

Preliminary: This May Change

HIST 302H: Ancient Greece

Fall Semester, 2020

MWF: 11:00 – 11:50

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Office hours (LA 263): Wednesday, 2-4 PM; or by appointment

Introduction and overview: Two and a half thousand years ago, a few million people living around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea embarked on a grand experiment. The world's earlier complex civilizations had all shared a core idea: that a few people had special access to the gods, and because of this, could tell lesser mortals what to do. The Greeks largely rejected this way of thinking.

In doing so, they created a new problem in world history: how do we know what to do if there are no god-given rulers to tell us? They sought answers in reasoned, open discussion, inventing history-writing, rational philosophy, timeless works of art, citizenship, and democracy. As they developed these concepts in a tough landscape of material scarcity and relentless competition, however, they also relied on unprecedented levels of slavery and misogyny, and engaged in endless, draining wars.

In this course, we will follow the Greeks' story across the first millennium BCE, focusing on the interplay between the Greek Question and the hard realities of economics, politics, and war. We will begin with the emergence around 800 BC of city-states that were communities of roughly equal, free (male) citizens, and will end with the move after 350 BC back toward accepting godlike great kings. We will pass from the Greeks' early struggles against giant, threatening empires to their own imperial triumphs and efforts to live in the multicultural world they made.

Until the eighteenth century CE, the Greek experiment was perhaps unique in history, and because of that, few people cared about it very much. The educated aristocracies of early-modern Europe's powerful, imperial states found the great empires of Rome, China, and Egypt much more interesting. Ancient Greece often struck them as bizarre, and its republicanism seemed downright scary. But as Europeans and their North American colonists started throwing out their own divine kings and aristocracies between 1750 and 1800 and seeking new bases for authority in reason, written constitutions, and even democracy, they found only one historical parallel to help them make sense of the world they were bringing into being: ancient Greece. For the last quarter of a millennium, politicians, journalists, and intellectuals have been using the ancient Greek experience to make sense of the great events of their day.

In this course we'll see just how rich the Greeks' legacy is. It has the power to appall as well as to inspire; but, as the twenty-first century rolls on, the Greeks remain good to think with.

Learning Outcomes

By taking this course, you will:

- Acquire and retain specific knowledge about a crucial period in human history. You will, for example, learn why democracy first appeared in ancient Greece, how Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, and why the Greeks have had—and, moreover, continue to have—such a profound impact on the way we think about science, politics, art, and a whole range of other topics.
- Use your knowledge of ancient Greek history and historiography to better understand both current events and other periods of history.
- Recognize the importance of understanding historical events in context.
- Develop the ability to find, evaluate, and use both primary and secondary sources.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop the ability to effectively communicate in both oral and written formats.

Graded Assignments: Overview and Expectations

Expectations: This course comprises four parts: readings, lectures, written assignments, and in-class exercises (including discussion). Each of the four parts is integral to the course as a whole. Accordingly, you will need to engage with all of them both throughout the semester and on the exam. As both lectures and in-class exercises will presuppose familiarity with the readings, please be sure to complete *all* readings *prior to* the relevant class.

Participation: Your attendance and thoughtful, engaged participation are mandatory. There are many ways to participate in a history course. Please reflect on your current approach and challenge yourself to experiment with alternatives. Some possibilities are listed below:

- Show up for class prepared (i.e., having done the required reading and/or assignment, with a copy of the relevant text(s) in hand).
- Offer your opinion of the readings.
- Respond to someone else's opinion (e.g., agreeing/supporting, elaborating, asking for clarification, or expressing a different point of view).
- Ask a question – either a discussion question or merely something from the readings that confused/perplexed/fascinated you.
- Help get the discussion back on track.
- Play devil's advocate.
- Listen– yes, this is also participating! Above all, you must be an active listener.
- Finally, respect your classmates. Discussions thrive on a diversity of viewpoints, but they must be offered, criticized, and debated respectfully.

Please note that regular in-class exercises will also contribute to your participation grade; and that you will not be able to turn in these exercises after the end of the relevant class. Accordingly, repeated absences will have a substantial impact on your overall grade for the course.

Please also note that, depending on how our in-class discussions go during the first few weeks, I may ask you to continue the discussion between classes, via Slack.

3-2-1 exercises: In these weekly reading responses, I ask you to identify and briefly (c. 400-500 words) discuss **three** of the most important things you learned from the readings, **two** of the most important and/or interesting questions that the reading raised, and the **one** passage from an ancient source that you would be most excited to talk about in class.

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You will be responsible for nine (of 13 possible) responses over the course of the term. Unless otherwise indicated, they will be due on Tuesday, before midnight. I have posted several examples of (largely successful) 3-2-1 exercises from my Roman history course last term. Note, however, that a good response can take many different forms. Accordingly, please do not feel obliged to model your responses on the ones you see here.

Quizzes: Quizzes will take place at the start of class on September 18 and October 30 (both Fridays). We will discuss expectations in the week leading up to the first quiz.

Essay: How democratic was classical Athens? (c. 1250 words, due Saturday, Oct 17)

For this assignment, I ask you to use ancient evidence to answer an important question about Greek history. One of the main things that distinguishes ancient history from modern history is that so few ancient sources survive. Accordingly, you will encounter a significant percentage of the available evidence concerning your essay topic by the end of the term. In recognition of this fact, I want you to engage with the ancient evidence directly, rather than relying other people's opinions from textbooks, websites, etc.

To perform well on this assignment, you'll need to break the essay prompt down into smaller, more precise questions; decide which question(s) you will be able to answer in allotted number of words; clearly define key terms, like "democratic"; develop a clear thesis; support your arguments with reference to specific pieces of evidence; analyze your evidence using the methods of source criticism we will cover in class; organize your thoughts into a coherent whole with a recognizable structure; and express them in clear, grammatical prose.

We will discuss the essay at greater length the week before it is due. Please keep in mind, however, that many of the sources we read earlier in the term will be relevant. Accordingly, I would recommend that you start thinking about your essay sooner rather than later; and that you keep a running list of sources and ideas that you think may be helpful later on.

Exams: The midterm and final exams will take place on Friday, Oct 9, and Friday, Nov 20, respectively. They will have some selection of the following components: maps, timelines, factual short answers, identifications, and short essays. A study guide will be provided well in advance of each exam.

Late Work: Weekly assignments and in-class exercises will not be accepted late. Late essays will be penalized by one third of a letter grade for each 24-hour period that passes after the deadline. For example, an A- paper due Sunday, Sept 29, but submitted Monday, Sept 30, becomes a B+; the same paper submitted Tuesday, Oct 1, becomes a B; etc.). If you have extenuating circumstances that require an extension, you must contact me directly well before the essay is due.

Approximate grading breakdown:

Participation: 20%

Reading responses: 24%

Quizzes: 12%

Essay: 20%

Exams: 24%

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Other Important Information

Required Texts (available at the bookstore): Sarah Pomeroy, et al., *A Brief History of Ancient Greece*, 4th edition. Oxford University Press, 2020. [ISBN-13: 978-0190925307]

All other readings will be available on Moodle.

Online learning: Synchronous online learning requires a computer or tablet; a reliable internet connection; a quiet workspace with room to accommodate not only your computer/tablet, but also your notebooks and readings; a microphone and, depending on your location, headphones; and updated versions of the relevant apps (in our case, Zoom). Please let me know if you have any difficulties securing any of the above, as I would be more than happy to help.

At their best, synchronous online courses function much like courses conducted in person, complete with, for example, small-group discussions of primary sources, peer review of writing exercises, and multimedia presentations. But effective online courses don't just happen naturally. They require engaged preparation before class; active participation during class; and patience in the event, for example, that your microphone or one of your classmates' internet connection drops out at a particularly inconvenient time.

To help yourself participate as effectively as possible, please be sure to put away your cellphone, close all apps and browser windows that are not strictly necessary for class, and make sure that you have all of the relevant materials (e.g., books, notes, print-outs of the readings) close to hand.

Communications: All communications outside of class will be via University of Montana email accounts, Moodle, or (potentially) Slack.

Acknowledgements: This syllabus is based on versions of this course taught with my former colleagues Ian Morris, Megan Daniels, Mark Pyzyk, and Federica Carugati.

Key dates:

Aug 19 (Wed): First day of class

Sept 7 (Mon): No class (Labor Day)

Sept 18 (Fri): Quiz 1

Oct 9 (Fri): Midterm exam

Oct 17 (Sat): Essay due

Oct 30 (Fri): Quiz 2

Nov 11 (Wed): No class (Veterans Day)

Nov 20 (Fri): Final exam

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Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Introduction

1. Wed, Aug 19

No reading

2. Fri, Aug 21

Pomeroy et al., Introduction

Week 2: Early Greece and the Bronze Age

3. Mon, Aug 24

Pomeroy et al., ch. 1

4. Wed, Aug 26

Linear B Tablets on Mycenaean Society and Economy, Mycenaean Relations with the Hittites;
Egyptian Inscription on the Sea Peoples

5. Fri, Aug 28

Review selected passages

Week 3: The Early Iron Age

6. Mon, Aug 31

Pomeroy et al., ch. 2

7. Wed, Sept 2

Review Linear B Tablets on Mycenaean Society and Economy
Homer and Hesiod on Greek prehistory

8. Fri, Sept 4

Thucydides and Herodotus on Greek prehistory
Review selected passages

Week 4: Archaic Greece

Mon, Sept 7

No Class (Labor Day)

9. Wed, Sept 9

Pomeroy et al., ch. 3
Selected passages on aristocratic life

10. Fri, Sept 11

Homer on aristocratic life

Week 5: Archaic Sparta

11. Mon, Sept 14

Pomeroy et al., ch. 4

Optional: Selections from Powell 2001, *Athens and Sparta*

12. Wed, Sept 16

Tyrtaeus, Xenophon, and Plutarch on Sparta

13. Fri, Sept 18

The Cyrus Cylinder and Behistun Inscription

Quiz 1

Week 6: The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars

14. Mon, Sept 21

Pomeroy et al., ch. 5

15. Wed, Sept 23

Solon and Herodotus on Athens; Ober 1989, "The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 BCE"

16. Fri, Sept 25

Herodotus and Aeschylus on the Persian Wars, the Themistocles Decree

Week 7: The Rivalries of the Greek City-States and the Growth of Athenian Democracy

17. Mon, Sept 28

Pomeroy et al., ch. 6

Herodotus on the Constitutional Debate

18. Wed, Sept 30

The Old Oligarch, *Constitution of the Athenians*; the Erythrae Decree; selections from Thucydides, *The Funeral Oration of Pericles*

19. Fri, Oct 2

Review selected passages

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Week 8: Greek Life and Culture in the Fifth Century BC

20. Mon, Oct 5

Pomeroy et al., ch. 7

Lysias, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*

21. Wed, Oct 7

Selected passages on gender, slavery, and social history

22. Fri, Oct 9

Review selected passages

Midterm Exam

Week 9: The Peloponnesian War

23. Mon, Oct 12

Pomeroy et al., ch. 8

Thucydides on the stasis at Corcyra

24. Wed, Oct 14

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

25. Fri, Oct 16

Review selected passages

Essay Due: Saturday, Oct 17

Week 10: The Fourth Century BC: Changing Ideas, Continuing Warfare

26. Mon, Oct 19

Pomeroy et al., ch. 9

Plato, *Apology*

27. Wed, Oct 21

Aineas Tacticus and Diodorus on political conflict; Thucydides, *The Melian Dialogue*

28. Fri, Oct 23

Review selected passages

Week 11: Philip II and Macedonian Supremacy

29. Mon, Oct 26

Pomeroy et al., ch. 10

Arrian on Alexander's Speech at Opis

30. Wed, Oct 28

Selections from Demosthenes and Isocrates on Philip II

31. Fri, Oct 30

Review selected passages

Quiz 2

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Week 12: Alexander the Great

32. Mon, Nov 2

Pomeroy et al., ch. 11

Selected passages on Philip's marriages and death

33. Wed, Nov 4

Selected passages on the destruction of Persepolis and Alexander's legacy

34. Fri, Nov 6

Review selected passages

Week 13: The New World of the Hellenistic Period

35. Mon, Nov 9

Pomeroy et al., ch. 12

Selections from Thonemann 2016, *The Hellenistic World*

Wed, Nov 11

No Class (Veterans Day)

36. Fri, Nov 13

Selected passages on cultural contact, social history

Week 14: A Greco-Roman World

37. Mon, Nov 16

Pomeroy et al., ch. 13

38. Wed, Nov 18

Review selected passages

Final Exam: Fri, Nov 20