

HIST 355: Sports, Games and Spectacles in the Graeco-Roman World

Course Instructor: Dr. John Karavas

Course Description

The aim of this course will be to explore the emergence and subsequent development of both athletic competitions and sports-based games and spectacles from the Bronze age through to the period of late antiquity. Within this wider spatial and temporal context, the course will subsequently focus on two separate thematic entities: Ancient Greek Athletics, with particular attention to the development and evolution of the main Ancient Greek athletic events over the ages, as well as an in-depth investigation of the particularities of Roman public spectacles and gladiatorial games. Drawing on a variety of disciplines and available (primary) sources, from history and archaeology to modern sports studies, the course will primarily seek to examine the main purpose and function of these games and spectacles within the wider social, political, religious, cultural and intellectual context of the times, as well as their overall significance in the daily lives of the ancients. In addition to in-class lectures and discussions, the course will also include a substantial on-site teaching component, with field trips to archaeological sites and museums of athletic significance (such as Olympia, Isthmia, Nemea, Delphi and Messene) where sessions will center on the interpretation of the physical evidence.

Course Requirements

Assignments:

Students will be expected to write one research paper, not more than 2.500 words, on subjects/topics relevant to this course. Details will be provided on the first day of classes. Assignments for topics will be decided by lot, one month before the deadline for the submission of essays. Papers must be properly documented and should include an appended bibliography. Credit will be given for originality, i.e. illustrations, maps etc, personal observation and evidence of independent reading-research. Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (Check Student handbook, pg 9).

The deadline for the submission of the final essay is Friday, December 17. No extensions will be granted.

Exams:

Midterm: Wednesday, October 13

Quiz 1: Monday, November 15

Quiz 2: Wednesday, December 8

Final: TBA

Class Attendance - Absences

Student attendance is mandatory. All absences must be excused by the administration and not the instructor. Each unexcused absence will result in a lowered participation grade.

Grading and Evaluation

The mid-term grade will be calculated on the basis of the mid-term exam (70%) and with regard to student's attendance of and participation in classes (30%).

The final grade will be an average of the grades assigned for the mid term-exam (20%), the final essay (25%), the grade assigned for the TWO final exams (40%) and of that assigned for class participation and attendance over the course of the semester (15%).

Books, Course Materials, Moodle

The standard prescribed textbooks for this class include:

A. Futrell, *Blood in the Arena* (1997).

A. Futrell, *The Roman Games: A Sourcebook* (2006).

D. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient world* (2006).

A. Mahoney, *Roman Sports and Spectacles: A Sourcebook* (2001).

S.G Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics* (2004).

Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources, ed. by S.G. Miller (2004).

In addition to the above, further background or specialist reading material will be introduced to students at the beginning of each separate thematic entity. This will include a selection of ancient sources (in translation), literary or otherwise as well as iconographic and material culture evidence. This material is available on the class Moodle page.

Class Schedule

Monday, September 6

General Introduction. Establishing the main parameters and aims of the course within its wider spatial and temporal context.

Wednesday, September 8

Flashback: Sport in the Bronze Age and the Homeric tradition.

Miller (2004): 20-30; The earliest days of Greek Athletics (off prints-moodle).

Monday, September 13

The Origins of Ancient Greek Athletics – The Archaic period.

Kyle (2006), 72-93; Miller (2004) 20-30.

Monday, September 20

Documentary: The Ancient Olympics: Myth and Reality.

Wednesday, September 22

In Focus: What did it mean to be an athlete (or competitor)?

Van Wees, “Bodies of Men” prints; Class will take place in the Panathenaic Stadium.

Monday, September 27

The Olympic Games.

Miller (2004) 87-95; Scanlon, Greek Athletics and Religion (moodle); Kyle (2006), 110-135.

Wednesday, September 29

Other Games and athletic events throughout the Classical and Hellenistic period.

Miller (2004), 95-112; Olivova, “The Panhellenic games” (off prints-moodle); Kyle (2006), 136-149

Monday, October 4

The Panathenaic Games:

Miller (2004), 129-149; Kyle, “Athletics in the Athenian Agora”, (off prints-moodle).

Class will meet at the Athenian Agora.

Wednesday, October 6

Citizen/youth training and the role of the Gymnasium in Ancient Greece.

Miller (2004), 176-195; Kennel, "Training Citizens in the Gymnasium", (off prints moodle).

Class will meet at the supposed "School of Aristotle".

Monday, October 11

Women in Greek Athletics.

Miller (2004), 150-159; Kyle (2006), 217-228.

Wednesday, October 13

MID-TERM EXAM

Monday, October 18

Individual Competitions: Track and field events. (Re-enactments): Stadion, Diaulos, Dolichos, Hoplitodromos.

Miller (2004), 31-46

Class will meet at the Panathenaic Stadium

Wednesday, October 20

The "Heavyweights" I: "Hand to Hand" athletic competitions (Re-enactments) Wrestling, Boxing.

Class will meet at the Pankrateios Martial Arts Club.

Miller (2004), 60-84

Monday, October 25

The "Heavyweights" II: Pankration.

As above.

Wednesday, October 27

Track & Field Day I (re-enacting the events of the Ancient Pentathlon) Javelin, discus throw, dielkynstida (tug of war).

Miller (2004) 31-46.

Class will meet at the Ethnikos Sports Club.

Monday, November 1

Track & Field day 2: Long jump, Boxing, tug of war.

Miller (2004), 46-60.

Class will meet at the Ethnikos Sports Club.

Monday, November 8

Other games and communal athletic activities in the Ancient Greek World. Class will include the re-enactment of two team sports, Faininda and Harpaston.

Class will meet at the Fokianos Sports Complex.

Wednesday, November 10

Equestrian competitions.

Miller (2004), 60-84

Monday, November 15

SECOND EXAM

Roman public spectacles: The beginnings and subsequent development.

Mahoney (2001), 1-10; Kyle (2006), 279-346.

Wednesday, November 17

Chariot races and other games/sports in the Roman World.

Mahoney (2001), 24-36; Kyle (2006) as above, Futrell, (2006), chapter 6.

Monday, November 29

Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (I). Myth and Reality.

Mahoney (2001), 11-23, 91-99; Kyle (2006) as above; Futrell (1997), chapter 1.

Wednesday, December 1

Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (II).

Futrell (2006), chapter 4.

Monday, December 6

The end of Greco-Roman sports and spectacles; the advent of Christianity.

Class Handouts; Futrell (2006), chapter 5.

Wednesday, December 8

THIRD EXAM

Between Ancient and Modern; the Revival of the Olympic Games.

Visit to the Panathenaic Stadium