

GREEK & ROMAN STUDIES AT IWU

PRESENTS

THE IDES OF FEBRUARY PRESENTATION

Beckman Auditorium, The Ames Library

February 24, 2015

4:30 PM

Nancy Sultan, IWU

"Let us Now Praise Wicked Men:  
Netflix Series *House of Cards* (2013-14) and the 'Fifth Age' of Television."



In this short reception study (20 mins) I argue that the character of Francis Underwood in the Netflix series *House of Cards* is an exemplum of an ancient Greek folk-hero-type: the Odyssean trickster figure. This type fascinates us by being *polumêtis* (a man of many schemes) but has the potential to become such a wicked scoundrel (*ponêros*) so as to demand ritual sanctions. I interpret the series as a 'social drama' in the Victor Turner sense, one that will unite us all around the punishment of this *ponêros* leader before he infects us all with his hubris.

A discussion of the series will follow the talk.