

## World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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**Humanities Discipline: Theatre Appreciation (HUMA 100)**

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**Module Title: Religious Drama, Hellenistic Influences and the Jewish Tradition**

### **Module Objectives:**

1. Discover the earliest influences of Hellenistic dramatic influences on Jewish theatrical traditions
2. Examine the tensions between Jewish religious doctrine and presence of Greco-Roman dramatic influences
3. Develop competencies in directing, production/concept planning and script analysis of ritual theatre performances

### **Assigned Readings:**

Bowker, World Religions, "Judaism," pp. 125-147

Downs, The Art of Theatre, "Non-Western Theatre," chapter 11, pp. 238-239

Downs, The Art of Theatre, "The Art of Directing," chapter 8

Nashon, Jews and Theatre in an Intercultural Context, "From Alexandria to Berlin: The Hellenistic Play *Exagoge* Joins the Jewish Canon"

### **Study Questions:**

1. What historical context surrounds the Jewish playwright-poet Ezekiel? When did he live? Where?
2. How might the prohibition of "graven images" in Judaism influence Ezekiel's acceptance by Jewish and non-Jewish audiences of the Hellenistic period?
3. What popular forms of entertainment are associated with Greco-Roman theatres during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE?
4. How might Ezekiel's play *Exagoge's* form been influenced by the dramatic structure put forth in Aristotle's *Poetics*? (Act structure? Chorus?)

### **Assignment:**

Answer the previously listed study questions from the readings above. Construct a brief biographical entry and bibliographic citations for **Ezekiel the Tragedian** to be added to your **Individual Course Encyclopedia**. You must find *at least* 3 source citations to be added for this entry. Use the example below to guide your entry.

# ***Henrik Ibsen***

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian playwright considered to be the father of **modern realism**. Although his first plays were more aligned with Romanticism, Ibsen is most associated with using ordinary language to tell complex, sometimes disturbing stories of human society. Upon exile from Norway, Ibsen relocated to Germany and a production of one of his plays by the Duke of Saxe-Meinengen that showcased **realism** in its portrayal of characters. Afterwards, Ibsen's plays would be forever associated with capturing human frailty, questioning mankind's institutions and encouraging audiences to re-examine societal virtues and values.

## **Notable Works**

***A Doll's House (1879), Ghosts (1881), Enemy of the People (1882), Hedda Gabbler (1890)***

## **Sources**

Bellinger, Martha Fletcher., A Short History of the Drama. Henry Holt & Company: New York, 1927. pp. 317-22.

Brockett, O. and Franklin Hildy, History of the Theatre, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson: New York, 2007.

Downs, W.M., The Art of Theatre: Then and Now. Wadsworth: Boston, MA, 2013. pp. 381-384