

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

Fall Semester 2023

Course Instructor: Dr. John Karavas

CYA Email: john.karavas@cyathens.org

Class Hours: Monday – Wednesday, 8.45 – 10.20

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

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 15. No extensions will be granted.

Exams

Midterm: Wednesday, October 11

Quizz 1: Monday, November 20

Quizz 2: Wednesday, December 6

Evaluation and Grading

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 quizzes (40%) and of that assigned for class participation and attendance over the course of the semester (15%).

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.

Class Schedule

1	Mon Sept 4	<p>General Introduction</p> <p><i>Description</i> Establishing the main parameters and aims of the course within its wider spatial and temporal context.</p>
2	Wed Sept 6	<p>Flashback: Sport in the Bronze Age and the Homeric tradition</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Miller (2004): 20-30; The earliest days of Greek Athletics (off prints-Moodle session 2).</p>
3	Mon Sept 11	<p>The Origins of Ancient Greek Athletics – The Archaic period</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Kyle (2006), 72-93; Miller (2004) 20-30. Moodle session 3.</p>
4	Mon Sept 18	<p>Documentary: The Ancient Olympics: Myth and Reality</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Moodle Session 4.</p>
5	Wed Sept 20	<p>In Focus: What did it mean to be an athlete (or competitor)?</p> <p><i>Description</i> Class will take place in the Panathenaic Stadium. Moodle session 5.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Van Wees, "Bodies of Men" prints</p>
6	Mon Sept 25	<p>The Olympic Games</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Miller (2004) 87-95; Scanlon, Greek Athletics and Religion (moodle, session 6); Kyle (2006), 110-135.</p>
7	Wed Sept 27	<p>Other Games and athletic events throughout the Classical and Hellenistic period</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p>Miller (2004), 95-112; Olivova, "The Panhellenic games" (off prints-moodle session 7) Kyle (2006), 136-149.</p>

8	Mon Oct 2	<p>The Panathenaic Games</p> <p><i>Description</i> Class will meet at the Athenian Agora.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miller (2004), 129-149; Kyle, "Athletics in the Athenian Agora", (off prints-moodle session 8)</p>
<hr/>		
9	Wed Oct 4	<p>Citizen/youth training and the role of the Gymnasium in Ancient Greece</p> <p><i>Description</i> Class will meet at the supposed "School of Aristotle".</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miller (2004), 176-195; Kennel, "Training Citizens in the Gymnasium", (off prints moodle session 9)</p>
<hr/>		
10	Mon Oct 9	<p>Women in Greek Athletics</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miller (2004), 150-159; Kyle (2006), 217-228.</p>
<hr/>		
11	Wed Oct 11	<p>MID-TERM EXAM</p>
<hr/>		
12	Mon Oct 16	<p>Individual Competitions: Track and field events: Stadion, Diaulos, Dolichos, Hoplitodromos</p> <p><i>Description</i> Class will meet at the Panathenaic Stadium.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miller (2004), 31-46; Moodle session 12</p>
<hr/>		
13	Wed Oct 18	<p>The "Heavyweights" I: "Hand to Hand" athletic competitions (Re-enactments) Wrestling</p> <p><i>Description</i> Class will meet at the Pankrateios Martial Arts Club.</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Miller (2004), 60-84; Moodle session 13</p>
<hr/>		
14	Mon Oct 30	<p>The "Heavyweights" II: Pankration</p> <p><i>Required reading</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Moodle session 14</p>

15	Wed Nov 1	The Heavyweights III: Boxing <i>Required reading</i> Miller (2004), 46-60; Moodle session 15
16	Mon Nov 6	Track & Field Day I <i>Description</i> Re-enacting the events of the Ancient Pentathlon; Javelin, discus throw, long jump. Class will meet at the Haghios Cosmas Sports Complex. <i>Required reading</i> Miller (2004) 31-46; Moodle session 16
17	Mon Nov 13	Other games and communal athletic activities in the Ancient Greek World <i>Description</i> Class will include the re-enactment of two team sports, Faininda and Harpaston. Class will meet at the Fokianos Sports Complex.
18	Wed Nov 15	Equestrian competitions <i>Required reading</i> Miller (2004), 60-84; Moodle session 18
19	Mon Nov 20	SECOND EXAM Roman public spectacles: The beginnings and subsequent development <i>Required reading</i> Mahoney (2001), 1-10; Kyle (2006), 279-346; Moodle session 19
20	Wed Nov 22	Chariot races and other games/sports in the Roman World <i>Required reading</i> Mahoney (2001), 24-36; Kyle (2006) as above; Futrell, (2006), chapter 6; Moodle session 20
21	Mon Nov 27	Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (I): Myth and Reality <i>Required reading</i> Mahoney (2001), 11-23, 91-99; Kyle (2006) as above; Futrell (1997), chapter 1; Moodle session 21.

22	Wed Nov 29	Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (II)
		<i>Required reading</i>
		Futrell (2006), chapter 4; Moodle session 22.
<hr/>		
23	Mon Dec 4	The end of Greco-Roman sports and spectacles; the advent of Christianity
		<i>Required reading</i>
		Class Handouts; Futrell (2006), chapter 5; Moodle session 23.
<hr/>		
24	Wed Dec 6	THIRD EXAM Between Ancient and Modern; the Revival of the Olympic Games
		<i>Description</i>
		Visit to the Panathenaic Stadium.
		<i>Required reading</i>
		Moodle session 24

N.B.: The course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and to keep up to date with current research.

Course Bibliography

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 and resources 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. Please follow the instructions at the top of each session as to how to go about using them.