

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History
Semester I, 1989-90

History 303 A History of Greek Civilization Kenneth Sacks

This course deals with the history of Ancient Greece from c.776 B.C. to 404 B.C. During this period, the Greeks developed for Western Man the concepts of democracy and philosophy, as well as individual character and the freedom of social choice. Their advances in art and literature also proved to be fundamental to the development of these disciplines.

We shall attempt to appreciate the significance of these achievements through the extensive readings of records which they have left us histories, plays and philosophical tracts and through the use of slides to illuminate the art and architecture. The course, set within a framework of the political and military events, will stress the development of civilization and society. No background in Greek History is necessary.

Lectures: 1/week, plus discussion section led by T.A.

Written Assignments and Examinations: 6 week, 12 week, and final exam. Honors students and 4-unit non-honors students will also write papers.

Exams: Will be both objective and essay style. They will require an understanding of the fundamental questions, supported by evidence found in the readings and lectures.

Papers: 4-unit non-honors students are required to write a seven page paper. A list of suggested topics can be found at the back of the syllabus. However, students are encouraged to choose their own topic, based on their interests. But, all topics of your own choosing must be approved first by the instructor or T.A. by November 7. Papers are due by December 5.

Honors students will work closely with the instructor on paper topics or projects of your own choosing.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you register for 4 credits, you MUST do the required written work. If after having signed up for the fourth credit, you decide that you don't want to complete the written work, you MUST formally drop the credit, with the Registrar, by the 9th week of class. Otherwise, whether or not you complete the work, you shall be held responsible for it.

Grading: 3 units: approximately 30% for the 6 and 12 week exams, and 40% for the final. Consideration will be given for improvement for participation in the section meetings.

4 units: approximately 20% for the 6 and 12 week exams and for the paper, and 40% for the final. Consideration will be given for improvement and for participation in the section meetings.

Books to be purchased:

Hesiod and Theognis

Herodotus, The Persian Wars

Plutarch, The Rise and Fall of Athens

Greek Lyrics, trans. by Richmond Lattimore
Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War
J.M. Moore, Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy.
Aeschylus, The Oresteia
Sophocles, Three Theban Plays
J.B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, A History of Greece,
fourth edition

Office: 4117 Humanities Building
Phone: 263-2528
Office Hours: TBA

Asterisks (*) signify the books are on reserve at H.C. White Library.

Sep 5: Geography and Mycenaean Background

Bury, 1-51

How does the geography of Greece and the history of the Bronze Age influence the development of Greek society?

What was the nature of Mycenaean Civilization?

Sep 12: 1. Greece in the Dark Ages

Bury, 51-88.

What was the nature of Greek society during the Dark Ages, and what forces helped it move into the "light"?

2. Light from the East

Hesiod, the Theogony (all)

What factors helped the Greeks emerge from the Dark Ages?

Consider the possible Near Eastern influence on the Theogony?

Sep 19: 1. From Shame Culture to Guilt Culture

Hesiod, Works and Days (all)

Greek Lyrics: Archilochus, numbers 3, 24-29.

What is Homeric shame culture?

How do Hesiod and Archilochus react against the arbitrariness of aristocratic rule?

Why does guilt culture arise in Greece and what does it mean?

2. Rise of the Polis

*M.M. Austin, Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece, 49-81.

What is a polis; how did it develop?

Sep 26: 1. The Age of Tyranny

Theognis, lines 27-52, 183-196.

*A. Andrews, The Greek Tyrants, 31-65.

Argos: Herodotus VI 127.

Corinth: Herodotus V 92.

Sicyon: Herodotus V 67-68; VI 126-130.

What is a Greek tyrant?

What accounts for their rise to power? Consider especially class conflict and racial tension.

What are the effects of tyranny on the development of the

polis?

2. Sparta: Evolution of a Closed Society

Moore, 60-123, especially 75-82.

Herodotus I 65-68; VI 52-60.

Greek Lyrics, Tyrtaeus 1 and 2, Alcman (all).

*Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, especially chapter 6.

Bury, 89-99.

What are the agoge and syssition?

What was Tyrtaeus' message to Spartan soldiers?

What is the political system in Sparta; how did Sparta avoid tyranny?

Oct 3: Athens: Evaluation of an Open Society

Moore, 143-166 (I-XXII). Also 208-246 selectively.

Moore, 185-191 (XLIII-L), and 276-288. Use 141-142 as reference.

Plutarch, Life of Theseus, chapter 24-36.

Plutarch, Life of Solon.

Greek Lyrics, Solon 2-5; Anonymous Drinking Song 1.

Bury, 115-140.

Was there a Solonic revolution?

What role does the Peisistratid tyranny play in the development of Athens?

Did the Cleisthenic settlement achieve democracy?

Oct 10: EXAM

Oct 17: 1. Cosmos, Piety, and Religion

Hesiod, Theogony.

Herodotus I 46-56, 84-91; VI 61-84; IX 36-45.

What is the role of Delphi in Greek life?

What is the place of religion in Greek society? How does it compare with the polis as a dominant institution?

Why are there no successful transcendental religions in Archaic/Classical Greece?

2. Women in Archaic Greece

Greek Lyrics, Archilochus 24 & 26, Semonides, 1, 4, & 5,

Anacreon 2, Praxilla, 2.

Hesiod, Theogony, lines 453-735.

Theognis, lines 457-460.

What is man's vision of women; how did it change?

Oct 24: 1. Herodotus the Historian

Herodotus I 1-5; III 38; VII 133, 135; IX 15-16, 82, 107-122.

How truthful was Herodotus; how humanitarian?

2. Coming of the Persians

Herodotus I 95-122.

What is the background to the Persian invasion?

3. Ionia Fights for Freedom

Herodotus V 1-38, 49-51, 55-65, 91-126; VI 1-47

Why did the Ionians revolt; could they have been successful?

4. Darius' Invasion of Europe

Herodotus VI 48-49, 94-124.

What accounts for the Athenian victory at Marathon?

Oct 31: 1. Xerxes' Invasion: Europe in the Balance

Herodotus VII (all); VII 1-117.

How loyal were the Greek states to the Panhellenic cause?

Who was most responsible for the Greek victory?

2. Politics and Diplomacy, 479-460

Moore, 166-170 (XIII-XXVI). Also 246-255 selectively.

Thucydides I 89-95.

Plutarch, Life of Aristides, 22-27, Life of Cimon (all),

Life of Pericles, 7-10.

Bury, 200-214.

What were Athenian and Spartan policies after the Persian War?

How did Athenian foreign policy relate to domestic issues?

Nov 7: Contemporary Zeal

Aeschylus, The Eumenides

Film of The Eumenides

How are tradition and reason (or extenuating circumstances) represented in the play?

What parts does contemporary politics and foreign policy play?

What is Aeschylus trying to tell his Athenian audience?

Nov 14: 1. The Athenian Empire and the conflict with Sparta

Thucydides I 96-117, 128-138.

Moore, 167-168 (XXIV) and 247-251.

Moore, 202-207 (LXIII-LXIX) and 303-310.

Plutarch, Life of Themistocles, 20-32.

Bury, 215-244.

What methods did Athens use to maintain her Empire?

Was the League as a defense against Persia still a reality?

How did the growth of the League affect Athenian relations with Sparta?

2. Two Views of the Athenian Achievement

a. Man as the Measure

Plutarch, Life of Pericles.

Moore, 170-171 (XXVII) and 254-256.

Thucydides II 33-46.

b. The Mob as Tyrant

Moore, 37-47, 171-172 (XXVIII) and 255-257:

use 141-142 as a reference.

What is the Athenian self-image?

What are the themes Athenians stress in explaining their civilization?

Nov 21: Reason vs. Revelation, or: What a Piece of Work is Man

Sophocles, Antigone.

Film of the Antigone

What roles do tradition (revelation) and reason play in the Antigone?

How is Sophocles answering Aeschylus?

Which of the 2 productions of The Eumenides and Antigone do you prefer and why?

Nov 28: EXAM

Dec 5: 1. Thucydides: Historian for All Times

Thucydides I 1, 19-24, 65; II 47-55; III 36-50;

IV 104-107; V 25-26, 85-116.

Bury, 251-253.

What makes Thucydides so modern?

In what assumptions and methodologies does he differ from Herodotus?

2. The Origins of the Peloponnesian War

Thucydides I 24-88, 118-146.

Plutarch, Life of Pericles, 29-33.

Bury, 245-251.

What are the causes of the Great Peloponnesian War?

Dec 12: 1. Archidamian War

Thucydides II, III and IV.

What were the Athenian & Spartan strategies; were they successful?

How true to their ideals were the combatants?

2. The Disaster, 411-403

Thucydides VIII

*Plutarch, Life of Alcibiades, 24-39.

*Plutarch, Life of Lysander, 1-15.

Moore, 176-182 (XXXIV-XL) and 266-272.

Bury, 288-322.

What methods and strategies did the Spartans use to prevail?

Was Athenian defeat inevitable?

PAPER TOPICS FOR FOUR-CREDIT NON-HONORS STUDENTS
(All reading materials are either those purchased for class or
are on reserve at H.C. White Library)

1. The Birth of Greek Philosophy

How did the Greeks first come to think of philosophy?

What were the kinds of philosophical questions that the early
philosophers (that is, the pre-Socratics) posed?

READINGS:

Greek Lyrics: Xenophanes, numbers 1-2

Bury, 198-199

W. Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideal of Greek Culture,

vol. 1, 150-184

2. The Meaning of the Oresteia

Discuss Dover's conclusions about the meaning of the
Oresteia.

Illuminate your discussion with passages drawn from the
three plays.

READINGS:

Aeschylus, The Oresteia

Kenneth Dover, The Greeks, 84-101

3. The Histories of Herodotus and Thucydides

What were the messages of Herodotus and Thucydides, and
how were these messages affected by the different cultures and
life-experiences of the two authors?

READINGS:

Herodotus and Thucydides

4. Greek Strategy in the Persian War: The Significance of the
Themistocles Decree

Is the Themistocles authentic?

How does the question of its authenticity affect our
understanding of Greek strategy?

READINGS:

Donald Kagan, Problems in Ancient History,

vol. 1, 262-307

5. The Character of the Athenian Empire

How was the Athenian Empire accepted by the subject
states?

What methods did Athens employ in order to rule?

READINGS:

Donald Kagan, Problems in Ancient History,

vol. 1, 377-411 #