



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Religious Studies  
& Classics

## BECOMING A DETECTIVE: READING WITH SENECA

**OCTOBER 24, 2025**

**LOCATION:**

Modern Language Bldg.  
Room 413

**TIME:**

12:30 pm

**SUGGESTED PARKING:**

Second Street Garage



This paper investigates two works of Seneca as well as a moment of Senecan reception, the translation of his *Oedipus* by Ted Hughes. As a way to analyze these works together, I posit that we can fruitfully think about Seneca's corpus with the mindset of a detective scanning for clues in order to understand the hidden truth of a matter. While this may mirror the methodology of close reading in many respects, Seneca seems to me to encourage such a hermeneutic more than other writers of this period. From his *Natural Questions*, a treatise dealing with Stoic physics and the natural world, to his *Oedipus*, a tragedy that diverges dramatically from Sophocles' original, Seneca asks his reader to delve deeper into his texts to uncover the truth. I will conclude with a moment in which my own detective work in the Ted Hughes archive revealed something mysterious and important for our understanding of Hughes' poetics.



**PROFESSOR CHRIS TRINACTY**

*Classics*

Chris Trinacty (MA 2000) is the author of *Senecan Tragedy and the Reception of Augustan Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2014), two commentaries to Seneca's *Natural Questions*, and numerous articles on authors such as Seneca, Horace, and Pliny. He is Professor of Classics at Oberlin College and is currently working on books about Nero, Seneca, and Horace.