

HIST334 | Life and Death in Ancient Greece and Everything in Between: An Introduction to Athenian Society Fall 2024

INSTRUCTOR: ROBERT K PITT

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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 social and political relationships that bound Athenians together; watch them participate in the life of the gymnasium and at state festivals within different age classes; see how they join the workforce in the household, factories or shops; and 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.

Learning Goals

This course will primarily teach students to:

- Analyze a variety of ancient sources, including literary evidence, inscriptions, and archaeological data
- Use methodologies and theories from anthropology and the social sciences to explain ancient rituals and behaviors
- Evaluate modern scholarship on ancient Greek society by checking sources and assumptions
- Present personal research with an oral presentation to the class

Course Requirements and Assessment

CYA Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential, so attendance at all scheduled meetings is required. All absences are recorded and have consequences that may affect your grade.

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 (further details about each will be distributed):

- **Class Contribution 25%** – Class Contribution includes physical and mental presence in the classroom, arriving on time, preparation, and participation in class discussions, and posting occasionally on the Moodle forum. Reading assignments are to be completed before each class session. Class contribution is one of the most important factors for determining your grade for the semester. I expect all of you to come prepared, engage in our discussions, ask questions, and voice your opinions in class. If you are extremely uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group of students, you may send your opinions or afterthoughts in writing via email. If you never participate in class and do not send any thoughts by email, your contribution grade will be low.
- **Class presentation 25%** – Students will present a midterm presentation on an archaeological artifact that illuminates an aspect of ancient society.
- **Article analysis 25%** – Topics and instructions will be given in advance. 4-5 pages.
- **Final research paper 25%** – A paper that covers an area of ancient society discussing primary and secondary material. 5-6 pages.

Policy on Assignments and Make-up Work

Details about assignments will be given in advance. I will accept no late assignments or make-up exams unless discussed with me in advance. If you are unable to come to class, please let me know beforehand.

CYA Policies and Regulations

Academic Accommodations

Students are required to submit an official letter from the office at their school that handles academic accommodations (generally the Office of Disability Services), or to have that office send a letter. Students who have submitted such a letter to CYA should also talk to their professors individually to discuss how these accommodations will work in each specific course.

Site Visits and Accessibility

This course contains specific physical and spatial elements that are crucial to student learning, although modifications can be made to accommodate access.

- This course requires that students walk around 6 archaeological sites and museums; most of that walking is over uneven ground.
- This course requires students to give a verbal group or individual) presentation in front of the class as part of their assessment. Alternative assignments can be arranged where mental health issues would prevent the student from performing as well as they would like.

ePolicy on Original Work

Plagiarism is literary theft. As such, it is a serious offense which will not be tolerated either at your home institution or at CYA. Plagiarism on an examination or in a paper will result in an F for the course. You must cite the author of any and all ideas that you use that is neither common knowledge nor your own idea. If you are in doubt, it is safest to cite the source. Your work should be original and reflect your own ideas and thoughts. If you are unsure about what counts as original work, please consult your professor and check the Student Handbook.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is not permitted without specific permission. I have simply had too many infractions of an honor policy on this issue, and do not believe it helps most students to learn more effectively.

Upgrade to 400-level course

Courses can be upgraded to a 400-level. This constitutes usually 25% additional work on the part of the student. The option to upgrade opens the second week of classes. If you are interested in this option, please talk to your professor.

Course Content - IMPORTANT: Intrinsic to the study of the ancient Mediterranean is the encounter with ideas, beliefs, practices, and images that students may find alien, unexpected, and disturbing. A course of this nature will, by necessity, cover sensitive and difficult topics in both its reading and discussion material. If you are highly sensitive to or do not feel comfortable reading and discussing such topics, you should consider not taking this course. All students who elect to take this course do so entirely at their own risk and with the full knowledge that we will not censor reading materials, class discussions, or passages read out loud in class, and that all students will be held responsible for all of the course readings and assignments. I will not provide alternate readings and/or assignments, nor will I provide individual content warnings for specific readings.

Fall 2024 Tentative Schedule

| Day # | Date/Day | Topic / Readings / Assignments Due / Place (if applicable) |
|---|----------|--|
| Sep 5-7 | | |
| Field Study Delphi and Ancient Olympia | | |
| 1 | Sep 10 | <i>Introduction to the course and the syllabus; sources and methodologies.</i> Questions: What is the field of anthropology? Can we apply it to long dead peoples like the ancient Greeks? If so, how? Reading: T. H. Eriksen, <i>What Is Anthropology? Anthropology, Culture and Society</i> (London: Pluto, 2nd edition 2017), pp. 3-18: 'Why Anthropology?' (Moodle). |
| 2 | Sep 12 | <i>Introduction to ancient Athenian society: ethnicity, race, citizenship and the other.</i> Questions: What did it mean to be an Athenian citizen? Were the Athenians accepting of non-Athenians? What did it mean to be of a different ethnicity in the ancient world? How were foreigners integrated into the city-state of Athens and how were they kept out? Reading: S. Lape, <i>Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy</i> (Cambridge 2010), 1-30: 'Theorizing Citizen Identity' (Moodle). |
| 3 | Sep 17 | <i>Childbirth and infancy: making it past the first hurdles.</i> Questions: How can forensic anthropology and funerary archaeology inform our understanding of the status of newborns and babies within Greek society? Reading: M. A. Liston & S. I. Rotroff, 'Babies in the well: Archaeological evidence for newborn disposal in Hellenistic Greece', in J. E. Grubbs & T. Parkin eds, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World</i> (Oxford 2013), pp. 62-82. |
| Sep 18-21 | | |
| Field Study Crete | | |
| 4 | Sep 24 | <i>Children's rites and positions in cultic activity.</i> Questions: What were the main Athenian festivals and cults that children took part in, what were their roles, and what stratum of society were they from if they held positions in cults? Reading: R. Garland, 'Children in Athenian religion', in J. E. Grubbs & T. Parkin eds, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World</i> (Oxford 2013), pp. 207-26. |

| Day # | Date/Day | Topic / Readings / Assignments Due / Place (if applicable) |
|-------|---------------------|--|
| 5 | Sep 26 | <i>Sport and spectacle: gym culture, athletic competition and the body beautiful.</i> Questions: What were gymnasia for, who used them, and how did they shape Athenian society? Reading: W. Petermandl, 'Growing Up with Greek Sport: Education and Athletics', in P. Christesen & D. G. Kyle eds, <i>A companion to sport and spectacle in Greek and Roman antiquity</i> (Wiley-Blackwell 2014), pp. 236-45. |
| 6 | Oct 1 | <i>Marriage, the family and kinship groups: familial networks and ancestral clans.</i> Questions: What is kinship and what does it have to do with citizenship? How do you ensure your children are citizens? What cultic functions do these groups (phratries, gene) perform? Readings: D. L. Kellogg, 'Population and Social Structure', and C. B. Patterson, 'The Athenian Family', in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 159-187. |
| 7 | Oct 3 | TRIP: <i>National Archaeological Museum Pottery Collection.</i> Questions: What can pottery tell us about different aspects of Athenian life? What methodological problems do we meet with in using pottery data? Reading: J. Whitely, <i>The Archaeology of Ancient Greece</i> , Cambridge 2001, pp. 3-16: 'Introduction: Classical Archaeology and its objects'. Meet: Steps outside the National Archaeological Museum. |
| 8 | Oct 8 | <i>Women in Athenian society: law, customs and realities.</i> Questions: How were Athenian women expected to behave, how were they controlled, what rights did citizen women have, and were the realities different from the theory? Reading: M. A. Liston, <i>Reading the Bones: Interpreting the Skeletal Evidence for Women's Lives in Ancient Greece</i> , in S. L. James & S. Dillon eds, <i>A Companion to Women in the Ancient World</i> (Blackwell 2012), pp. 125-140. |
| 9 | Oct 10 | <i>Women on stage.</i> Questions: What can Euripides' <i>Medea</i> tell us about Athenian attitudes to women, and what male anxieties can you detect in the play regarding the control of women? Reading: Euripides' <i>Medea</i> (take a copy out of the library). |
| 10 | Oct 15 | TRIP: <i>The Theatre of Dionysos.</i> Reading: V. di Napoli, 'Theatrical Spaces,' in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 319-31. Meet: The Theatre of Dionysos, Dionysiou Areopagitou Street. |
| 11 | Oct 17 | <i>Sex, Sexuality & Gender in the private and public spheres.</i> Questions: What forms of sex were regulated in ancient Athens and why? Readings: A. Glazebrook, 'Prostitutes, Women, and Gender in Ancient Greece,' in S. L. Budin & J. M. Turfa eds, <i>Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World</i> (London and New York 2016), 703-13; and J. J. Winkler, 'Laying Down the Law: The Oversight of Men's Sexual Behavior in Classical Athens,' in D. M. Halperin et al., eds, <i>Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World</i> (Princeton 1990), 171-209. |
| 12 | Oct 22 | <i>Servants and enslaved peoples in the city and countryside: the status of freedom.</i> Questions: What types of slavery existed in Athens, where did slaves come from, could they gain their freedom, and what role did they play in the success of Athens' economy? Reading: R. Osborne, 'The Economics and Politics of Slavery at Athens,' in E. Robinson ed., <i>Ancient Greek Democracy: Readings and Sources</i> (Oxford 2004), 265-81. |
| 13 | Oct 24 | <i>Foreign residents of Attica: a multicultural society?</i> Questions: What status did foreign residents have in Athenian society, what were their responsibilities to the state and limitations on their lives? Reading: S. A. Wijma, <i>Embracing the Immigrant: The participation of metics in Athenian polis religion</i> , Stuttgart 2014, pp. 126-45: 'Embracing Bendis'. |
| | Oct 25-Nov 3 | Fall Break |
| 14 | Nov 5 | <i>An Introduction to Greek Religion: Prayers, Sacrifice and the Temple.</i> Reading: S. Deacy, 'Famous Athens, Divine Polis: The Religious System at Athens,' in D. Ogden ed., <i>A Companion to Greek Religion</i> (Blackwell 2007), pp. 221-35. |
| 15 | Nov 7 | TRIP: <i>The Acropolis.</i> Reading: P. Valavanis, 'The Akropolis,' in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 63-85. Meet: The west entrance of the Acropolis. |

| Day # | Date/Day | Topic / Readings / Assignments Due / Place (if applicable) |
|-------|---------------------|---|
| | Nov 12-15 | Field Study Peloponnese |
| 16 | Nov 19 | <i>The Panathenaia Festival: Athens on show.</i> Reading: M. M. Miles and J. Neils, 'Athenian festivals,' in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 332-44. |
| 17 | Nov 21 | TRIP: <i>The Acropolis Museum.</i> Reading: I. Jenkins, 'The Parthenon frieze and Perikles' cavalry of a thousand,' in J. M. Barringer & J. M. Hurwit eds, <i>Periklean Athens and its Legacy</i> (Austin 2005), pp. 147-61. Meet: The Acropolis Museum, Dionysiou Areopagitou Street. |
| 18 | Nov 22 | (Make-up T TH class) <i>Private religion and healing gods.</i> Questions: How did an Athenian seek divine help for illness, where might they go and to which gods did they pray? Reading: F. Graf, 'Healing,' in E. Eidinow & J. Kindt eds, <i>The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion</i> (Oxford 2015), pp. 505-518. |
| 19 | Nov 26 | <i>Festivals to Dionysos: wine, theatre and drama.</i> Reading: S. G. Cole, 'Finding Dionysus,' in D. Ogden ed., <i>A Companion to Greek Religion</i> (Blackwell 2007), pp. 327-41. |
| | Nov 28-Dec 1 | Thanksgiving Break |
| 20 | Dec 3 | <i>Death and burial rites in Athens.</i> Reading: T. Shea, 'The Archaic and Classical Cemeteries,' in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 140-55. |
| 21 | Dec 5 | TRIP: <i>The Kerameikos.</i> Reading: D. Felton, 'The Dead,' in D. Ogden ed., <i>A Companion to Greek Religion</i> (Blackwell 2007), pp. 86-99. Meet: The Kerameikos, Ermou Street. |
| 22 | Dec 6 | (Make-up T TH class) TRIP: <i>Ancient Agora: Trade, manufacturing and the economy.</i> Reading: J. McK. Camp II, 'The Agora: Public Life and Administration,' in J. Neils & D. K. Rogers eds, <i>The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens</i> (Cambridge 2021), pp. 86- 97. Meet: Ancient Agora, Adrianou Street. |
| 23 | Dec 10 | <i>The Eleusinian Mysteries: secrets for a better afterlife.</i> Reading: K. Clinton, 'The Mysteries of Demeter and Kore,' in D. Ogden ed., <i>A Companion to Greek Religion</i> (Blackwell 2007), pp. 342-56. |
| 24 | Dec 12 | <i>Final seminar.</i> |