**Joan of Arc: A Singular Life**

**1412-1431**

*“One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it. But to sacrifice who you are and to life without beliefs, that is a fate more terrible than dying.”*

From *Joan of Lorraine* by Maxwell Anderson

The Arc of the Course

*The nature of Joan of Arc’s genius has intrigued people for almost six centuries. In this seminar, we will consider that mystery through the lenses of historians, playwrights, filmmakers, actors, composers, visual artists, and theologians, as well as our own personal insights.*

Week I: The Context.

Setup of the Seminar. Review of the basic facts, as offered in selections from Pernoud’s *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses* and Shaw’s Preface to *Saint Joan*.

General historical and social overview of the time and place (15th Century France) with conversation about the nature of authority, especially as seen in beliefs and practices such as feudalism and the walled city; the Divine Right of King; the One, True, Holy Apostolic Church; and the established sense of place, nationhood, gender roles.

Reading Assignment for Week 2, January 23:

*Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw plus *“*Epilogue” & from the “Preface” (3-8)

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Vocation and Departure” (30-33; 46-52); “Orleans:” (70-4)

Consult maps at <http://www.susannedumbleton.com>

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Week 2: The Human Jeanne.

*Saint Joan* by Shaw emphasizes the rise of Joan *La Pucelle* as military and political phenomenon, measuring her against the other historical figures as well as the ideas of the time. Of particular interest to Shaw is the nature of inspiration, so in considering his rendering of the trial, we will discuss Shaw’s sense of the nature of Joan’s belief about self and God and the challenges to religious and secular authority, as well as the question of the wearing what was considered male attire. We will consider links Shaw builds to his own time (1924). We will compare his work with the historical texts provided by Pernoud.

Reading Assignment for Week 3, January 30:

*The Lark* by Jean Anouilh

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Orleans” (81-3; 85-7; 90-3; 101)

Optional: View *The Lark* [*https://archive.org/details/HallmarkHallofFameTheLark*](https://archive.org/details/HallmarkHallofFameTheLark)

Review depictions of Joan of Arc in art at <http://www.susannedumbleton.com>

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Week 3: The Spiritual Jeanne.

In Anouilh’s play, the mystical nature of Jeanne d’Arc’s vision emerges along side the practical facts of her work. The difficulty she faces when the Dauphin refuses her advice after the victory at Orleans proves almost more than she can manage, and we will consider what we learn in Pernoud about her “relapse.” We will consider the way in which Anouilh uses Joan of Arc’s story to encapsulate the dilemma of humans caught in dire circumstances and weighing a desire to survive against a desire to transcend unfair, even evil, opposition. We will discuss the role of faith in such discussion.

Reading Assignment for Week 4, February 6:

Watch *The Passion of Joan of Arc* by Theodor Dreyer

https://archive.org/details/DreyersThePassionOfJoanOfArc

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Trial of Condemnation” (165-6; 169-72; 172-9, 179-195)

“Relapse” (210-224) and “Death” (228-34)

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Week 4: The Abandoned Jeanne.

*The Abandoned Joan of Arc.* In his powerful 1928 film, Danish filmmaker Theodor Dreyer shows Joan beleaguered by erudite figures for whom her commonsensical, confident responses seem defiant of authority and a threat to world order. Using the film we will debate extreme views about the nature of Joan and her situation. What are current ideas about individual conscience?

We will also discuss the balance of power and the sexual dynamics of the situation and the techniques particular to film to make a point.

Reading Assignment for Week 5, February 13:

*Joan of Lorraine* by Maxwell Anderson

*Joan of Arc* by Pernoud, from “Rehabilitation” (258-63 and 264-69)

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Week 5: The Pragmatic Joan of Arc.

Caught in tensions within French provinces as well as between England and France, and Rome and local clerics, Joan of Arc demonstrated remarkable capacity to navigate. The simplicity and political skill of her responses stymied sophisticated clerics. Discussion will focus on the nature of the historical figure’s authenticity within the context of complex political and theological tensions. We will consider the nature of idealism and pragmatism as seen in Anderson’s play within a play

*Discussion:* We will consider the extent to which all leaders must accept the imperfection of those with whom they work in order to advance their mission.

Assignment for Week 6, February 20:

Read “On Playing Joan” by Imogen Stubbs, in Shaw, ppxiv-xvi

Read “Note” by Anouilh

Re-read any sections you would like to discuss as well as any notes you have taken. with an eye to returning to the opening questions: what are the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, cultural, psychological qualities that allowed Jeanne the Maid to think, act, and speak as she did?

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Week 6: The Persistent Jeanne.

Summary and Concluding Discussion.

**Required Readings:**

Anderson, Maxwell, *Joan of Lorraine: A Play in Two Acts.* Dramatists Play Service, 1946, ISBN 0-8222-0593-9

Anouilh, Jean. *The Lark.* Dramatists Play Service, 1998. ISBN-10:082220634X.

Dreyer, *The Passion of Joan of Arc. https://archive.org/details/DreyersThePassionOfJoanOfArc*

Pernoud, Regine. *Joan of Arc By Herself and Her Witnesses.* Trans. Edward Hyams. New York: Scarborough House 1992 (first published 1969.) ISBN-10: 081 2812603

Shaw, George Bernard. *Saint Joan. Penguin Classics, 2001. ISBN-10: 0140437916*.

**Related Readings/Films/Videos/Music**

Brecht, Berthold. *Saint Joan of the Stockyards.* Modern Plays, 1932.

Castor, Helen. *Joan of Arc: A History.* Harper Collins, 2016. ISBN-10:0062384406.

Harrison, Kathryn. *Joan of Arc: A Life Transfigured.* New York: Random House, 2015. ISBN-10: 0767932498.

*Joan of Arc, La Pucelle.* An anthologytranslated and annotated by Craig Taylor, New York: Manchester University Press, 2006.

Tchaikovsky. *The Maiden of Orleans.*

Twain, Mark: *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc.* Project Guttenberg.

Verdi, *Giovanna d’Arc*

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