

Section Plan: 2/17/03-2/21/03

## Antigone and Obligation

### I. Questions on Freud?

### II. Obligation - what is obligation?

A. Natural obligation - if state is doing right things (is just, e.g.), then there is a natural obligation to embrace it; and this right thing - justice, efficiency, moral - is knowable

1. Examples: Civil rights movement; civil disobedience

B. Conventional obligation - esp. consent; voluntary agreement of moral agents who self-impose obligations; authority derived from consent; social contract most prominent

1. Examples: cleaning schedule

### III. Antigone

A. Questions on Oedipus or Oedipus at Colonus?

B. What is Hegel's idea of ancient tragedy v. modern tragedy?

1. Ancient tragedy - ethical antagonists; neither are particularly wrong; clash

2. Modern tragedy - interior antagonism; results in individual action

C. What principles or values do we see at stake in Antigone?

1. Antigone - religious obligation; obligation to family - "I shall be a criminal, but a religious one. The time in which I must please those that are dead is longer than I must please those of this world. For there I shall lie forever." 85; "It was not Zeus that made the proclamation; nor did justice....I did not believe your proclamation had such power to enable one who will someday die to override God's ordinances."; "I know that I will die - of course I do - even if you had not doomed me by proclamation. If I shall die before my time, I count that a profit. How can such as I, that live among such troubles, not find a profit in death?" 505 - this pain doesn't count, but if I left my brother unburied - "that would have been real pain." 513

2. Creon - loyalty, obedience, security - "I would not count any enemy of my country as a friend - because of what I know, that she it is which gives us our security." 205; "If she sails upright and we sail on her, friends will be ours for the making."; "The man the city sets up in authority must be obeyed in small things

and in just but also in their opposites." 720; "There is nothing worse than disobedience to authority. It destroys cities, it demolishes homes; it breaks and routes one's allies." 730

D. Are these principles ultimately contradictory? I.e., is there anyone in the play that offers a solution? ISMENE - compromise

IV. Where is this relevant in contemporary society?

A. In the Bedroom - hopefully this will work - obeying law v. love of child, wife

B. Where else do we deal with conflicting obligations?

C. Is Ismene's strategy the best strategy?