tragicomedy: word coined by Mercury in the prologue of *Amphitryon* to describe a mythical burlesque/travesty, i.e. a play that combines characters associated with tragedy (treating these lightly) with those of comedy. It does not necessarily involve the combination of serious and comic elements as is implied in modern usage of the word (= “dark comedy” *et sim*).

Epidamnus: the setting of Plautus’s *Menaechmi*, wherein there are jokes on its apparent meaning (as a Greek/Latin hybrid), “for a loss”, i.e., a place of financial loss.

Alcmena: the wife of Amphitryon in *Amphitryon*; she appears virtuous and loyal toward her husband, but also may be comically characterized as something of a sensualist (by the standards of the ideal Roman *matrona*) in her affair with Jupiter, appearing pregnant on stage and immediately after a night of prolonged sex with Jupiter as she does.

*contaminatio*: the blending together of multiple plays or scenes from multiple plays, viewed as a fault by the likes of Luscius of Lanuvium (as in Terence’s prologues), but critical to the Roman process of creatively adapting Greek literature.

Periplectomenus: the old, misogynistic bachelor of *Miles Gloriosus* who aids Pleusicles in his pursuit of Philocomasium.

Euripides’ *Alkmene*: referred to at the beginning of *Rudens* (with reference to the previous night’s storm); serves to signal the play’s running dialogue with tragedy.

lex Oppia: sumptuary law passed in the grim days of the Second Punic War (215 BCE) to curtail women’s luxury expenditures; repealed after women’s protests in 195 BCE (Megadorus in *The Pot of Gold* addresses the social & familial issues associated with this law).

Euclio: the miser and main character of *The Pot of Gold*, whose anxiety and paranoia over his treasure alienates him from his family and society.

Pyrgopolynices: stereotypical braggart soldier of *Miles Gloriosus*, punished for his lechery at the end of the play with the threat of castration.

Pamphilus: marries Philumena in Terence’s *Hecyra*, whom he had raped before their marriage; they seem destined to enjoy a happy marriage after Bacchis’s intervention near the end of the play.
**Megadorus:** the misogynistic old bachelor of *The Pot of Gold*, who initially agrees to marry Euclio’s daughter (and has much to say about contemporary Roman marriage and dowries).

**Sceparnio:** Daemones’s gruff (rustic) slave in *Rudens*, who nonetheless makes clever metatheatrical remarks such as that at the beginning of the play about the night’s storm being an *Alkmene* of Euripides.

**Part II, Commentary (30 points each, 180 points total)**

*Distribution of Points:*
(1): 4 points total (= 2 points for author and 2 for the work);
(2): 4 points total (= 2 points each if 2 speakers)
(3): 4 points total for context
(4): 18 points total for commentary:

**Passage 1 (Plautus, *Amphitryon* 633-53)**

(1) Plautus, *Amphitryon*;
(2) Alcmena;
(3) after Jupiter leaves her (and as her real husband is about to arrive home), Alcmena muses about her husband and their marriage in song;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. on the page, the song can be read as one of “noble” self-sacrifice, i.e., Alcmena, as an idealized Roman matrona, shares in her husband’s glory as this relates to the state and his public life, while accepting the strains his responsibilities and duties place on their private life and her personal happiness;

b. on the other hand, by Roman standards at least, the song can be read as one of surprising sensuality: as the audience knows, the very pregnant matron has just enjoyed a prolonged night of sex with (whom she believes to be) her husband, and yet she seems unsatisfied. In this vein, her final celebration of “manhood” may be taken as sexual double entendre;

c. the song’s tone (darkly ironic?) could be made clear in performance: the actor playing Alcmena could, for example, play up his unusual appearance in pregnant costume and make gestures, etc., in such a way as to mark the (un?)seriousness and meaning of his words (see (a) and (b) above).

**Passage 2 (Terence, *Adelphoe* 41-58)**

(1) Terence, *Adelphoe*;
(2) Micio;
(3) in a monologue near the beginning of the play, Micio delineates the differences between his brother and himself;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. Micio establishes not only the personal differences between himself and his brother here, but also the play's main themes (city vs. country, liberal vs. authoritarian parenting, the role of the paterfamilias within the family, etc.);

b. we learn of the unusual arrangement whereby Micio has become Aeschinus's adoptive father, a factor which seems to inform his parenting philosophy, and perhaps the play's surprise ending, where the brothers seem to embrace their biological father;

c. while this early monologue and Micio's congenial character in general lead us to believe that his character and method of parenting will prevail, it turns out that his son has not kept him in the loop about something so important as the rape/pregnancy of Pamphila (cf. also the ending, where Micio must make various concessions to Demea).

Passage 3 (Plautus, *Menaechmi* 787-806)

(1) Plautus, *Menaechmi*;
(2) Senex (Speaker A), Matrona (Speaker B);
(3) Matrona has summoned her father to arbitrate in her marital dispute with her husband;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. Senex's traditional (patriarchal) conservatism: he has no qualms with Menaechmus I's consorting with hookers and partying in general;

b. Senex's traditionalist theory of gender: “real men” are entitled to the “privileges” about which Matrona complains, and depriving them of these would emasculate them;

c. what finally gets Senex's attention here is that Menaechmus is stealing his wife's possessions and giving them to Erotium, a threat to the family's finances (the marriage seems to be *sine manu* and Matrona is an *uxor dotata*); cf. the play's central theme of property (and relationships).

Passage 4 (Plautus, *Aulularia* 90-100)

(1) Plautus, *The Pot of Gold*;
(2) Euclio;
(3) Euclio reveals his absurdly miserly character early in the play by giving these orders to Staphyla as he is about to leave his house (to get a public handout);
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. the incivility of the obsessed Euclio is highlighted by his denial of such basics as fire and water to fellow human beings (as well as by his cruelty to Staphyla);

b. Euclio's miserliness has thus led him to suffer a deeply anti-social neurosis that isolates him from his community altogether;

c. the paradox of refusing admittance to Lady Luck (especially striking to a Roman audience because Fortuna is a goddess worshipped throughout ancient Italy) shows how this neurosis has developed to such an extent that it causes Euclio to act against both mainstream religion and his own best interests.

**Passage 5 (Plautus, *Rudens* 1235-53)**

(1) Plautus, *Rudens*;
(2) Daemones (Speaker A), Gripus (Speaker B);
(3) Daemones tells Gripus his views on honesty, moral probity, etc., in regard to ownership of the chest (the "trunkfish");
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. Daemones's uncompromising morality/sense of justice is entirely in line with the just universe described by Arcturus in the prologue;

b. the cynical Gripus presents a more down-to-earth “comic” (and contingent) perspective on morality, which contrasts starkly with the more idealistic/absolutist view of Daemones;

c. the metatheatrical debate here reflects the play's persistent bi-play between tragedy and comedy, serious morality and self-interested pragmatism, *et sim.* (can comedy in fact be didactic?)

**Passage 6 (Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* 1434-37)**

(1) *The Braggart Soldier*;
(2) Pyrgopolynices;
(3) the soldier ends the play by confessing the error of his ways;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. Pyrgopolynices's confession of guilt here seems surprisingly abrupt, given his stock characterization throughout, and is perhaps only brought about by the immediate threats of violence against him;

b. the typical *miles gloriosus*—marked by vanity, ignorance, self-delusion—seems incapable of rehabilitation or grasping the inappropriateness of his behavior; hence P.’s surprising self-awareness and moral reform here in a seemingly farcical ending;
c. as part of Romanizing the play, Plautus has stressed the soldier’s complicity in adultery (faux-adultery in this case, as no real situation for adultery exists) and thus created a clear “moral” for the play.

**Passage 7 (Plautus, Captivi 51-62)**

(1) Plautus, Captivi;
(2) the prologist;
(3) the prologist prepares the audience for the unusually serious Plautine play to be performed;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. the prologist mostly speaks in earnest, as Captivi turns out to be an ethically challenging play that for the most part is free of the usual cast of New Comedy’s demimonde;

b. the jarring assertion that “all battles will take place offstage” alerts the audience to the very serious (i.e. “tragic”) implications of some aspects of this play;

c. the prologist’s claim that “what follows here is fact for us actors” points to the actors’ status as slaves in real life, and so is an extremely striking example of Romanization in New Comedy, in so far as it invites the audience to contemplate the relevance of slavery to the acting company.

**Passage 8 (Terence, Hecyra 865-68)**

(1) Terence, The Mother-in-Law;
(2) Pamphilus (Speaker A), Bacchis (Speaker B);
(3) at the end of the play Pamphilus & Bacchis agree not to reveal the whole story to anyone else;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. Bacchis, who has just tied up the play’s loose ends (quasi-dea ex machina), shows herself to be a “hooker with a heart of gold” (and one of Terence’s most interesting female characters) who openly defies the stereotype of the harsh, self-interested and mercenary meretrix;

b. there is psychological realism in the agreement not to reveal more than is necessary or expedient (this reflects Terence’s Menandrian tendency toward naturalistic depiction of character and situation);

c. the reference to not doing things as they usually are done “in comedies” is a neat example of how Terence subtly combines metatheatrical devices with plot and character, here to comment on the comparative artificiality of other, more typical comedies that simply final conventions of “the happy ending”.
Passage 9 (Plautus, *Captivi* 998-1005)

(1) Plautus, *Captivi*;
(2) Tyndarus;
(3) Tyndarus reappears onstage (before Hegio and Philocrates) after being brought back from the mine;
(4) some possible talking points for elaboration:

a. the image of rebirth (= return from the underworld) reflects Tyndarus's imminent change of status from slave to free person;

b. the pointed Romanization of the passage—and therefore the issue of the arbitrariness of slavery—via the reference to the toys of “patrician children”;

c. this is a unique example of physical punishment being enacted during a Roman comedy, all the more significantly so in that (1) the person meted out this servile punishment is actually free, and (2) the punisher is in fact his father (cf. the structurally parallel relationship between Roman children and slaves vis-à-vis the paterfamilias).