

HIST 334: Life and Death in Ancient Greece and everything in between: An introduction to Athenian Society

Fall Semester 2023 [*Syllabus in development*]

Course Instructor

NAME **Prof. Robert K. Pitt**

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HOURS **After class or by appointment**

AVAILABLE

1. Course Description

This course takes a sociological and anthropological approach to ancient Athenian society, focusing on the individual and examining the human journey through the rites and rituals surrounding birth, transitional phases, marriage, family and kinship, illness and death. We will examine the role of religion in all aspects of the ancient city; explore the political relationships that bound Athenians together; watch them at the gymnasium and in sports and athletic contexts within different age classes; see how they join the workforce in the household, factories or shops, and how the economy of the city was organized as well as delve into their private lives at home. A holistic approach to all aspects of society will bring to the fore the many groups who have traditionally been marginalized in scholarship: children, women, servants, enslaved peoples, foreigners and refugees in the city. To gather evidence for this analysis of ancient life, we will visit a number of archaeological sites and museums around Athens.

Classes are taught both in the classroom and out on archaeological sites and in museums around Athens.

2. Course Resources and Activities

In order to explore these questions, the course includes a detailed bibliography of important primary sources and secondary literature, from which we will draw evidence and debates for the seminars. Through an engagement with the literary sources and the archaeology on the ground we will learn how to analyze and assess information about the ancient Athenians and residents of Athens in order to bring out the stories of individuals and to understand the social and political structures that underpinned their lives. Two key components of the learning experience are the student presentations, in which each course member is assigned a topic or social group to research and to present to the class, developing key skills in oral presentation, as well as contributing to group-led enquiry; the second component is the course focus on discussion and debate during class, based on the readings and questions given in advance for each session. Two essays are also required for the course, one about a type of source material (literary depictions, inscriptions such as grave markers, dedications to gods, physical anthropology (bones), and archaeology), the second a more synthetic paper exploring a topic such as birth, death, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.

3. Requirements and Evaluation

The course has no prior requirements. Students should expect to read for the classes themselves around 4 hours per week. The following assignments and assessments will make up the final grade:

- **Primary source paper:** 20%
- **Class Presentation:** 25%
- **Midterm quiz:** 15%
- **Final research paper:** 25%
- **Class participation and attendance:** 15%

4. Class Attendance - Absences

Student attendance of all classes is mandatory; please be on time at the stipulated meeting point when we are out on sites. CYA allows zero unexcused absences. In case of illness, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor (preferably in advance) and to make up for missed work (see also the general stipulations of CYA). If you have to miss a class due to illness, you should notify the Student Affairs Office.

Students are also expected to participate in classes, and so make sure they are well-rested for these early morning meetings, it is not enough to turn up only in body!

5. Class schedule, meeting points, and reading

Basic reading is noted below each class in the schedule [*this is in preparation, bibliography and readings to be added*] and is **compulsory** because of the seminar style of the course. The readings and questions for each class will be posted on Moodle.

Tuesday 5th September

1. Introduction to the course and the syllabus, sources and methodologies.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 7th September

2. Childbirth and infancy: making it past the first hurdle in life.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 12th September

3. Children in Athens: rites of passage and kids at play.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

[CYA Crete Trip 13-16 September]

Tuesday 19th September

4. Education and Literacy: writing your name and other useful skills.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 21st September

5. Sport and spectacle: gym culture, athletic competition and the body beautiful.

CYA Syllabus

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 26th September

6. TRIP: National Archaeological Museum Pottery Collection.

Meet: National Museum.

Thursday 28th September

7. Marriage, the family and kinship groups: familial networks and ancestral clans.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 3rd October

8. Women in Athenian society: rules and realities.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 5th October

9. Sex, Sexuality & Gender in the private and public spheres.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 10th October

10. A Man's World: politics and war from an anthropological perspective.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 12th October

11. Servants and enslaved peoples in the city and countryside: the status of freedom.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 17th October

12. Foreign residents of Attica: a multicultural society?

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 19th October

13. An Introduction to Greek Religion: Prayers, Sacrifice and the Temple.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

[CYA Fall Break October 20-29]

Tuesday 31st October

14. TRIP: The Acropolis.

Meet: The west entrance of the Acropolis.

Thursday 2nd November

15. Private religion and religious associations.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

[CYA Peloponnese Trip November 7-11]

CYA Syllabus

Tuesday 14th November

16. The Panathenaia Festival: Athens on show.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 16th November

17. TRIP: The Acropolis Museum.

Meet: The Acropolis Museum, Dionysiou Areopagitou Street.

Friday 17th November [Make-up T/Th class]

18. Festivals to Dionysos: wine, theater and drama.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 21st November

19. TRIP: The Theatre of Dionysos.

Meet: The Theatre of Dionysos, Dionysiou Areopagitou Street.

[CYA Thanksgiving Break November 23-26]

Tuesday 28th November

20. TRIP: Ancient Agora: Trade, manufacturing and the economy.

Meet: Ancient Agora, Adrianou Street.

Thursday 30th November

21. Illness, disease, healing and medicine: the cult of Asklepios.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Friday 1st December [Make-up T/Th class]

22. The Eleusinian Mysteries: seeking a better afterlife.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Tuesday 5th December

23. Death and its rituals.

Meet: classroom CB-1.

Thursday 7th December

24. TRIP: The Kerameikos.

Meet: The Keramikos, Ermou Street.