

ANTH / PSCI 357 | Solidarity, Social Movements, and the Fight for Justice and Change in Greece: a Service Learning Approach Spring 2025

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[A note on class hours: our contact hours will be once a week for 3 hours and 10 minutes, every Wednesday. The schedule is blocked off on two days, Monday and Wednesday, to allow an open morning in student schedules for volunteering.]

Course Description

In recent years, Greece has seen the development of a number of social movements and solidarity efforts, in the face of the difficult social conditions that have arisen with the "financial crisis" that occurred in 2009 and the austerity measures which followed. Some of these efforts are new and creative responses, while others have long histories in Greek society and politics. Preceding the crisis, we also see the emergence of what has been called "civil society": voluntary and social organizations that are an integral part of political life, but are not commercial in nature or part of the state. This course examines the roles that solidarity and social movements, social justice goals, and civil society development play in contemporary Greek society. What are the social problems currently identified by these concerns? In what ways have people responded? How has the relationship between citizen and state, individual and society, been changing through these efforts? Students join such organizations as volunteers, devoting a minimum of 45 hours to their volunteer work over the course of the semester. These volunteer experiences are integrated into the course, providing an experiential dimension to the questions we will be exploring together.

Course Approach

There are three main reasons why students want to do a service learning course when they study abroad: they have a personal commitment to service or justice, they want to contribute to the community where they will be living, and they want to feel involved and immersed in this community and learn about it by being so. This course provides a structured way of doing these things. At the same time, however, our texts, lectures, and assignments provide another layer to this experience, as students learn about the history and development of the kinds of organizations that welcome volunteers, about why the concept of volunteerism has come to be so closely linked to the idea of a functioning democracy, and about why the development of this type of activity has occurred in a very different way in Greece than it has in other places, like the United States. Through this students will reflect on the cultural specificity of how they themselves have defined service and their expectations of volunteerism, and be challenged and broadened in their viewpoints on this subject, as study abroad is meant to do. Students who have specific areas in which they would like to volunteer may contact the professor before the course begins to see if suitable arrangements can be made. All efforts will be made to match students to volunteer positions that align with their personal interests.

The course begins with an overview of society in Greece and its changes over the past 60 years, giving a particular focus to the most recent 25 years, when we see the development of what has come to be called "civil society." We then thematically examine the sectors, events, and social problems in Greece which have received the attention of citizens, where people have collectively worked to shape their society towards their sense of the greater good. Although our story is sited in Greece, we will consistently switch to a wider focus to understand how and why social scientists have studied the spread of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as an institutional form globally, what role civil society plays in discourses of development and democracy, and what the critiques are of that role. We'll look at social movements and solidarity movements in Greece from this comparative view as well. Through our readings and assignments we will be asking:

- Why is volunteering still a somewhat unusual social practice in Greece?
- How do people in Greece think of themselves as citizens, and how do they perceive the responsibilities of the state?
- How has the "crisis" played a role in the articulation of "solidarity" movements and ideals in Greece?
- Might there be forms of civil society in Greece that are not typically recognized as such, or limitations to the concept?
- What roles do Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) play, both as actors in society and as potentially significant voices on political issues? How and when are NGOs an internationalizing or Europeanizing force?
- How does the specific social and historical context of Greece shape the practices and goals of the citizens, NGOs, and social movements we find there?

We will be reading from texts across the social sciences -- sociology, political science, anthropology, gender studies, religious studies, environmental studies, and more. Although the course will be taught through the lens of political anthropology, by a professor of anthropology, we will build a holistic view by benefiting from the perspectives of multiple disciplines all concerned in their own way with a similar subject. At the same time, as active researchers of a culture foreign to them, students will be trained to act and think as anthropologists, a discipline well-suited to this role, utilizing the concepts, methodology, and ethical framework developed in that discipline towards that purpose.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

- have become an integral part of an organization in Greece that contributes in a meaningful way to society,
- be self-reflective on what it means to volunteer and the complex and varying roles that voluntary organizations have in a society,
- have learned ethnographic methodology and done ethnographic fieldwork,
- have developed an "anthropological eye" with which to view and interpret their fieldwork findings,
- have a broad general knowledge about contemporary society in Greece within which to interpret their experiences and understand what's happening around them,
- have specific knowledge on the multidisciplinary academic discussion concerning civil society, NGOs, social movements, and solidarity movements applicable to Greece and elsewhere,
- and be able to contextualize, compare, and analyze the role of the organization they've volunteered with, within their specific domain in Greece and within academic discourses that discuss such work.

Course Requirements

Attendance in class:

Students are expected to be present at all class meetings, on time, and to have done the assigned reading and assignment for that day. Unexcused absences will directly affect your grade. The course meets once a week in the classroom on Wednesday for a double class session, so that you have the first half of Monday open for volunteering in your schedule. Because we only meet once a week, missing one day is like missing a week of class, so please make every endeavor to attend.

Attendance for volunteering:

Students must be at their volunteer job weekly at the time agreed upon between them and their organization, and average 3.5 hours of work each time. Students must inform their organization if they are unable to attend due to illness or other problem, and will need to make up that time. The professor will receive evaluations of the students from the organization, which will be part of the participation grade. Students must complete the projects that they have agreed upon with their organizations; I will assist you in making sure you only take on an amount of work that you can complete in the volunteering time required for this class.

Participation in class:

Students will need to write one discussion question/comment for each article read, and have it with them in class.

Other work for this course is as follows (descriptions and assessment rubrics are available on the course Moodle page):

1. An ongoing fieldwork journal; a general format for these will be provided by the professor, and specific research questions will be posed at intervals throughout the semester.
2. A semi-structured interview with someone associated with their volunteer work, with the results written up in a 6-8 page interview paper.
3. An annotated bibliography on materials relevant to the field in which they're volunteering.

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation 10%
Fieldnotes entries 25%
Interview Paper 30%
Annotated Bibliography 35%

Detailed instructions and grading rubrics for each of the above will be available on Moodle, our online course software.

CYA Regulations and Accommodations

Attendance Policy

CYA regards attendance in class and on-site (in Athens or during field study trips) as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. It is required that you have good communication with your volunteer organization and warn them ahead of time if you will be missing hours due to illness.

Academic Accommodations

If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, inform the Office of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation. The student and professor will need to discuss at the start of the semester how accommodations will work specifically for this course.

ePolicy on Original Work

Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own original work. Any ideas taken from the work of others must be clearly identified as quotations, paraphrases, summaries, figures etc., and accurate internal citations and/or captions (for visuals) as well as an accompanying bibliography must be provided. Use of assistive technologies like A.I. are not permitted for writing assignments or reading response summaries.

Use of Laptops

In-class or onsite use of laptops and other devices is permitted if this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if devices are not used for class-related work.

Class Schedule

You will find the weekly schedule [at this link](#). The schedule of readings and topics is flexible and likely to change (in agreement with both professor and students) based on student interests and any significant current events that unfold during the term.

Course Bibliography

You'll find the course bibliography [at this link](#), and is updated continuously as new articles are published. Course readings are drawn from this bibliography. Students taking the course at the 400 level will be assigned additional readings from this bibliography. Unassigned readings can be utilized for the annotated bibliography assignment.