

COMM 3666: Special Topics in Communications:
Greek Intellectual Revolution

Department of Communication Studies, University of Minnesota
Winter break 2017-18

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Summary

This course is a three-week study abroad experience in Greece with the objective to examine how this ancient culture revolutionized its self-understanding of certain eternal human questions. Students will first acquire a degree of cultural competence in understanding the ancient culture, secondly understand how that revolution shaped our own western cultural foundations, and thirdly to use the ancient answers to provoke a critical assessment our answers to those same human questions.

The class consists of a pre-trip meeting, the time in country, and doing an on-line evaluation at the end of the class.

Course Objectives

Why Greece?

How should a community govern itself? How should a community interpret its own history, reinforce its values, situate itself in relation to other communities, set gender roles, and deal with death and other ultimate questions? These are questions fundamental to the liberal arts and fundamental to being an contributing citizen of a democracy in a globalized world.

A remarkable community came into being in classical Greece. This community thought long and hard about those questions. Out of this came revolutions in democracy, drama, rhetoric and art that impacted all of Greek history and western culture as well. Examination of sport, religion and women's complex roles in this society help us understand these revolutions. As we visit sites and consider texts these various themes keep reappearing in various aspects and combinations.

One way to pose those fundamental questions about our own lives and culture is to explore how another culture (or cultures) grappled with them. That is the purpose of this class.

"Some Greek fellow was always first!"

-- Lucretius, 1st cent. BCE
Roman philosopher & poet,
quoted in Eva Keuls and Kees
Scherer, *Greece*, p. 5

"To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?" - Cicero, *Orator*, 120

"The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land." - G. K. Chesterton, 1909

"One's destination is never a place but a new way of seeing things." - Henry Miller

Global Perspectives

This course satisfies the Global Perspectives Liberal Education Theme.

This course and all readings and materials focus on the country of Greece, both ancient and modern.

The course examines several aspects of culture that are enduring points of human inquiry (the questions identified above) and compares and contrasts the answers generated by the ancient culture to the different answers students have imbibed as they grew up in western culture. (See the 'theme' section below for specific issues and how they are approached.)

The different answers of the ancient cultures pose implications for student's own values, for methods of studying other cultures, and for policies of the United States.

Understanding the ancient culture(s) requires critical awareness of contemporary issues

Contemporary assumptions distort our view of ancient cultures. Historically there has been an uncritical admiration of the ancient Greeks. 19th Century academics looked for and found affirmation of their sexism and stance of cultural superiority in ancient Greece. Critical scholars of our generation more attuned to issues of justice tend to accept those conclusions and therefore condemn the ancient society. In their view, studying ancient Greece is at best irrelevant, mere antiquarianism and at worst affirms western cultural imperialism.

This is a profound error. A new generation of scholars have been assembling the data, old and newly discovered, to challenge the 19th century view of ancient Greece.

In this class students learn to be careful of making assumptions about other cultures, learn how contemporary concerns can distort views of other cultures, and consider key aspects of contemporary culture in the light of the different perspectives of ancient culture.

The ancient culture's answers to key questions are different than ours.

While it is true that western culture's foundations are in ancient Greece, it is not true that there is a straight line between them and now. Some of the differences students encounter are:

- Ancient direct democracy is based on mass participation, officials chosen by lottery, and the use of trials for political purposes, no separation of powers or a written constitution, among other differences.
- While undeniably a patriarchal culture, elite women functioning as priestesses had considerable agency. Women were prominent in other ways in public ritual.
- Greek religion is different from almost any modern religion, be it "western" or "eastern." Further, the Greek Orthodoxy of contemporary Greece is unfamiliar to most American students.
- The mixing of sporting events with religious festivals, both in a civic context, places different values on each.

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there"
-- L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, 1953.

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." – William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

We fashion statues with materials from statues fashioned by other older craftsmen, we fashion poems with words from poems written in other times by other poets, we fashion lives with feelings, events that other people before us had experienced. We appropriate works, modify plans, change perspectives invent something new fashion things entirely ours always leaving traces of an earlier origin. We go on putting our names beside other names even those that we'd like to erase.
-- "Appropriation of Statues", Titos Patrikios, 2006

Contemporary Greece

The encounter with **globalization** is based on contemporary Greece and its relation to the European Union. We learn about the world largely through our mass media. And mass media has a narrative to sell about contemporary Greece: lazy Greeks sponging off of thrifty northern Europeans. That EU institutions are neo-liberal and that Greece was born in debt and has been often exploited and re-colonized since is unmentioned.

As a study abroad experience we will be "on the ground" immersed in modern Greece, talking to Greeks, working with local staff people. All of this helps us see the divergence between media narratives and a more complex reality.

We aim to understand a different culture on its own terms to gain a degree of cultural competence.

Themes of the class

Course objectives are explored experientially through a consideration of a number of themes. These are not studied one at a time during the course, but are constantly reoccurring in various combinations as we read primary texts and, equally "read" sites and art (more on this below).

These themes are:

- To understand the origins of conscious analysis about **democracy**, how Greek democracy differs from our Republic, the arguments against democracy made by Plato and others and what values and ethics are revealed by those arguments. Sites that focus on this: The Pnyx (Assembly grounds), the Keiremikos (the cemetery, site of Pericles's funeral oration) and the modern Greek Parliament (analysis of struggle of independent Greece to create a stable democracy).
- To understand the origins of conscious analysis about **rhetoric** and deliberation's role in civic governance. This theme is advanced by analysis of the clash between sophists and Socrates including Aristophanes' *The Clouds*. Visual and spacial rhetoric are concepts that help explain the shape of Orthodox churches and their use of icons (Hosios Lukas and Nafplio churches).

Oratory is the art of enchanting the soul.
- Socrates, quoted in Plato, *Phaedrus*

For what should a man live if not for the pleasures of discourse?
- Phaedrus, quoted in Plato, *Phaedrus*
- To understand the origins of formal **drama** in civic life and drama's shaping of public values. Sites that focus on this: The Theater of Dionysus, Theater of Epidaurus.
- To consider the **gender roles** of the ancient culture, the way they are different than ours, as well as the role of women in religion and public rituals with a focus on the content and staging of drama and the oracle at Delphi. There are a surprising number of primary texts that comment on gender roles in ancient culture including many dramas, and several essays.
- At several points, **sports** facilities and games are co-located at religious sites. What does this imply about value placed on athletic competition? (Sites of Athens, Olympia and Delphi.)
- To contemplate the three eras in which Greek culture created enduring **artistic achievements** in sculpture, architecture and painting (Cycladic, Classical, and Byzantine) and to see it as a reflection of civic values.
- To move to **cultural competence** in seeing one or more of the cultures we encounter (Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean, Classical, Hellenistic, Byzantium, modern Greece) as differentiated categories, with values and ethics we can understand in their own terms.
- To gain deeper insight on certain **contemporary issues** (e.g. the status of women, democracy, and extremism) by reflection on how they have been valued in other cultures.

- To develop skills at **cooperatively working** in small group settings where there is intensive interaction with other group members.

Student Learning Outcomes

Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.

- Encounter several ancient cultures and their diverse value systems (e.g. privileging "the warrior" or "balance").
- Encounter ancient Greek religion and a modern religion (Eastern Orthodoxy), both unfamiliar to most citizens of the United States.
- Encounter a contemporary society struggling with globalization and neoliberalism.

Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines.

- Experience the interaction of archeology, rhetoric, history, drama, and political science in developing an understanding of ancient cultures.
- Experience the process of creativity and innovation in shaping conceptions of rhetoric and its place in political society.
- Appreciate the creativity and innovation of pre-technical societies.

Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

- Understand both the contributions and limitations of the foundational contributions of western culture including democracy and public expressions of morals and values.
- Understand the role of super-national institutions and their impact on small countries and poor people.
- Learn to work effectively in an intense small group of students from diverse backgrounds.

Text and Readings

J. Nordin, "Site and activity guide"

J. Nordin, "An Introduction to the History of the Conceptualization of Rhetoric"

J. Nordin, ed., "Class Reader"

A number of primary sources, listed below and in the class schedule.

We also spend a considerable amount of energy "reading" the physical sites. The differing shapes of Greek temples and Byzantine churches reveal much of those different religions meant to worshippers. The shape of theaters, assembly grounds, the geography of cemeteries, among others, are also sources for us. Sites illuminate process, ritual, class relations, and relation of human to the divine.

Likewise, we "read" artifacts such as vase paintings and statues for what they reveal about gender roles, civic values and religious beliefs.

Points of emphasis

- Greece is not a tropical country; come prepared to be outside in rain and near-freezing temperatures.
- Working cooperatively in a group is a major component of the class so you must be prepared to tolerate and support each other. You must attend all activities.
- Be flexible; something will have to be rescheduled or changed during this trip.
- The risks you face on this trip are not significantly larger than from living in Minnesota, but they are different risks.
- Grading is not like other classes. Study abroad is not an "automatic A".
- This class can be a challenge in personal ways—but a good challenge.

Expectations

Respect for the instructor and the students should be expected. This mutual respect requires that:

- You prepare properly for the trip.
- You do not “duck out” of class events.
- Cell phones, computers and other electronics are never a distraction.
- You follow the class contract we develop in our pre-trip meetings.

Attendance The nature of this class demands that you will attend all activities, including pre-trip meetings.

Arguing about grades First, talk to me. If that does not resolve the issue, submit a formal, written request making an argument for your position. Attach any original graded assignment. As with all arguments, insults, whines, wild accusations and the like will simply lead to the request being denied.

Few problems are solved by ignoring them Few academic problems, anyway. Almost any issue can be overcome if you are forthright and proactive about it. My overriding objective is to have you benefit by this class. Seek me out for any issue.

Taking responsibility I am responsible for offering a quality educational experience. You are responsible for taking advantage of the opportunity.

University Policies

Academic dishonesty Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses that undermine the ability of a society to deliberate and decide issues properly. Plagiarism is using material written by others and claiming it as your own. Academic dishonesty includes inventing false sources, acquiring test materials without permission, submitting false records of academic achievement, and making false statements to an instructor about issues pertaining to academic achievement. This includes making false statements about needs for changing deadlines. Penalties can include reduction in grades, a zero score on an assignment, failure in the course or expulsion from the University.

It should be noted that this syllabus has copied, with permission, from the syllabi of others and from university web sites.

Special Needs The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), are invited to contact DS to arrange a confidential discussion at 612- 626-1333 (V/TTY) or ds@umn.edu. You are responsible for contacting DS early in the semester and ensuring that I have been sent the letter outlining what accommodations are justified for you.

Note that Greece has not even begun to develop handicapped accessibility in spaces either public or private. Accurate nutritional information is not always available. Check with me if you have any concerns.

Student conduct The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

Sexual Harassment "Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: <http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Mental health and stress As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website at <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>

Study abroad can be stressful in different ways from a classroom setting. It can be productive stress. We are there to support you.

Theme The class has been certified as meeting both the Lib Ed. Arts and Humanities core and the Global Perspectives theme.

Evaluation

Grading components will consist of the following

- **Focus group report** Each student is assigned one thematic group. The group reads a set of primary texts associated with the theme. They meet with the instructor and then present their findings to the rest of the class.
- **Discussion participation** At several points there are formal class discussions; one using a study guide.
- **Journaling** Four journals are required during the trip with students expected to show reflection and integration of experiences.
- **Class participation** Do you ask a lot of questions? Do you show interest? Do you in any way disrupt or delay the logistics of the class, or do you do anything especially helpful to make the class run smoothly?
- **Dinner with the course leader(s)** Each of you will have a small group meeting over dinner for a more focused discussion

This is not an "automatic 'A'". Active and constructive participation in all phases of the class is an important part of your grade.

Students have the option to focus on aspects of Greek cultural heritage that are relevant to their interests.

Grading elements

Focus group report	15%
Rhetoric study guide	10%
Journals 1-3	20%
Delphi project presentation	10%
Class participation	35%
Report on Nat. Museum visit	10%
Dinner with the instructor	5%
Other participation	20%
Final Journal	10%

Readings for focus groups

Students will have the opportunity to focus on a theme over the course of the class. Each group will focus on reading, evaluating and reporting to the class on a set of primary texts that relate to their focus. A partial list follows

Focus group on Gender roles

Key questions:

- Why is it hard to be dispassionate about this?
- How does the absence of writings by women affect what we know?
- How do you see the role of women in Greek religion?
- What are the ethical implications of having prescribed roles?

Focus texts:

Plutarch, *Virtues of Women*, (excerpts)
Grave markers for women in the Keramikos
"Gyges and the queen", Herodotus, 1.8-1.13
Short stories about prostitution in *The Learned Banqueters*
Lucian, "Dorian and Myrtale" *Chattering Courtesans*
Women compared to animals by Semonides of Amorgos, *Women*
Perspectives on Aspasia in Plutarch, *Life of Perikles* and Plato, *Menexenus*
"We women are the most unfortunate" speech by Medea in Euripides *Medea*

Presentation to be made at Delphi

Focus group on Sport and society

Key questions:

- What is the implication of having sport and religion so closely connected?
- Thinking of the story of the Olympic torch, what does it mean to invent a past? Where are we doing that now?

Focus texts:

Pindar, Olympic Odes (No. 6, 8)
Plato, "Lesser Hippias", 363c ff
Homer, "Funeral Games", Iliad Book 23
Xenophanes, Fragment 2
Lucian, *Herodotus*
Philostratus, *On Gymnastics*

Presentation to be made at Olympia

Focus group on Religion and the gods

Key questions:

- Consider this: "God in Christianity, Islam and Judaism is a protest against the injustice of the universe; the Gods in Greek religion are an explanation of why the universe is unjust."
- The role of women in religion overlaps with the focus group on gender roles, you may wish to consult with that group when assessing religious gender issues.
- Have the Greek gods truly disappeared? Did they have, do they have, a 'life' in our modern culture

Focus texts:

Herodotus, "Who is happiest", 1.30 – 1.33
Callimachus, Hymn "The Bath of Pallas"

Hesiod, "Theogony" (excerpts)
St. Peter of Damaskos, *The Philokilia*, v. 3, p. 157.
Saying about the gods, Xenophon of Colophon, *The Stromata*

Modern texts:

Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*, p. 275-6
Richard Stoneman, *The Ancient Oracles*, p. 65
Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Athens: A Cultural and Literary History*, p. 77

Presentation to be made at Hosios Loukas

Students may identify an alternative group (such as democracy, rhetoric, art, etc.)

Texts for "Site" readers

Students adopting this option will be responsible to study, practice and "declaim" these texts with fluency and appropriate emotions at the indicated sites.

Athens

Sappho, "Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled mind"
Sappho, "Some men say"

The Pnyx

Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, 403ff

Olympia

Lesser Hippias, 363c ff
Pausanias, Eleia II 20.8ff

Schedule and assignments

The template for each site is as follows:

- Visit the site; hear an introduction to the history and archeology of it.
- Read and discuss a primary text associated with the site.
- Discuss an aspect of Greek culture related to the text or site.

Date	Site visits Quotes indicate the title of either a lecture or a discussion	Assignments (Readings, journals, and other) C: Class reader R: <i>The Beginnings of the Conceptualizing of Rhetoric</i> P: Primary texts DQ: Subjects for discussion
TBD	Pre trip meeting, Ford Hall "Trip themes" "Trip logistics" "Trip objectives"	Attend one (not both) meetings. Sign up for site report Select roommates Complete team-building, and class rules exercise Understand initial assignment
Wed 12/27	Fly to Athens	Be at MSP airport by _____ for _____ departure Readings: • C: "Before we land in Athens" (logistics and historical overview) • C: Peter Hall, "The Fountainhead: Athens 500-400BC", <i>Cities in Civilization</i> , 1998 • C: "Expansion and renaissance", <i>The Rough Guide</i> , 2008 Take self quiz at end of the section
Thurs 12/28	Arrive; settle in to Philipos hotel "Walking orientation to Plaka district" Opening night dinner "Safety briefing"	DQ: "First impressions of Athens"
Fri 12/29	Acropolis Acropolis Museum "Introduction to the class" "How do we approach the past?" "Overview of Greek history"	Readings: C: "The Acropolis" DQ: "Contrast the value systems of Homer, Athens and us"
Sat 12/30	Pnyx (Ancient assembly grounds) "Their Democracy and ours" "Opponents of Democracy" Keramikos (Ancient cemetery) "Pericles' vision of Athens" "Democracy and gender in Athens" Greek Parliament tour	Readings: • C: Section 2: "Democracy" • C: "Athenian Civics 101: Direct Democracy in the Periklean Age." • C: "The Mytilenian Debate", History of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides, book 3 (36-50) • C: Thucydides, "Pericles' Funeral Oration" in History of the Peloponnesian War, book 2.35-45 • C: "Funeral Epitaphs", Stylianos Spyriadkis, Bradley Nystrom, Ancient Greece: Documentary Perspectives. PM Ferry to Khania, Crete
Sun 12/31	Plateia Agias Aikaterinis Archeological Museum Class New Year's eve on your own	
Mon 1/1	Sleep in Class: "Rhetoric" / "Approaching the past"	Self study guide on rhetoric due (at start of class) Readings: • "Conceptualizing Rhetoric" • C: Section 3: "Rhetoric" • R: Sections 1-4 • Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen"

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato, "Phaedrus"
Tues 1/2	To Herakleion Herakleion Archaeological Museum Knossos	DQ: "How do archeologists come to conclusions on limited evidence?"
Wed 1/3	Gortyn Phaistos (Minoan palace) Agia Triada (Minoan villa) Lunch in Matala Class	Overnight ferry to Piraeus.
Thurs 1/4	Corinth canal "U.S. Marshall plan and the Corinth canal" Ancient Corinth Class: "The cultural collision of Christianity with Hellenism" Acrocorinth Class: "Intro to Nafplio"	Journal 1 due by departure "Dinner with the instructor" starts Overnight in Nafplio
Fri 1/5	Theater of Epidaurus Nafplio Medieval Forts "Venice, Franks and Ottomans" Class	DQ: "Comparing how physical sites are located"
Sat 1/6	Epiphany celebration Class: "Stages of history"	DQ: "Civic religion"
Sun 1/7	To Dimitsana Open-air Water power museum "Renewable energy in pre-industrial societies"	DQ: "Imagining rural life and perspectives in traditional society." Overnight in Dimitsana
Mon 1/8	Olympia site "The Olympic flame: inventing a past"	DQ: "What is the relationship of sport to the intellectual life?" DQ: "What does it mean that sport and religion are linked?" P: Pindar Focus group report on sport and society Initial study for Delphi project Overnight in Olympia
Tues 1/9	Olympia museum Rio Bridge Galaxidi	Overnight in Delphi
Wed 1/10	Delphi "Greek Religion is different" "Women in Greek religion"	P: Plutarch Gender role focus group report
Thurs 1/11	Monastery of Ossios Loukas "Eastern Orthodoxy / Monasticism / Visual Rhetoric" Distomo WWII memorial "WWII in Greece" Thebes Museum Class: "Thebes and Drama" to Athens	DQ: "What do the shape of churches reveal?" Class project: Prep. for Delphi, review of Pausanias. DQ: "Mid-class assessment: how have you changed?" Religion and Gods focus group report Journal 3 due as you get on the bus "How is returning different?" Overnight in Athens
Fri 1/12	Theater of Dionysus Ancient Agora	Actors 1, 2 & 3: Reader's Theater Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C: Thomas Schmitz, "Orality - Literacy" in Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts • C: "Introduction to Aristophanes' Clouds" • C: Aristophanes, "Clouds" (excerpts)

Fri 1/13	National Archeological Museum Class: sum up / integrate Graduation festivals Farewell dinner	Do class eval (online) Report on National Museum DQ: "Putting it all together / how have we changed?" Transitioning back Final journal due Class evaluations (online) due
Sat 1/14	Fly back	Check out and be ready for bus to airport at ____ for ____ departure Arrive in MN same day.