

## **HIST418 | ANCIENT HISTORY: SOURCES & METHODS SPRING 2025**

**Course Instructor: ROBERT K. PITT**  
**Email: robert.pitt@cyathens.org**

### **Course Description**

This course offers an overview of the literary and archaeological evidence for ancient history, particularly for the writing of Greece's past, and the methodologies of how to treat and analyze primary and secondary sources. We will focus on the writings and methods of a number of leading Greek historians in order to understand how they crafted their works and dealt with historical enquiry and will also examine the wider field of ancient historiography by investigating the writings of historians preserved only in fragments and looking at historical documents in papyri and inscriptions. We will then investigate how these ancient works have been used by historians from the Renaissance to the present in creating a picture of the ancient world, exploring their own methodologies and ideologies from Marxism to the Neocons.

### **Learning Goals**

This course will primarily teach students to:

- Analyze a variety of ancient sources, including literary evidence, papyri, inscriptions, coins, and archaeological data
- Use methodologies and theories to arrange historical data
- Evaluate modern scholarship on ancient history
- Learn how to write history
- Present research through presentations and written papers

### **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 Participation 20%** – Participation in class and 40-50 pages reading a week.
- **Mid-term presentation 40%** – Students will prepare a 10–15-minute illustrated talk on a source for ancient history and will answer questions.
- **Research paper 40%** – A final research paper of 3000 words on a subject of the student's choice associated with ancient history, its sources, methodology and practice.

#### **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 certain 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 1 archaeological site and 4 museums; most of that walking is over even ground.

-This course requires students to give a verbal 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.

**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.

**Class Schedule**

Class	Date	Topic / Readings / Meeting point
	<b>Jan 23-25</b>	<b>Field Study   Delphi and Ancient Olympia</b>
		<b>PART I: LITERARY SOURCES</b>
1	Mon Jan 27	<i>Introduction to the course: syllabus, themes and definitions.</i>
2	Wed Jan 29	<i>Ancient historiography.</i> <b>Reading:</b> C. Pelling, <i>Literary Texts and the Greek Historian</i> , 1999, ch. 1: 'A culture of rhetoric'.
3	Mon Feb 3	<i>Herodotus I: Method and the Father of History.</i> <b>Reading:</b> J. Marincola, <i>Greek Historians</i> , Cambridge 2006, pp. 19-39.
4	Wed Feb 5	<i>Herodotus II: Greeks Abroad.</i> <b>Reading:</b> A. B. Lloyd, 'Appendix C. The Account of Egypt: Herodotus Right and Wrong', in R. B. Strassler (ed.), <i>The Landmark Herodotus. The Histories</i> , Pantheon Books, NY 2007, pp. 737-743.
5	Mon Feb 10	<i>Thucydides I: Introduction.</i> <b>Reading:</b> S. Hornblower, <i>Thucydides</i> , Duckworth 1987, pp. 1-12.
6	Wed Feb 12	<i>Thucydides II: What they should have said: Speeches in the History.</i> <b>Readings:</b> J. Marincola, <i>Greek Historians</i> , Cambridge 2006, pp. 77-85.
7	Mon Feb 17	<i>Thucydides III: Narratology.</i> <b>Reading:</b> J. Marincola, <i>Greek Historians</i> , Cambridge 2006, pp. 61-76.
	<b>Feb 18-21</b>	<b>Field Study   Peloponnese</b>
8	Mon Feb 24	<i>Historians in fragments.</i> <b>Reading:</b> Harding, in Marinola, <i>A Companion to Greek Historiography</i> , I, Blackwell 2007, pp. 180-188.
9	Wed Feb 26	<i>Tragedy and Comedy as historical sources.</i> <b>Reading:</b> C. Pelling, <i>Literary Texts and the Greek Historian</i> , 1999, ch. 7: 'approaching Aristophanes'.
		<b>PART II: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES</b>
10	Wed Mar 5	<i>The Archaeologist and the Ancient Historian.</i> <b>Reading:</b> J. M. Hall, <i>Artifact &amp; Artifice: Classical Archaeology and the Ancient Historian</i> , Chicago 2014, ch. 1, pp. 1-16.
11	Mon Mar 10	<b>TRIP: The Athenian Agora: Socrates about town.</b> J. M. Hall, <i>Artifact &amp; Artifice: Classical Archaeology and the Ancient Historian</i> , Chicago 2014, ch. 5, pp. 77-95.

Class	Date	Topic / Readings / Meeting point
12	Wed Mar 12	MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS
13	Mon Mar 17	<i>Philip II and the Royal Tombs at Vergina: excavating 'Big Men'.</i> <b>Reading:</b> J. M. Hall, <i>Artifact &amp; Artifice: Classical Archaeology and the Ancient Historian</i> , Chicago 2014, ch. 6, pp. 97-117.
	<b>Mar 18-22</b>	<b>Field Study   Northern Greece</b>
14	Mon Mar 24	<i>Papyri: Searching the desert for lost worlds.</i> <b>Reading:</b> R. S. Bagnall, <i>Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History</i> , 1995.
15	Wed Mar 26	<i>Epigraphy: History on Stone.</i> <b>Reading:</b> F. G. B. Millar, 'Epigraphy', chapter 2 in M. H. Crawford ed., <i>Sources for Ancient History</i> , Cambridge 1983.
16	Mon Mar 31	<b>TRIP: The Epigraphic Museum: Sources for the Athenian Empire.</b> <b>Reading:</b> continue Millar from last class.
17	Wed Apr 2	<i>The Spartan Mirage: The archaeology of legends.</i> <b>Reading:</b> N. M. Kennell, <i>Spartans: A New History</i> , Wiley-Blackwell 2021, chapter 1.
18	Mon Apr 7	<i>Coins and money in the ancient world.</i> <b>Reading:</b> M. H. Crawford, 'Numismatics' chapter 4 in his <i>Sources for Ancient History</i> , Cambridge 1983.
19	Wed Apr 9	<b>TRIP: The Numismatic Museum.</b> <b>Reading:</b> continue Crawford from last class.
	<b>Apr 11-21</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
20	Wed Apr 23	<i>Trip: The National Archaeological Museum: Artefacts and the Ancient Historian.</i> <b>Reading:</b> I. Morris, <i>Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity</i> , Cambridge 1992, pp. 31-69.
		<b>PART III: METHODOLOGY</b>
21	Mon Apr 28	<i>The development of Historical science from the Renaissance to the 20th century.</i> <b>Reading:</b> A. D. Momigliano, 'Ancient history and the antiquarian', in <i>Studies in Historiography</i> , London 1966, 1-3.
22	Wed Apr 30	<i>What is History, anyway?</i> <b>Reading:</b> P. Horden & N. Purcell, <i>The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History</i> , Oxford 2000, pp. 463-523.
23	Mon May 5	<i>Comparative Anthropology.</i> <b>Reading:</b> K. Thomas, 'History and Anthropology', <i>Past and Present</i> 24, 1963, 3-24.
24	Wed May 7	<i>The Use and Abuse of History: Framing narratives in the 20th century.</i> G. G. Iggers, <i>Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodernism Challenge</i> , Hanover-London 1997.

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

### Bibliography:

John Marincola, *On Writing History: From Herodotus to Herodian*. Penguin classics. London, 2017.