Abandoned on a deserted island by his comrades, Philoctetes nurses a bitter grudge against the Greek army as he struggles to keep himself alive. Now, nearly ten years after they deserted him, the Greeks learn that they cannot capture Troy without Philoctetes' help.

Sophocles' Philoctetes is the story of Odysseus' cunning plan to win Philoctetes back to the Greek cause, and of the unintended effects that his tactics have on his auxiliary, Achilles' son Neoptolemus. The encounter between the three heroes ultimately calls into question the meaning of virtue, loyalty, patrimony, honor, and wisdom. We will read the play in Sophocles' glorious Greek, exploring the playwright's unique syntax and creative word-choice. We will seek to situate Sophocles' drama within its fifth-century Athenian context as well as exploring questions that arise in modern performance.