

HRS 113 (GE Area C4)
CULTURE OF CLASSICAL GREECE
FALL 2008
DR. NYSTROM
MENDOCINO 4004

COURSE TITLE: “The Culture of Classical Greece”

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Examination of the Golden Age of Athens and the birth of Western humanism; studies in the classical ideals, tragedy, comedy, poetry, history, philosophy, art and architecture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students who successfully complete this course will: understand the ideals and values that inspired classical Greek culture and made it so extraordinary; be able to explain how these ideals and values developed over the course of a millennium of ancient Greek history; and be able to explain how these values and ideals were expressed in Greek drama, poetry, social and political organization, religion, philosophy, art, and architecture.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

My office hours are: MW 1:15-2:15 and 8:20-8:50 p.m. in Mendocino 2024
Phone: 278-5334
E-mail: nystromb@csus.edu

TEXTS:

C. Freeman, The Greek Achievement
S. Spyridakis and B. Nystrom, Ancient Greece: Documentary Perspectives (on reserve)
Homer, Odyssey
Plato, Symposium
Sophocles, The Theban Plays

The assigned readings are important. The two “Opportunities” will be entirely on the readings. The Interpretive Essay is based primarily on the readings. Finally, it will very difficult to earn more than 80% of the possible credit on the essay portions of the midterm and final exams without making effective use of the readings in illustrating and supporting the points you make.

GRADING POLICY:

Course grades will be based on the two Opportunities (25 points each), an Interpretive Essay (100 points), and the Midterm and Final Examinations (100 points each).

Participation may influence your grade. Productive contributions to class discussions may raise your course grade by one grade (e.g., from B+ to A-). Allowing your cell phone to ring, talking or texting during class, or creating other disturbances may lower your course grade by one grade.

Three or more absences will reduce your course grade by one grade. I will take roll occasionally, either by reading the student roster or simply by noting that some students are absent.

Please do not tell me at any point during the semester what grade you might need, whether to get into graduate school, keep your financial aid, or avoid academic probation.

Course grades will be assigned as described below (percentage of possible points):

93% and above	A	78-79%	C+	60-62%	D-
90-92%	A-	73-77%	C	59% and below	F
88-89%	B+	70-72%	C-		
83-87%	B	68-69%	D+		
80-82%	B-	63-67%	D		

OPPORTUNITIES:

The two Opportunities (25 points each) are short-answer exercises designed to reward you for keeping up with assigned readings. Each Opportunity will consist of 5-8 short-answer questions that will be easy to answer if you are familiar with the material. *There will be no make-up Opportunities and I'll make few, if any, comments on them.*

WEEKLY LECTURE TOPICS:

Week 1:	Holiday
Week 2:	Introduction to Homer's <u>Odyssey</u> ; Survey of ancient Greek history
Week 3:	Survey of ancient Greek history (continued)
Week 4:	Classical Greek Values; Sculpture and Architecture
Week 5:	Discussion of Homer's <u>Odyssey</u>
Week 6:	Discussion of Homer's <u>Odyssey</u> (continued); Religion
Week 7:	Religion
Week 8:	Midterm Exam
Week 9:	Lyric poetry; Historiography
Week 10:	Philosophy
Week 11:	Philosophy
Week 12:	The good life; Everyday life
Week 13:	Drama
Week 14:	Drama
Week 15:	Alexander and Hellenistic Culture

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND EXAMS:

September 29: **OPPORTUNITY #1 (25 points)** You are responsible for Homer's Odyssey and the following selections from Spyridakis:

“The Spartan Army” (Plutarch)
“Spartan War Songs” (Tyrtaeus)
“Solon’s Abolition of Debts” (Aristotle)
“The Democratic Reforms of Cleisthenes” (Aristotle)
“A Critique of Athenian Democracy” (The Old Oligarch)
“The Battle of Marathon” (Herodotus)
“The Delian League and Athenian Power” (Thucydides)
“The Melian Dialogue” (Thucydides)
“Pericles’ Funeral Oration” (Thucydides)
“Praise for a Wrestler” (Pindar)

October 20: **MIDTERM (100 points):** 50 one-point multiple-choice questions and one 50-point essay) on all lectures; Freeman, chapters 5, 7, 11; Homer’s Odyssey; and the following selections from Spyridakis:

“Solon's Abolition of Debts” (Aristotle)
“The Democratic Reforms of Cleisthenes” (Aristotle)
“Pericles' Funeral Oration” (Thucydides)
“A Critique of Athenian Democracy” (The Old Oligarch)
“The Spartan Constitution and Society” (Xenophon)
“The Delian League and Athenian Power” (Thucydides)
“The Melian Dialogue” (Thucydides)
“The Homeric Hymn to Gaia”
“The Homeric Hymn to Ares”
“The Origin of the Gods” (Hesiod)
“The Spartan Army” (Plutarch)
“The Battle of Marathon” (Herodotus)
“The Cures of Asclepius at Epidaurus”
“Dionysus, God of Wine” (Diodorus)
“Praise for a Wrestler” (Pindar)
“Spartan War Songs” (Tyrtaeus)

November 24: **OPPORTUNITY #2 (25 points)** You are responsible for Plato’s Symposium, Sophocles’ Oedipus the King and Antigone; and the following selections from Spyridakis:

“A Conversation with a Sophist” (Plato)
“Socrates on the Sophists” (Xenophon)
“Socrates on Trial” (Plato)
“The Death of Socrates” (Plato)
“The Allegory of the Cave” (Plato)
“The Dualism of Body and Soul” (Plato)
“The Megalopsychos – A Man of Great Soul” (Aristotle)
“The Mixed Constitution” (Aristotle)
“Aristophanes Lampoons Socrates” (Aristophanes)
“On the Horror of War” (Euripides)
“The Spartan Constitution and Society” (Xenophon)

“Women in Sparta” (Plutarch)
“Justifying Slavery” (Aristotle)
“Husbands, Wives, and the Household” (Xenophon)
“Advice to Newlyweds” (Plutarch)

December 8: **INTERPRETIVE ESSAY (100 points) due in class.**

December 15: **FINAL EXAM (100 points):** 50 one-point multiple choice questions based on lectures and assigned readings since the midterm. There will also be one 50-point essay question based on all lectures for the course, all readings for which you were responsible on the midterm, and the following readings:

Freeman, chapters 12-14, 16-21; Sophocles, Antigone and Oedipus the King; Plato, Symposium; and the following selections from Spyridakis:

“The Mixed Constitution” (Aristotle)
“A Conversation with a Sophist” (Plato)
“Socrates on the Sophists” (Xenophon)
“Socrates on Trial” (Plato)
“The Death of Socrates” (Plato)
“The Allegory of the Cave” (Plato)
“The Dualism of Body and Soul” (Plato)
“The Megalopsychos – A Man of Great Soul” (Aristotle)
“Aristophanes Lampoons Socrates” (Aristophanes)
“On the Horror of War” (Euripides)
“On Man” (Sophocles)
“Epicurus’ Letter to Menoecus” (Diogenes Laertius)
“A Late Greek Stoic of the Roman Empire” (Epictetus)
“Hippocrates on Epilepsy”
“Alexander and Oecumene” (Plutarch)
“Diogenes the Cynic and the Simple Life (Diogenes Laertius)
“Stoic Pantheism – Cleanthes’ Hymn to Zeus”
“A Call to Arms” (Demosthenes)
“Archimedes of Syracuse” (p. 322)
“Eratosthenes Measures the Circumference of the Earth”
(Cleomedes)
“An Ancient Copernicus – Aristarchus of Samos” (Archimedes)
“Women in Sparta” (Plutarch)
“The Spartan Constitution in Society” (Xenophon)
“Justifying Slavery” (Aristotle)
“Husbands, Wives, and the Household” (Xenophon)
“Advice to Newlyweds” (Plutarch)

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY (100 points):

Write an essay in which you describe how distinctively Greek beliefs, values, ideals, attitudes, and concerns are found in Homer's *Odyssey*, Plato's *Symposium*, and Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*.

Good examples of distinctively Greek beliefs, values, ideals, attitudes, and concerns include *arête*, *sophrosyne*, *moderation*, *humanism*, *rationalism*, belief in a well-ordered cosmos, belief in the superiority of Greek culture, the importance of safeguarding individual freedom vis à vis state power, belief in absolute moral laws, belief in deities identified with nature and its processes, the conviction that human beings can be perfected, belief in the cosmos as an intelligible system, belief in the polis as the natural and proper setting for human life, and the value of hospitality (*xenia*).

There are many distinctively Greek beliefs, values, ideals, attitudes, and concerns that do not appear on this list, which is intended only to get you started in your thinking about the interpretive essay. Some of the items on the list overlap. There are not always clear lines that distinguish beliefs from values, ideals, from concerns, etc.

This is an analytical paper, not a research paper. The object is to write about your insights and understanding, not what others think. You are free to consult scholarly books and articles for the purpose of acquiring general information; however, you may quote only ancient Greek authors in your paper. If you do consult scholarly books and articles, be careful not to represent as your own any ideas belonging to their authors or to paraphrase text; this is plagiarism and grounds for assigning a grade of zero to your essay.

Do not cite my lectures. Everything I say in class is in the public domain and yours to use as you please.

Format citations (which may appear within your narrative) as in these examples:

(Plato, *Symposium*, p.126)
(*The Homeric Hymn to Ares*, p. 180)

If you use an edition of an ancient Greek text other than the one I assigned, you may use the format above, but you must also include a full citation on a separate bibliography page at the end of your paper.

Do not cite sources from the web, which can be unreliable.

Papers must be double-spaced, written in Times New Roman 12-point font, have one-inch margins on all sides, and be between 7 full pages and 8 full pages in length. In fairness to other students, I cannot read material beyond the 8-page limit. Your paper's title and your name should appear only on a separate title page, which does not count as part of the 7-8 page requirement.

Papers are worth 100 points and are due in class on Monday, December 8.

Some General Grading Criteria for Papers:

“A” papers clearly state their topic and how it will be addressed. They make good points that demonstrate familiarity with the material and support them with effective examples. They are logical and correct in their grammar and word usage. Although “B” papers possess these strengths to a lesser degree, their arguments are generally clear and reasonably well supported. “B” papers make few mistakes in grammar and word usage. “C” papers may be weak in stating and supporting their theses and in their grammar and word usage. These deficiencies can make passages in a “C” paper difficult to understand and the argument as a whole ineffective. “D” papers possess the same weaknesses as “C” papers but to a greater degree. As a result, “D” papers can be difficult to understand and usually give the impression that the author has little understanding of his/her subject.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

You will be prepared for the essay portions of the midterm and final exams if you can demonstrate a knowledge of what is presented about each of the following questions in lectures and assigned readings and can write about the issues carefully and thoughtfully.

Prior to the Midterm:

- In what ways does the political and social structure of Athens in the fifth century BCE reflect Greek beliefs, values, and ideals?
- What heroic qualities, admired by the ancient Greeks, does Odysseus possess and how does he use them to perform heroic deeds?
- What lessons does Homer teach in the *Odyssey*?
- What beliefs were central to ancient Greek religion? In particular, what did ancient Greeks (most of them, anyway) believe about nature/the world, the gods, body and soul, and the afterlife?
- What were the aims or purposes of ancient Greek religion?
- What were the most important practices in Greek religion?

Prior to the Final (and in addition to the questions above):

- What are the most important lessons taught by Greek philosophy?
- Greek drama was didactic; that is, its purpose was to teach. What are the more important teachings of Greek drama?
- What qualities did the Greeks associate with the ideal (or heroic) human being? In other words, what should we be like?
- If asked to describe the most distinctive features of ancient Hellenism (Greek culture), what features would be cited?
- What were the achievements of the historians Herodotus and Thucydides in connection with the writing of history (historiography)? According to them, what lessons are taught by history?
- What were the essential features of Hellenistic culture? How did it compare to the culture of Greece in the fifth century BCE?

LAPTOPS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS:

No laptops or other electronic devices may be used in class without an authorization letter from the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES:

HRS 113 is a lecture/discussion course with no prerequisites. For Humanities and Religious Studies majors, it may be used to satisfy the requirements for the major. It can also be used to satisfy the General Education Category C4 requirement.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the campus policy on academic dishonesty at www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMA00150.htm.

Any plagiarized assignment will receive a grade of zero.

No electronic devices are to be used in class.

Students who leave the room during exams will not be allowed to return. If this policy creates a documentable difficulty for you, please make necessary arrangements with the Testing Center.

Make-up exams may be scheduled only for compelling and documented reasons.

A grade of "Incomplete" may be assigned at a student's request if, in the words of the University catalog, "required coursework has not been completed and evaluated during the course due to unforeseen but fully justified reasons."

Students with disabilities who require special arrangements for examinations should contact me during the first week of the semester.