

ARCH/HIST346 | The Strangeness of Ancient Greece: Diversity, Difference and Regionality among the Greek States

Summer Session I, 26 May – 21 June 2025

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Course description

The weight of Classical texts about Athens or by Athenians has led to a concentration on this one ancient polis, an Athenocentricity that must be balanced by the archaeological, literary and epigraphic record across the rest of the ancient Greece world. Was Athens in fact *the* typical polis, the norm, the exemplar, or quite unique and unusual? Did other Greeks behave like the Athenians in their cultural, religious, or political lives? Did all Greeks have the same rules and taboos concerning gender, sex and sexuality? These questions and many others will be explored during this intensive 4-week tour of Greece, which will cover several regions of the country in order to bring out the local differences in material culture, literary and epigraphic traditions, and archaeological remains. We will visit dozens of archaeological sites and museums and use the evidence presented to discuss issues of race, ethnicity, social structures, language and communication, war, politics, slavery, and religion.

Learning objectives:

The course aims to train students in a wide range of disciplines needed to critically evaluate both ancient evidence and modern discussions on Greek culture, using a holistic approach that evaluates the value of different types of evidence and explores how they are used and abused in creating histories of the ancient world.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- assess the trustworthiness of ancient literary sources by understanding their contexts
- work with a variety of material culture from coins and inscriptions to sculpture and pottery and to think about them as evidence for societies
- evaluate modern scholarship from the perspective of the creation of ideas about ancient Greece, and how our understanding of material culture has been shaped by these trends
- appreciate how archaeological sites and museums are formed by processes of cultural identification, promotion and politics
- 'read' sites with an eye towards how cities operated with fortifications, markets, political centres and religious spaces

Course requirements:

Since this is an intense traveling course, students are not required to submit a lengthy final essay (i.e. term paper). A grade will be assigned on the basis of student evaluation throughout the course, principally from presentations and work sheets on sites and in museums. The following components will contribute to the final grade:

- Active participation (not merely physical presence, but the expression of critical opinions and contribution to class dialogue) and co-operation with the professor and fellow students.
- One oral field report or presentation on an archaeological site or museum, of no more than 10-15 minutes, chosen from a list of monuments, objects, and topics.
- A series of work sheets to be completed when visiting sites and museums.
- In-class debate.
- 120-150 pages of reading per week. Please note that weekly load of reading varies depending on each week's subject matter and/or travel load. Readings will be given electronically.

Grading and Evaluation:

Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

Site presentation 50%

Work sheets 25%

Active participation and contribution 25%.

Class Schedule:

Day	Date	Sites/Topics/Readings	Overnight
1	05/26 Mon	Arrival. 18.00 Orientation meeting in the CYA cafeteria 19.30 Welcome dinner by CYA at the restaurant Mavro Provato	Athens
2	05/27 Tues	Introductory lecture CYA (room VK-2) 10.00-12.00 - Evidence and methodologies for the ancient Greeks: An Introduction. Reading: Hansen, <i>Polis</i> , 31-65 Hall, <i>Ethnic Identity</i> , 34-66	Athens
3	05/28 Wed	FREE until: 17.00 Leave CYA for a tour of the Acropolis Themes: state religion and private dedication; historical and mythological commemoration in the cultic landscape; changing times and introducing new gods. Reading: J. M. Hurwit, <i>The Acropolis in the Age of Pericles</i> , Cambridge 2004, chapter 2: 'Landscape of Memory: The Past on the Classical Acropolis'.	Athens
4	05/29 Thur	09.00 meet outside the Acropolis Museum on Dionysiou Areopagitou Street FREE afternoon Themes: gendering dedications to the gods; self-representation and state propaganda in sculptural monuments; (re)presenting the ancient Greeks in a modern museum.	Athens
5	05/30 Fri	FREE morning 17.30 Slopes of the Acropolis; Sanctuary and Theatre of Dionysos (meet at the Theatre of Dionysos entrance, opposite the Acropolis Museum) Themes: medicine, miracles and healing; new gods for the Greeks; internationalism on the religious circuit.	Athens
6	05/31 Sat	09.00 meet at the Ancient Agora , entrance on Adrianou Street opposite the church of Saint Philip Themes: peopling public spaces; ancient economies; commemorating glory. 11.00 Kerameikos (ancient cemetery) Themes: death in Greek society; the role of women in religion and burial; talking to the dead and conjuring magic. FREE afternoon Reading: J. McK. Camp II, <i>The Athenian Agora Site Guide</i> , Princeton 2010, 15-33. Worksheet: Kerameikos Museum: The Greek way of Death	Athens
7	06/01 Sun	FREE DAY	Athens
8	06/02 Mon	FREE DAY	Athens
9	06/03 Tues	STUDY TOUR TO NAXOS 06.00 Bus leave CYA for Piraeus port Introduction and walking tour of Naxos town	Naxos
10	06/04 Wed	09.30 Naxos archaeological museum and the Portara temple	Naxos
11	06/05 Thurs	08.30 Road trip visiting the marble kouros statues, temples and villages of the island Themes: natural resources and the marble trade	Naxos
12	06/06 Fri	11.00 Ferry back to Athens (arrive ca. 15.00, bus to CYA)	Athens
13	06/07 Sat	FREE DAY	Athens
14	06/08 Sun	08.30 Trip around Attica 10.00 Archaeological Site of Rhamnous 13.00 Site and Museum of Brauron	Athens
15	06/09 Mon	09.00 Roman Athens: Library of Hadrian, Roman Agora, (meet at Monastiraki square)	Athens

		Themes: The changing role of Greece under Roman dominance, and Athenian self-representation.	
16	06/10 Tues	09.00 Sites and sanctuaries on the Western Hills: the Pnyx, Philopappos, and Hill of the Nymphs (meet outside the Acropolis Museum)	Athens
17	06/11 Wed	STUDY TRIP TO DELPHI AND THE PELOPONNESE 08.00 Leave Athens for Thebes 10.30 Archaeological Museum of Thebes 12.00 Monastery of Ossios Louka	Delphi
18	06/12 Thur	08.30 Site and Museum of Delphi . Themes: Oracles and divination at the centre of the world. Pilgrims, prayers and deception in an international space: how to speak to a god. Reading: C. Morgan, <i>Athletes and Oracles</i> , Cambridge 1990, chapter 5: 'The Institution of the Delphic Oracle'.	Olympia
19	06/13 Fri	09.00 Olympia: site and museums Themes: Panhellenism and all the Greeks together. Athletes, spectators, winning and losing in the greatest of games. The cult of beauty and the body beautiful. Reading: J. M. Barringer, <i>A Cultural History of Olympia and its Monuments</i> , Princeton 2021, Introduction.	Kalamata
20	06/14 Sat	08.30 Leave for site of Messene Reading: N. Luraghi, <i>The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory</i> , Cambridge 2008, chapter 8. Worksheet: Messene: Ethnic identity in a new city.	Kalamata
21	06/15 Sun	08.30 Leave for the sites of Tiryns and Mycenae	Nafplio
22	06/16 Mon	08.30 Epidauros 12.30 Archaeological Museum of Nafplio	Nafplio
23	06/17 Tue	08.30 Leave for site of Corinth Travel back to Athens	Athens
24	06/18 Wed	FREE DAY	Athens
25	06/19 Thur	09.30 National Archaeological Museum : sculpture and pottery collections Themes: self- and family-representation in funerary sculpture: what makes the perfect death? Sex, nudes, and covering up: looking at the body in ancient Greece. Reading Greek pottery: utility and ritual. 11.30 Epigraphical Museum Themes: A language divided: ancient Greek dialects and their mutual comprehension. Powerful stones: imperial documents and control in Athens. Class reading: Hall, <i>Ethnic Identity</i> , chapter 6: 'Ethnicity and linguistics'.	Athens
26	06/20 Fri	09.30 Walking tour of post-antique Athens and final thoughts 12.30 Farewell lunch at CYA	Athens
27	06/21 Sat	12.00 Check-out apartments Program ends	

Bibliography abbreviations:

Hansen, *Polis* = M. H. Hansen, *Polis. An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State*, Oxford 2006.
Hall, *Hellenicity* = J. M. Hall, *Hellenicity. Between Ethnicity and Culture*, Chicago 2002.
Hall, *Ethnic Identity* = J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, Cambridge 2004.