

PROVISORY SYLLABUS – SUBJECT TO CHANGES

This course has been approved for GE-B and Traditions and Historical Foundations, GE-H

CLAS 150g: The Greeks and Their Legacies

Schedule: TTh 11am-12:20pm **Professor:** Christelle Fischer-Bovet (fischerb@usc.edu)

Course Description

This course introduces students to the civilization of ancient Greece, its history and culture, and legacy in major theaters of reception from antiquity onward. The Greeks stand at the origin of a vast cultural inheritance felt widely in the western tradition and beyond, in literature and in the arts (in the achievements of Homeric epic, Attic tragedy, comic drama, in enduring work of painting, sculpture, and architecture); the earliest works of philosophy, rhetoric, and history in the western tradition all were composed in Greek; and Greek science has laid the basis for a vast area of intellectual endeavor in later periods from ancient Rome to medieval Arabic culture to the rediscovery of classical learning in the European Renaissance. From the Greeks have come core ideas of political thought and experience such as freedom and democracy with a nearly global reach of influence; and aspects of Greek history, mythology, and religion all have provided an inspiration and language for creative endeavor in the arts in a wide area down to the modern period — even in areas that might strike us as thoroughly modern such as film. Other, less admirable forms of influence may be seen in Greeks' relationships with institutions and ideas such as slavery and ethnocentrism, or with the institutions and practices responsible for conditions of extreme social inequality or gender disparity characteristic of ancient societies. Generally, the Greeks have made lasting contributions to how we pose and think about key questions to define us as individuals and as a society, questions such as What is a state, or what is the nature of a good state? What is the appropriate relationship of the individual to society, and how can their separate interests be accommodated and reconciled? What is beauty, or justice? What is the relationship between nature and culture? What is the nature of our relationship with the divine or with fate? And how can individuals and societies survive and flourish in the face of the irrational drives of human violence and aggression?

This course prepares students with all the tools for understanding the complex cultural inheritance of ancient Greek thought and culture from close study of major scenarios in history and key sources in literature and material culture, and from survey of key episodes in the transmission of Greek culture in later periods.

Learning Objectives

Objectives of the course may be stated as follows:

1. To provide broad knowledge of ancient Greek history and culture, especially those aspects of it exerting a lasting influence on later ideas, institutions, and values in various theaters of reception;
2. To help students to situate ancient Greece in the context of a wide cultural area in the Mediterranean and Near East both in antiquity and beyond, with emphasis on the spread and transformation of ideas and practices, and their modern legacies;
3. To help students to engage with complex texts in the literary, historiographical, and philosophical traditions preserved from ancient Greece and pressing questions about human experience raised by them which continue to concern us today;
4. To help students to cultivate valuable critical and interpretive ability through close study of major works of the human imagination;

5. To help students gain a new perspective on our own culture by tracing its roots in antiquity

Course Requirements

1. Quizzes (objective, short-answer questions) taken in discussion section [15%]
2. Two seven-page essays (25% each)
3. Midterm exam (objective, short-answer questions + one essay) [15%]
4. Final exam (short-answer questions + essays) [20%]

Additional requirements are as follows:

- All students are expected to attend lecture and section meetings each week, to prepare for class meetings by completing assigned readings and other relevant assignments when due, and to contribute to discussion session activities through active engagement with course questions and materials. How a student fulfills these requirements and how much one learns from the course will be reflected in the final grade received.
- Submission of all required assignments is necessary in order to receive a passing grade in the course.
- University policy on grade of “Incomplete” will be followed.
- Extensions on paper and exams will only be given for substantial reasons (for example, serious illness, family emergency, conflict with religious holidays); students must make every effort to contact the instructor for approval *in advance* where possible.

Required readings: (available at the bookstore and on reserve in Leavy Library – 2 hours)

- Pomeroy et. al., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, Oxford University Press; 3rd edition (December 16, 2011) - ISBN-13: 978-0199846047
- Ober and Norman, *The Threshold Of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*; W. W. Norton & Company; Fourth edition, *Reacting to the Past* (June 22, 2015) - ISBN-13: 978-0393938876
- Links to **supplementary primary readings will be posted on Blackboard** (BB, see “assignments” with readings)

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departement/departement-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments [NB: All assigned readings and visual material listed under ‘Texts’ are to be completed or viewed by students in advance of lecture.]

Weeks 1-2: The Homeric world: warrior culture in archaic Greece; the epic imagination in antiquity and beyond

Texts: Homer, *Iliad*; Herodotus (select passages treating legacy of Homeric poetry in antiquity); Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam* (selections); *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986)

Week 3: Archaic song culture; *kouroi* and *korai* in literature and the arts

Texts: Greek lyric poets (selections)

Week 4: Greece and Persia from the Ionian revolt to Marathon and Salamis; imaginative geography in the classical tradition

Texts: Herodotus, *Histories* (selections); Hippocratic corpus, *Airs, Waters, Places* (selections); Aeschylus, *Persians*; *300* (Zach Snyder, 2006)

Week 5: Tyranny and the origins of democracy

Texts: Herodotus, *Histories* (selections); Pindar (selections); Solon (selections)

Week 6: Transition and crisis; myth and tragedy in democratic culture

Texts: Aeschylus, *Oresteia*; *Oresteia* (Peter Hall, 1981)

Weeks 7-9: The rise of Athens and the Peloponnesian War

Texts: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (selections); P.J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Greek Historical Inscriptions 478-404 BC* (documents for Athenian imperial culture in practice); Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* (selections); Gregory Crane, *Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity* (selections)

Week 10: Athenian democracy in concept and practice

Texts: Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (selections); P.J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Greek Historical Inscriptions 478-404 BC* (document for Athenian political institutions)

Week 11: Democracy and its discontents; the philosophical revolution

Texts: Aristophanes, *Birds*; Plato, *Apology, Republic, Phaedrus* (selections); Anon., “The Old Oligarch”

Week 12: Macedonia, Alexander’s Greece, Alexander’s Asia

Texts: Isocrates, *Panegyricus* (selections); James Romm, *Alexander the Great: Selections from Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Quintus Curtius*; Phillip Harding, *From the End of the Peloponnesian War to the Battle of Ipsus* (documents for state relations in the era of Alexander); *Alexander* (Oliver Stone, 2004)

Week 13-14: The Hellenistic world – the Successors of Alexander in Egypt and Iran

Texts: Rosetta Stone and selections of inscriptions, papyri; Antiochus’ cylinder and cuneiform texts; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautika*

Week 15: New horizons