLIC EVENT
<i>Philoctetes</i> , selections from the <i>Iliad</i> (based on discussion in the complementary modern text, <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i>)	<i>Achilles in Vietnam</i>	What has changed in 3,000 years?	Shay's thesis that the Greeks generally treated veterans more humanely, including methods for reintegrating veterans into society.	Theater of War reads scenes from <i>Philoctetes</i> relevant to the ideas addressed in <i>Achilles in Vietnam</i> ; a panel discussion of veterans follows.
<i>Trojan Women</i>	<i>Trojan Women</i> (film)	What is the cost of war on the homefront?	<i>Trojan Women</i> may be read as a commentary on atrocities by Athenians on Melos in the Peloponnesian War.	Dr. Minbirole addresses the way that the film <i>Trojan Women</i> reflected attitudes toward atrocities in Vietnam.
<i>Iliad</i> Books Sixteen; Twenty-Two; Twenty-Four	<i>Joyeaux Noel</i> ; meeting of Achilles and Priam in <i>Troy</i> (2004)	Can we sympathize with the enemy?	The empathy shown between Priam and Achilles is among the most impactful episode in the epic.	Prof. Chaaban at the Islamic Society of Central Florida discusses the films in regard to the experience of veterans and Muslims in America
<i>Ajax</i>	<i>Ajax in Iraq</i>	Can literature provide a catharsis for veterans?	Mr. Brennan will present his project as a graduate student, working with veterans and myth.	Theater of War reads scenes from <i>Ajax</i> followed by a panel of veterans.

The lessons about catharsis would work well in any of the classes, but the particular ancient and modern sources from a variety of genres would work best in the following courses:

- 1. Twentieth Century, Greek and Roman: *Iliad*, *Philoctetes*, *Achilles in Vietnam***
- 2. Twentieth Century, Introduction to Humanities, Greek and Roman: *Iliad*, *Joyeux Noel*, *Troy***
- 3. Twentieth Century, Mythology, Introduction, or Greek and Roman: *Ajax* and *Ajax in Iraq***
- 4. Mythology, Greek and Roman, or Introduction: *Trojan Women* and *Trojan Women (1971)*.**

The professors who attend our courses will all teach multiple sections of one or more of these four courses, maximizing the dissemination of our materials. Although we are only asking for committed faculty to incorporate our materials into their sections of a given course for one semester, we believe that we will foster long-term impact on our colleagues by creating awareness of veterans' issues. By designing comprehensive lessons that are easy to incorporate into the topics already covered, we can create a lasting influence on these classes. Moreover, by focusing on techniques of addressing and including veterans in discussions about sensitive topics related to their own experiences, we will train a body of faculty to be adept at serving our veterans in the long term.

The materials and content we will share are all based around general introductions to Aristotle's theory of catharsis in the *Poetics*. It is crucial to understand that we use extensive selections from the *Iliad* in addition to tragedies for several reasons. First, in the *Poetics*, Aristotle discusses Homer more than he discusses tragedy (particularly notable are *Poetics* 1448b and 1451a). James Hogan, among others, has argued that Aristotle considers the Homeric epics and tragedy to be "fundamentally similar in their structural principles, and that the effect or function of the two dramas was of the same kind" (pg. 95 *Aristotle's Criticism of Homer in the Poetics*). Plato refers to Homer as the first tragedian (*Resp.* 10.395b–c, 607a; *Tht.* 152) and Pseudo-Plutarch notes that in Homer, one finds all the elements of a tragedy (*Vit. Hom.* 213).

Our lessons also provide a general introduction to epic and tragedy as genres, the mythology of the Trojan War, and the historical context of the plays we read (*Ajax* c. 442 B.C.E; *Trojan Women* 415 B.C.E). These plays were performed during the first and second Peloponnesian Wars (c. 460-455 B.C.E and 431-404 B.C.E). We do not know the origins of the Homeric songs, but some of our earliest certain knowledge of these songs and their transmission is from the Athenian festivals in which they were performed, ongoing in Athens during the same war torn period in which these tragedies were first staged. The tragedies retell myths related to the Trojan cycle, but also reflect contemporaries events, opinions, and attitudes. Naturally, audiences living with the memories and realities of the Persian Wars (490 B.C.E. and 480-479 B.C.E.) and Peloponnesian Wars would hear Homer in the context of their own experiences. The same is true of some of the modern sources we use: *Trojan Women* (1971), filmed using Edith Hamilton's translation, can be considered in light of the Vietnam War; *Joyeux Noel* (2005) fictionalizes an actual event from World War I, but few students will miss its relevant and contemporary anti-war message; Peter Jackson, the director of *Troy* (2004), has made numerous comments suggesting, for example, that "nothing has changed in 3,000 years," and critics have found parallels with our war in Iraq; *Ajax in Iraq* is an undisguised commentary on the continuity of veteran experience and suicide in particular.

The selections we use from *Our Ancient Wars* relate a broad array events or figures from antiquity to modern war, but we will use chapters that correspond to our themes: "Socrates' Military Service" (which considers PTSD); "Moral Injury, Damage, and Repair"; and "Combat Trauma and the Tragic Stage: Ancient Culture and Modern Catharsis?". *Achilles in Vietnam*, written by a psychiatrist, similarly offers broad analysis of veterans' experiences based on a very close comparison with episodes from the *Iliad*, but our focus is on the author's comparison of the sensible treatment of veterans in antiquity, as compared to the American methods of isolating individuals, rotating soldiers in and out of combat units, lack of closure for the living, and similar topics relevant

to our focus on healing and catharsis. We also juxtapose Shay's text with *Philoctetes* because of the shared theme of betrayal of command.

The audiences of the ancient tragedies and public performances of epic in Athens were made up primarily (perhaps exclusively) of combat veterans, or young men who would someday fight. The Classical Age in Athens was a world in which nearly one hundred percent of the male population fought on a yearly basis, or if not yearly, very regularly; this is particularly true of the period when the tragedies we use were written. If women or slaves attended the festivals in which these myths were performed, they too were poignantly aware of the costs and devastations of war; their experiences are different, but accounted for in these classical works, and in our lessons.

Some history of the time will help the faculty and their students realize how context can change the artist's interpretation of a myth, and the audience's reception of it. Beyond these basics, our objective is to show how modern and ancient experiences have a great deal in common, and more than our students and veterans might expect. The sources we have chosen address issues that are immediately relevant to our veterans, and many of the ancient texts are already taught in Valencia's Greek and Roman Humanities, Introduction to Humanities, or Mythology.

PREPARATORY PROGRAM FOR NEH DISCUSSION LEADERS

Our professional development courses will provide readings, a lesson plan, two YouTube video lessons, two objective quizzes, and a writing assignment for our ten faculty partners. To attain professional development credit, they will report on how they used the material, evaluate its success, and make suggestions. The courses will be open to other faculty in addition to those who have already committed.

The juxtaposition of modern and ancient content is as appropriate for Greek and Roman Humanities course as it is in a Twentieth Century course; in both cases, it is fruitful to teach the universality of themes, identify time-tested characters, and isolate common elements of plot that have

been effectively used throughout the centuries. The Mythology course and Introduction to Humanities are very general introductions to their topics, and the textbooks currently used in both courses include references to drama, and ancient and modern sources. It is important to note that Valencia's mythology course is a world mythology course with emphasis on theoretical approaches: "Examines world mythology in comparative perspective, analyzes myths with a variety of methods, and considers the application of mythological ideas and symbols in the humanities." It was a professor who teaches Twentieth Century who suggested that our juxtaposition of *Achilles in Vietnam* with the *Iliad* would be an appropriate inclusion to his course; he noted that his father was a Vietnam veteran, and he saw the juxtaposition of ancient and modern texts to be a natural way to teach his course. A lesson on Aristotle's theory of catharsis would similarly be useful for discussing modern theater or film just as much as it is in analyzing world mythology.

The lessons we are sharing have been put into practice over the course of our first grant, and have consistently sparked thoughtful, constructive dialogue between veterans and civilians. Most striking and consistent has been the awareness generated among our civilians students when they discuss with their veteran classmates the realities of the war experiences they read about in our modern and ancient texts. The lesson plans aim to empower those who have experienced war by using the Humanities to help veterans identify, and perhaps clarify, common struggles, and recognize that they are not alone in their experiences.

DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR MILITARY VETERANS AND OTHERS

Our project will create discussion groups for veterans in three ways. First, we will continue our work in the special veteran section of Greek and Roman Humanities taught by Sean Lake and Julie Montione. Second, at each of the seven public events, time will be dedicated to discussion led by trained faculty, the project directors, or the invited speakers. Finally, our trained faculty will lead discussions based on our lessons in their own classes. Our partner, Josh Bowes has committed to

directing student veterans to sections taught by our trained faculty. Again, based on our previous experiences, we think that the dissemination of the information to non-veterans will still be of great value. At the public events, we will seek veterans from the Valencia community at large, and in the Orlando region. We will continue to utilize the efforts we used in our first grant to promote the public events including advertising developed by the Public Affairs and Marketing department at Valencia College, meetings with the Office of Veteran Affairs, mass e-mails, the faculty newsletter, and social media.

PROJECT FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Sean Lake is co-Project Director and a professor of Humanities at Valencia. He has recently completed a textbook for Greek and Roman Humanities, and is currently working on turning a conference paper on Aristotle's ideal tragic plot into a publication.

Julie Montione is co-Project Director and a professor of Humanities at Valencia, she has been teaching Humanities and Religion at Valencia College since 2012. As the wife, daughter, and sister of veterans, she is passionate at reaching the veteran community both within the college and the greater Orlando area.

Dr. Dori Haggerty, West Campus Director, Faculty and Instructional Development will provide the institutional support for the professional development courses. Her office will facilitate the trainings and provide the infrastructure.

Joshua Bowes, graduate of the original grant class, certifying official for student veterans. Josh will act as a consultant in the training program and continue to recruit veterans for the designated courses by trained faculty and in our public events.

Bryan Doerries, Director of Theater of War, a professional theater group that will visit campus for two performances and read scenes from the ancient Greek tragedies *Ajax and Philoctetes*. This presentation will be paired with the modern works, *Ajax in Iraq* and *Achilles in Vietnam*.

Dr. John Minbiolo will address the issue of whether film “listens” to its audience, and discuss the way that civilian casualties, atrocities in war, and collateral damage in *Trojan Women* (1971) reflect the war in Vietnam. The screening of the film will be juxtaposed with Euripides’s *Trojan Women*.

Bassem Chaaban is a professor of World Religions at Seminole State College and Director of Outreach at The Islamic Society of Central Florida. Professor Chaaban will organize and lead a film screening and discussion focusing on the possibility of feeling empathy or sympathy for the enemy. Book Twenty-Four of the *Iliad* will be read along with scenes from the films *Troy* and *Joyeux Noel*.

Dr. Tyon Hall is the director of the Orlando Veteran Center and she will facilitate in our training program with our faculty participants, as well as continue to publicize and attend our public events.

Mark Brennan, a former Valencia student and veteran, will discuss Aristotle’s theory of catharsis and the course he is developing for veterans as a graduate student at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Art Miles, a local educator at South Seminole Middle School, has once again committed to bring students to our public events to record veteran stories for the Library of Congress Oral History project.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The mission of Valencia College is to “provide opportunities for academic, technical, and lifelong learning in a collaborative culture dedicated to inquiry, results, and excellence.” Through existing professional development and its teaching-centered tenure process, Valencia takes great pride in training faculty who are already committed to student success and see the value of student engagement; we, therefore, focus on sources and strategies that have already found success in spurring useful, cathartic discussion in our classes.

Valencia has a successful history of managing institutionalized grants, and a history of successful completion of state and federal grants, including prior NEH awards. The project directors

have had three years of experience working productively with Valencia's grant personnel who, among many responsibilities, help to ensure a positive and productive relationship between the sponsor and recipients. The college has a long term track record of overall financial stability, and has the ability to effectively implement all statutory and regulatory requirements.

Our project will receive assistance from the support staff named above, as well as the East and West Campus Humanities Departments, Resource Development Office, Public Affairs and Marketing, and Grants Accounting Office. Administrative support from these areas will ensure the project is able to schedule consultant travel, conduct the planned courses over the project period, maintain compliance with the project budget, and meet all project deliverables.

EVALUATION

The eleven faculty participants in the professional development courses will be required to submit a lesson plan indicating how specifically they plan to implement our material into their course, and a short report about how the lesson was received and what can be improved in order to receive professional development credits. Attendees at our public events will be given surveys asking for their feedback about the events. The project directors worked with Laura Blasi, the director of Institutional Development at Valencia, to create surveys for the first grant, and will revise these surveys as templates to improve future ones deployed in 2019-2020.

PREPARATORY PROGRAM SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

Professional Development Courses

Through our partners at Faculty Development, we will create four new professional development courses for faculty. These courses will offer an integrated examination of the experiences of war as expressed in ancient and modern texts. A major focus will be the application of Aristotle's theory of catharsis. Each course addresses one essential question, using the ancient and modern texts as a starting point for dialogue. The public events will be the semester following the professional development course and are part of the curriculum. The courses are also embedded with skill development for facilitating discussions. In the end, faculty will be able to:

- use our materials to promote dialogue among veterans and civilians
- make connections between ancient and modern textual accounts of war
- put into practice the idea that literature can help produce a catharsis, or relief, from negative emotions.

Fall 2019 Course: Can literature provide a catharsis for veterans?

Sources: *Ajax*, *Ajax in Iraq*, *Poetics*

Public Event: Theater of War: reading from *Ajax* followed by veteran panel and public discussion

Spring 2020 Course: What is the cost of war on the homefront?

Sources: *Trojan Women*, *Trojan Women* (1971), selections from *Poetics*

Public Event: Dr. Minbiole discusses atrocities in *Trojan Women* and how film "listens" to its audience.

Summer 2020 Course: Can we feel sympathy for the "enemy"?

Sources: *Iliad* (Books Sixteen; Twenty-Two; Twenty-Four - deaths of Patroklos, Hektor, and meeting between Achilles and Priam), *Joyeux Noel*; *Troy*; selections from *Poetics*

Public Event: Islamic Society of Central Florida Bassam Chaaban leads discussions about the film *Joyeux Noel*, scenes from *Troy*, and veterans living with Muslims in the United States.

Fall 2020 Course: What has changed in 3,000 years?

Sources: *Iliad*, *Philoctetes*, *Achilles in Vietnam*, selections from *Poetics*

Public Event: Theater of War: reading from *Philoctetes* followed by veteran panel and discussion.

Course Outcomes

Faculty members will confidently lead discussion groups with veterans and civilians, creating a network of support for veterans and greater understanding among civilians. Our goals include:

- Implement a lesson based around the potential for catharsis in tragedy that also helps create dialogue between historical narratives of war and student veterans' own military service.
- Student veterans will connect with civilians and help ease veterans' reintegration in society.
- Allow civilians to hear firsthand experiences from today's veterans.
- Detailed analysis of plot according to Aristotle's theory of catharsis, especially considering the parameters described at *Poetics* 1453a7-17 and 1454a2-9.
- Comparison of major themes in an ancient and modern source addressing the experiences of war.

Sources for Faculty

The following works will be assigned to faculty, depending on the course they attend. Some will be read in full, others in selections. In order to reduce costs, many freely available texts have been identified, others will be lent to faculty. Faculty will assign texts and passages from these sources to their students according to the lesson plan they develop based on our suggestions. We will show the films at our public events and have classroom sets for lending of *Ajax in Iraq*, *Achilles in Vietnam*, and *Our Ancient Wars*.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Available on E-Book Central (Valencia Library database)

Doerries, Bryan. *The Theater of War: What Ancient Tragedies Can Teach Us Today*. New York: Vintage Books, 2016.

Euripides. *Trojan Women*. Available on E-Book Central (Valencia Library database)

Homer. *Iliad*. Available at https://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/homer/iliad_title.htm

McLaughlin, Ellen. *Ajax in Iraq*. New York: Playscripts, Inc. 2011.

Meineck, Peter. "Combat Trauma and the Tragic Stage: Ancient Culture and Modern Catharsis?" *Our Ancient Wars: Rethinking War through the Classics*, edited by Victor Caston and Silke-Maria Weineck, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2016, pp. 184–208.

Monoson, S. Sara. "Socrates' Military Service." *Our Ancient Wars: Rethinking War through the Classics*, edited by Victor Caston and Silke-Maria Weineck, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2016, pp. 96–118.

Shay, Jonathan. *Achilles in Vietnam*. Simon and Schuster. 1995.

Shay, Jonathan. *Odysseus in America*. New York: Scribner, 2003.

Sherman, Nancy. "Moral Injury, Damage, and Repair." *Our Ancient Wars: Rethinking War through the Classics*, edited by Victor Caston and Silke-Maria Weineck, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2016, pp. 121–154.

Sophocles. *Ajax*. Available on E-Book Central (Valencia Library database)

Shared Inquiry Handbook for Discussion Leaders and Participants. The Great Books Foundation, 2014.

Films: *Trojan Women* (1971), *Joyeux Noel* (2005) and *Troy* (2004)

Supplemental Readings:

Modern research has shown that literature can indeed bring about positive change in regard to psychological well-being; we are not pursuing this grant as part of a course of therapy based on psychological sources, but it is relevant to mention this research in passing:

Comer, David Kidd & Castano, Emmanuel, et al. (2013). Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind. *Science*. 342 (6156) 377-380.

Dowrick C, Billington J, Robinson J, et al. (2012). Get into Reading as an Intervention for Common Mental Health Problems: Exploring Catalysts for Change. *Medical Humanities*. 38 15-20.

Caracciolo, M., & Van Duuren, T. (2015). Changed by Literature? A Critical Review of Psychological Research on the Effects of Reading Fiction. *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, 17(4), 517-539.
doi:10.5325/intelitestud.17.4.0517

Bal P.M., Veltkamp M (2013) How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation. PLoS ONE 8(1): e55341.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>

Syllabus for Discussion Groups
Expanding the Conversation: Catharsis Across Campuses
Project Directors: Sean Lake and Julie Montione

Discussion Groups Format

Faculty will have completed the face-to-face professional development course seminars -- our preparatory program -- to “expand the conversation of catharsis” in their Humanities courses. Professors will then lead discussions in their courses the following semester. They will be provided with a class set of texts and will be enrolled in a separate professional development Canvas course providing a repository of videos, articles, and space for feedback on their implementation. During the semester they and their students will participate in a public event designed to elicit dialogue with community partners and national figures regarding war and classical texts.

Courses will include but are not limited to:

- HUM 2220 Humanities Greece and Rome
- HUM 1020 Introduction to Humanities
- HUM 2250 Twentieth Century Humanities
- HUM 2310 Mythology

Discussion Group Rationale

The training highlights using ancient and modern texts to create meaningful dialogue between veteran and civilian students. Through our partner at Office of Veteran Affairs, student veterans will be actively recruited for these courses.

Discussion leaders:

The following professors have all submitted letters of commitment expressing their interest and enthusiasm in participating in the preparatory program and becoming discussion leaders: Karen Styles, Justin Stone, Eric Wallman, Jeremy Bassetti, Travis Rodgers, Vishma Kunu, Bob Warren, Matt Koval, Shawn Grant, Jed Broitman, and Nicole Hill.

Location

Discussion group will be in professor’s classes across Valencia’s campuses. Public Events will be in various auditoriums on East and West campus.

Discussion Group One

Spring 2020

Essential Question to Explore:

Can literature provide a catharsis for veterans?

Sources / Genres for Students:

- **Philosophy Text:** Aristotle’s *Poetics* (available through college library online)
- **Theater Texts:** 1. *Ajax* (available by college library online)
2. *Ajax in Iraq* (class set will be provided through the grant)

Wars / Conflicts: Trojan War & Iraq War

Event: Theater of War led by director Bryan Doerries and with Mark Brennan, a Valencia graduate and veteran of the war in Afghanistan, will serve on the panel presentation of Theater of War.

Discussion Group Two

Summer 2020

Essential Question to Explore:

Can we humanize our enemies?

Sources / Genres for Students:

- **Epic Poetry:** *Iliad* Book 24 (available by college library online)
- **Film:** scenes from *Joyeux Noel* & scenes from *Troy* (available by college library online)

Wars / Conflicts: Trojan War and World War I

Event: “Dinner and Movie with the Islamic Society of Central Florida”

Bassem Chaaban will lead a discussion oriented around the films *Joyeux Noel* and *Troy*. The plot of *Joyeux Noel* and the scene in which Priam and Achilles meet will be compared to the condition of American veterans and returning home where, for example, veterans of Iraq may live side by side with Iraqi immigrants.

Discussion Group Three

Fall 2020

Essential Question to Explore:

What has changed in 3,000 years?

Sources / Genres for Students:

- **Epic Poetry:** *Iliad* and *Aeneid* (available by college library online)
- **Nonfiction prose:** *Achilles in Vietnam* (class set will be provided through the grant)

Wars: Trojan War and Vietnam War

Event: Theater of War reads scenes from *Philoctetes* relevant to the ideas addressed in *Achilles in Vietnam*; a panel discussion of veterans follows -- including veterans from Vietnam and current conflicts.

Discussion Group Four

Spring 2021

Essential Question to Explore:

What is the cost of war for women, children and male civilians?

Sources / Genres for Students:

- **Tragedy:** *Trojan Women*
- **Film:** *Trojan Women* (1971)

Wars: Trojan War, Peloponnesian War, and Vietnam

Event: Dr. John Minbirole will discuss atrocities in war, and discuss Euripides' *Trojan Women* along with the modern film version of the tragedy produced in 1971.

All events will be attended by our partners at **South Seminole Middle School**, who will record veteran stories for the **Library of Congress Oral History project**.