

Why study ancient Greek history? If we were Greek, we might say “to learn about our ancestors and their achievements”. But if not Greek, why? The answer is really the same. We are all in so many ways heirs to the Greek achievement that the ancient Greeks are everyone’s ancestors. A statement by Hesiod, 8th century BC poet and farmer, furnishes the key to grasping the distinctive Greek imperative: “That man is altogether best who considers all things himself and marks what will be better afterwards and at the end; and he, again, is good who listens to a good adviser; but whoever neither thinks for himself nor keeps in mind what another tells him, he is an unprofitable man” (*Works and Days*, 295-297). Like people of any other long lasting society, ancient Greeks had a lengthy history which unfolded in a number of distinct stages involving different social, political, and cultural phases. What makes the Greek experience so significant is not what happened, but the sustained effort on the part of Greeks to make sense of things. This incessant curiosity and attentiveness grew out of early political necessity, but it ultimately addressed every imaginable object. In this course, as we follow the developments of Greek history, we will also be following the Greek response to Greek history—the effort to understand and convey an understanding of the human experience as they knew it. We will find that we ask many of the same questions and find many of the Greek answers still valid.

We are going to use a single narrative history text to follow the important developments of ancient Greek history in its successive stages. We will also be reading a succession of works—epic, didactic, and lyric poetry, early prose, history writings, tragedy and comedy, speeches, philosophic dialogues to gain an understanding of the forms and content of the Greek responses to the Greek experience. Except for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, all these readings are online. Some of these texts may be read as narrative, as poetry, as analyses. But in each case, whatever the genre, they also pose implicit or explicit questions and present or imply answers with varying degrees of certainty. Our approach concentrates on finding and articulating the central question(s) in each text and considering how the author presents or dramatizes the question(s) and then provides or suggests (or sometimes doesn’t) possible answers. This remains a history course, meaning we are most interesting in researching causes and consequences and in establishing contexts for cultural developments.

Required Texts (all available at UNCG Bookstore)

Sarah Pomeroy et al., *A Brief History of Ancient Greece*, 3rd edition (= AG)

Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Richard Lattimore

Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. Richard Lattimore

(NOTE: Please do not substitute other translations, and especially not a prose translation, for the Lattimore versions—we all need to be looking at the same words)

Evaluations: 3 exams (60%), 3 papers (30%), 4 summaries (10%)

Class Schedule/Assignments (reading assignments are to be completed by the time of the class connected with them)

1/8 Overview and Beginnings: Greece and the Aegean before the Greeks
AG 1-19; begin reading the *Iliad*, preferably the whole work, but you need to read Books 1, 2, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18-24; when you finish, begin reading the *Odyssey*, preferably the whole work, but especially Books 1-7, 13-24

1/10 Mycenaean Age: First Greeks AG 19-25

1/15 Martin Luther King Holiday—No Class

1/17 Mycenaean Age: World of the Linear B Tablets AG 27-37; handout and websites:
<http://www.ancientscripts.com/linearb.html>;
<https://arsartisticadventureofmankind.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/d1.png?w=863&h=575>

Summary #1: Based on the information about the roughly 1000-year period between ca. 2200 and 1200 BC presented in AG pp. 19-39, write a general “history” of Mycenaean Greece

1/22 Collapse and Continuities AG 37-58; *Odyssey*

Paper 1: Based on what we know of the world of the Mycenaeans, how does the world depicted by Homer differ from that of the Mycenaeans in terms of political organization, agricultural practices, and architecture?

1/24 Epic: Questions and Answers in the *Iliad*—Being Greek

1/29 Epic: Questions and Answers in the *Odyssey*—Being Greek

1/31 Trade, Colonization, and Consequences AG 58-83;

Summary #2: Based on the information provided in AG pp. 58-83, write a general history of the period from ca. 750-500 BC

2/5 New Age, New Visions and Voices AG 83-98

http://www.artic.edu/~llivin/research/ionic_architecture

Hesiod, *Works and Days* <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/works.htm>

Theognis:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0479%3Avolume%3D1%3Atext%3D11%3Asection%3D2>

Alcaeus: <http://mkatz.web.wesleyan.edu/Images2/cciv243.Alcaeus.html>; read #5-11, 18

2/7 Greek Rationalism in the Archaic Age

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/thales> ;

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaximander>

Pythagoras: <http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/Biographies/Pythagoras.html>

2/12 Sparta

AG 99-120; Plutarch, *Life of*

Lycurgus: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/lycurgus.html>

2/14 Athens

AG 121-136; Aristotle, *Athenian*

Constitution, Section 1: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/athenian_const.1.1.html

2/19 EXAM 1

2/21 Persian War 1: Ionian Revolt

AG 136-146; Herodotus Books I,

and V: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/herodotus/h4/>

2/26 Persian War 2: 480-479 BCE

AG 146-151; trireme:

<https://i.pining.com/736x/2d/ed/b0/2dedb08016acd749f150074c1dfd4c36.jpg>;

<https://www.ancient.eu/uploads/images/1212.png>

2/28 Persian War 3: From Delian League to Athenian Empire AG 134-163; Thucydides Book 1.89-117 (= Chapter 4): <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7142/7142-h/7142-h.htm>

Summary #3: Based on the information provided write a summary history of developments between 500 and 445 BC

3/5-3/9 Spring Break—No Classes

3/14 Athenian Culture and Society M 163-185;

<http://www.greeceathensaegeaninfo.com/a-greece-travel/a-maps/map-ancient-athens-piraeus-lg.jpg>

<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-2-Xr-BeGa2U/UHpDMA6BpqI/AAAAAAAAAgqY/MaWD58g1jOg/s1600/athenss.gif>

<http://www.ancient-greece.org/architecture/parthenon.html>

<http://www.ancient-greece.org/architecture/parthenon.html>

Parthenon pediment:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Athens#/media/File:Reconstruction_of_the_west_pediment_of_the_Parthenon_1.jpg

3/19 Peloponnesian War to 421

AG 211-231

Old Oligarch <http://courses.ttu.edu/gforsyth/oo.htm>

Sophocles, *Antigone* <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/antigone.html>

Thucydides, Peloponnesian

War, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7142/7142-h/7142-h.htm#link2HCH0001>

Read Book 1, Chapters 2-3, end of Chapter 5 (the funeral oration by Pericles); Book 3, Chapter 9

Paper 2: If we treat Antigone as representing aristocratic tradition and Creon as representing the newly dominant Athenian demos, discuss how Sophocles depicts each as flawed and what possible way of reaching a better outcome does he suggest.

3/21 Peloponnesian War to 404 AG 231-246; Thucydides, Melian Dialogue: <http://lygdamus.com/resources/New%20PDFS/Melian.pdf>; Xenophon, *Hellenica*. 2.1.1-2.3.20 = <http://www.attalus.org/info/xenophon.html> (click on *Hellenica*, Book 2)

3/26 EXAM 2

3/28 Revolution and Recovery AG 247-253; Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.11-2.4.43 = <http://www.attalus.org/info/xenophon.html> (click on *Hellenica*, Book 2 and scroll down to section 3.11 to start)

4/2 Socrates *Dissoi Logoi*: http://www.constitution.org/gr/dissoi_logoi.html; Protagoras: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lives_of_the_Eminent_Philosophers/Book_IX#Protagoras_Apology <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html>

4/4 4th century Quest for Stability: Politics and Philosophy AG 247-282; Plato, *Republic* Book VII: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html>

Paper 3: Using what Socrates says about his practices and ideas in the *Apology* and what Plato recommends in Book VII of the *Republic*, discuss the ways in which each thinks that wisdom (*sophia*) would serve to produce a better state (polis). Remember that Socrates' "wisdom" consists in admitting that he knows nothing. Plato's wisdom involves knowing what is truly real.

4/9 Rise of Macedon AG 283-300

4/11 Alexander of Macedon AG 300-325;
<http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/lecture9b.html>;
Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, Book 1: <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/alexandr.html>

4/16 Hellenistic Age: Successor Kingdoms AG 326-334

Summary #4: Based on the information provided in AG pp. 283-334, write a general history of developments between the 350s and 270s BC

4/18 Hellenistic Age: Economy and Society AG 334-342

4/23 Hellenistic Age: Ideas and Beliefs AG 342-360; Alexandrian Museion: <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/phillips.htm> Stoicism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoicism>

4/25 Greece and Greeks in the Roman Empire and Beyond AG 361-365

5/2 EXAM 3 12-3 p.m. in regular classroom