



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Veterans Affairs to host Greek book club *Program promotes healthy living through communication*

OMAHA, Neb. — An army commander home from 10 years of war find his wife having an affair – with his cousin. The wife has been nursing a grudge from the incident that began the war – her husband killed their daughter. As a welcome-home gift, the wife kills her husband and is later killed herself by their son out for revenge. How can this family get out of its cycle of revenge?

This plot and others are included in a group of Greek plays that will be discussed in a four-session book group starting at the Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Lincoln, Neb.

Besides the book group, the project, Ancient Greeks, Modern Lives: A National Conversation, also includes a lecture, an acting workshop and a dramatic reading by a New York theater group.

The book group will at 7 p.m. each date in Room 107 at the Lincoln VA, 600 S. 70th St. Books will be provided.

Aug. 22: Homer, The Iliad, trans. Lombardo

Sept. 19: Aeschylus, Oresteia, trans. Meineck

Nov. 8: Sophocles, Ajax, Electra, and Philoctetes, trans. Meineck and Woodruff

Nov. 28: Euripides, Herakles Gone Mad, trans. Meagher

The project is one of many across the country organized by the Aquila Theater Group, which received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to partner with 100 different classics professors in 100 towns to bring discussions and performances of Greek drama to the public. Dr. Anne Duncan, associate professor and vice chair, Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, was chosen to coordinate the project in Lincoln.

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While Veterans in Nebraska are the main audience, the public is welcome to the events. Duncan chose to highlight Veterans because, she said, the material from ancient Greece revolves around the Trojan War and issues of war.

Duncan partnered with Dr. Christine Emler, associate chief of medicine at the Lincoln clinic, to bring the events to the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System. Such activities are a part of patient-centered care and focus on the patient as a whole person and not just a disease, Emler said.

“I think the arts, whether it’s in the form of music or in written art or dramatic art or photography, I think that certainly gets to the Veteran as a whole person,” Emler said. “I also truly believe that health is not just the absence of disease. So using the creative arts for to help improve communication, to help improve relationships, to help improve Veterans’ health, is a good thing.”

For those who may be intimidated at the thought of reading Greek plays, Duncan said, don’t be. She said her students usually say, “The names are kind of weird and hard to remember, but the stories are amazing. And in a way, they feel kind of familiar because Greek drama is one of the things that’s an ancestor to our own drama.

For more information, call Anna Morelock at 800-451-5796, ext. 95547, or Rob McCrory at 402-489-3802, ext. 97879

The VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System’s mission is to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. VA NWIHCS employees serve more than 161,000 Veterans in Nebraska, western Iowa and portions of Kansas and Missouri. The system includes a tertiary medical center in Omaha and a Community Living Center in Grand Island, Neb. Community-based outpatient clinics are located in Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte, Norfolk, and Bellevue, Neb., and Shenandoah, Iowa; and a contract outreach clinic in O’Neill, Neb. For more information, visit www.nebraska.va.gov.

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