

INTRODUCTION TO GREEK CIVILIZATION

CLAS 403

Professor: Phillip Deen
Senior Lecturer of Philosophy & Humanities, Humanities Program
Time: Tu & Th 1:10 – 3:00
Dates: 01.21- 05.01
UNH: Satisfies Historical Perspectives (HP) graduation requirement.
Classroom: 345
Office: 431
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Office Hours: I am on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays. The best time to meet would be before 10:00 or right after class at 3:00. If these times do not work for you, I am sure we can set up a time, online if necessary.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an examination of the immensely influential cultural contributions of the ancient Greeks, with particular emphasis on 5th Century Athens. Though we will spend some time recounting historical events, this is a humanities course and the central concern will then be the meaning of these events as expressed through mythology, drama and philosophy. Ultimately, humanities courses are about returning to ancient texts in order to educate our moral character in the present day.

COURSE GOALS

The specific goal of the course is to gain knowledge about the texts and culture of classical Greece. Second and more broadly, you will engage deeply with general questions of aesthetics, politics, metaphysics, and the nature of a good life. Third and most broadly, I will help you learn how to read and to think. You obviously know how to do both somewhat already, but the humanities are also about being able to read and think critically. You will learn how to understand, present, and evaluate arguments better in the hope that this will make you a more interesting, reflective, and ethical person.

TEXTS

The Portable Greek Historians: The Essence of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius.

Finley, ed. (Penguin Books, 1977) ISBN 014015065X

Sophocles, *Antigone, Oedipus the King, Electra*. (Oxford World Classics, 2009) ISBN 0199537178

Four Plays by Aristophanes: The Birds; The Clouds; The Frogs; Lysistrata. Arrowsmith, ed. (Meridian, 1984) ISBN 0452007178

A Plato Reader: Eight Essential Dialogues. Reeve, ed. (Hackett, 2012) ISBN 1603848118

There will also be a number of readings posted on the course website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essays (60% = 5 x 12%)—This is a philosophy class, which means that the emphasis will be on your ability to understand, present and evaluate arguments from and about the texts. Seventy percent of your grade will be determined by **5 short essays** (4-5 pages each) on the following subjects: (a) Pre-Classical mythology; (b) Tragedy; (c) War / Comedy; (d) Early Platonic Philosophy; and (e) Middle Platonic Philosophy. I will provide a short list of **assigned essays questions**, from which you will **pick one**, and you will have a week to write your essay. Further instructions will be included with the assignment.

Unless I have authorized an extension – and that requires a legitimate justification – assignments must be turned in at the scheduled time to be accepted. If it is impossible for you to complete the homework on time, please notify me as soon as possible. I am sure we can figure out a solution, but I need to know beforehand.

Worksheets (30% = 18 x 1.67%)—For each class, I will post a worksheet for the assigned texts. I am providing them to help you understand the arguments that we will be discussing in class and you will be writing about in your essays. Each worksheet asks you to (a) explain the essential points of the arguments and (b) give your own opinion on the relevant philosophical issue.

You must **complete 18 worksheets** out of 24 over the course of the semester. Please do **half before mid-semester**. There are five possible grades: Excellent (95), Good (85), Sufficient (75), Insufficient (65), or Not Completed (0).

As one purpose of this assignment is to make sure that you are prepared for class, and because I don't want you doing the homework after we have discussed the texts in class, it **must be submitted before the relevant class begins**.

In-Class Participation (10%)—I do not grade attendance, but you are expected to come to class each week having read and prepared to discuss the material. You are not required to speak every class, but you must be prepared to discuss the material.

A: 93.3+, A-: 90.0-93.2, B+: 86.6-89.9, B: 83.3-86.5, B-: 80.0-83.2, C+: 76.6-79.9, B: 73.3-76.5, B-: 70.0-73.2, D+: 66.6-69.9, D: 63.3-66.5, D-: 60.0-63.2, F: 0-59.9

HOW YOUR ESSAYS WILL BE GRADED

I know that philosophy can be intimidating since you may not be used to reading or discussing it. You are not expected to come to class having mastered the material. After all, my job is to help you by explaining the texts' arguments in class. But, by reading the material before class, by sharing in the class discussion, and by listening to my explanation of the arguments, you will be prepared to write an argument of your own.

You are being asked to write an argumentative essay. This is very different from a book report or a journal entry because you are trying to persuade your audience to believe something on the basis of good reasons and evidence. There is absolutely nothing wrong with presenting your opinions or using "I," but your opinions must be cogently presented and defended.

I truly do not care if you agree with me, so don't try to guess. After all, I could be wrong. What matters is how well you argue. There are three elements of a good argumentative essay:

Knowledge—You need to show that you understood the texts and their arguments. What you write must accurately represent the texts, and in your own words.

Clarity and Organization—It must be well argued. It doesn't matter if you are correct if your meaning is not clear to the audience. Your words must not be obscure and ideas must be well-structured. Also, proofread for grammar, spelling, etc.

Insight—This shows not only the ability to present the material accurately and clearly, but also shows a deeper insight into the text's implications and significance. What is the basic issue? Why does it matter?

An A-range paper fulfills each of the above 3 criteria to an excellent-to-truly exceptional degree. A B-range paper fulfills each of the above 3 criteria to a good-to-very-good degree. A C-range paper fulfills some of the above 3 criteria to a fair-to-good degree, but exhibits some significant problems in relation to at least one of them. A D-range paper shows serious deficiencies in two or more of the above criteria.

Therefore, your paper must have a brief **introduction** in which you inform your audience what you will be discussing. You also need a **clear thesis**, that is, a statement of what you will believe and will be arguing for in this paper. The rest of your paper is dedicated to **explaining why your thesis is correct**. If you assert that something is true that is not just background information and that is important for your thesis, then you need to back it up. A major part of showing why your thesis is correct is **presenting the texts' arguments** so your audience has the background information they need. If you quote a meaningful passage from the text, you need to **make clear how that selection supports your argument**. **Provide examples** when relevant.

When I grade your papers, I will highlight the structure of your argument. That means the claims you make and the reasons and evidence you use to support them. I will also make insertions, deletions, and add comments where to make corrections or simply to ask questions.

HONOR CODE

As in all academic work, be sure to adhere to the policies governing academic integrity outlined in the University's "Student Rights, Rules and Responsibilities." Please note that plagiarism, including but not limited to, using the words or ideas of another person as found in books, journals, Web sources, and any LLM such as ChatGPT without citation will result in a failure for the assignment. Additional penalties, including failure for the course or expulsion from the University, may also be imposed.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Of course, you will be using an electronic device to attend class. However, please turn off and store cell phones and other electronic devices prior to the beginning of class (unless you get special dispensation for note taking).

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, please register with Student Accessibility Services.

READINGS SCHEDULE

I. Mythology, History, and the Rise of Greece

1. Tu: Introduction to the Course
Th: Classical Civilizations, Mythology and Greek Religion
Hamilton, 'The Titans and the Twelve Great Olympians'
Hesiod, *Theogony*
2. Tu: The Trojan War and Epic Poetry
Hamilton, 'The Trojan War'
Homer, *Iliad* Bk. I, XXII & XXIV
Th: The Hero
Hamilton, 'Hercules'
- 'The Adventures of Odysseus'
Homer, *Odyssey* Bk. IX
3. Tu/Th: The Persian War and the Birth of History
Herodotus, *Histories* [PGH 74-79, 81-116, 131-215]
Essay #1 Assigned

II. Athens Triumphant

4. Tu/Th: Classical Greek Art and the Parthenon
Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Ancient Greece* [Ch. 2-3]
5. Tu: Tragedy: The Cycle of Violence
Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
Th: Tragedy: Hubris and Fate
Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*
6. Tu: Tragedy: Authority of the State vs. the Family
Sophocles, *Antigone*
Th: Tragedy: Vengeance and the Female Hero
Euripides, *Medea*
Essay #2 Assigned

III. The Fall of Athens

7. Tu/Th: Democracy, War, and Empire
Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* [Bk. I: 66-88; II: 34-54; III: 26-28, 35-50]
- 'Melian Dialogue' [online, but at V: 84-116 in the original]
- *The Peloponnesian War* [VI: 1-2, 6-32, 60-62, 88-93; VII: 60-87]
Old Oligarch, 'Constitution of the Athenians'
8. Tu: Comedy: Women against the War
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*
Essay #3 Assigned

IV. Philosophical Reflections

8. Th: Pre-Socratic Philosophy
Miletians, Parmenides, Heraclitus, et. al. 'Pre-Socratics Packet'

SPRING BREAK

9. Tu: The Practice of Philosophy
Plato, *Euthyphro*
Th: The Good Life
Plato, *Gorgias* (481b – 507e)
- *Protagoras* (348c – 362)
10. Tu: Comedy: Philosophy and Public Morality
Aristophanes, *The Clouds*
Th: The Value of the Examined Life
Plato, *Apology*
11. Tu: The Philosopher and the Polis
Plato, *Crito*
Th: Moral Education and Recollection
Plato, *Meno*
Essay #4 Assigned
12. Tu: Love and the Eternal Forms
Plato, *Symposium* (198-223d)
Th: Intrinsic vs. Instrumental Value of Virtue
Plato, *Republic*, Bk. I, II (357b-369)
13. Tu: A Just Soul
Plato, *Republic*, Bk. IV (427d-444e)
Th: Wisdom and Rule
Plato, *Republic*, Bk. V-VII (472e-490d, 504d-521)
14. Tu: Philosophy after Plato: Cynicism & Stoicism
Dio Chrysostom, '4th Discourse on Kingship'
Epictetus, *Enchiridion*
Th: Philosophy after Plato: Epicureanism and Neoplatonism
Epicurus, 'Letter to Herodotus'
- 'Letter to Menoeceus'
- 'Principle Doctrines'
Plotinus, *Enneads* (selections) SUPPLEMENTAL ONLY
Essay #5 Assigned