Honors 103: NAVIGATING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE ABROAD in Greece, 4 credits

Honors 337: A Culture of Freedom, 4 credits

Course Meetings

8/22 through 8/26 remotely via Zoom, synchronous meetings daily, 9:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM

8/27 through 9/9 at the Athens Centre, see attached schedule for daily activities. Debrief every evening.

Instructor Information

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Course Description

Honors 103, Abroad, fulfills precisely the same function as the sections of the course offered on site at WWU: to allow students to analyze documents and literature produced in Mediterranean antiquity with a focus on the relationship between individuals and their community. Throughout the course, the emphasis rests on beginning to formulate clear perspectives on what makes this relationship productive or counterproductive and communicating these ideas through discussion and submitted assignments. Do not be deceived! Formulating clear perspectives on this relationship is a lifelong endeavor! As this particular experience involves students spending time in the specific setting of Greece, the focus of our literary inquiry will center on selections of Greek literature curated to enhance the experience of students at the various sites we will be visiting. Overall emphasis will be placed on the opportunity to analyze developments first hand with the crucial relationship between individual and community that was born on the Hellenic peninsula that sowed the seeds for democracy.

In this respect, students will have the opportunity to conduct inquiry into the actual context in which this innovative relationship between individual and community developed, supplemented by specific readings associated with seminal moments in the development of democratic institutions and through exploring sites in Athens and the Attic peninsula, as well as southern Greece, where most agree full democracy was born. Thus, students will have precisely the same opportunity to ask the questions that the Greeks themselves have explored since coming to recognize that they had developed a way of life that was quite different from those of the surrounding regions and cultures:

* What was it about this environment that nurtured the peculiar Greek focus on freedom and equity in the relationship between citizens and their community?
* In what ways does Greek culture differ from that which developed in neighboring regions?
* What was it about the Greek culture that allowed them to leave behind the impressive legacy that amazes us to this day?

These questions will allow students to explore the complexity of the relationship between individuals and their community as it developed in Greece. Students will have the opportunity to visit precisely the sites where our Greek authors maintain this peculiar way of life was born, defended in its maturity, and died. Finally, students will have the opportunity to explore how the experience of Classical Greek democracy has been received and revived by the world today through direct interaction with sites, their preservation, the emphasis that has been placed on the material remains at a variety of historical locales, and how that understanding informs the design, implementation, and maintenance of democratic institutions today.

The study abroad version of Honors 103 is comprised of a single week of classes and coursework via synchronous meetings on Zoom, where students will complete readings, attend lectures, engage in discussions, and prepare for traveling abroad. The preliminary week will be followed by two weeks of travel and study in Greece. Finally, upon returning, students will be tasked with completing their final project and schedule individual follow-up meetings. The study abroad component is subdivided into class sessions, guided site visits, with time set aside for assignments, travel, and opportunities for self-guided tourism.

Students choosing to enroll in the seminar offering will be expected to complete an additional set of readings that is designed to allow them to dig deeper into the development of the two most famous *polis* communities of Greek antiquity, Sparta and Athens. In addition, seminar students will submit alternative set of assignments based on their readings. Participating in the program experientially is otherwise identical for all students.

Course Goals

1. To develop and refine critical thinking skill using the diverse ancient literature of the Mediterranean as our subject. The literature of this regions, particularly the Greek authors, have been put to this purpose for the last two thousand years and are remarkably well-suited to precisely this sort of exercise. In this instance the literature will be enriched through the exploration of the sites and locales where the events that transpired inspired our Greek authors’ analysis and reflections.
2. To turn our critical faculties toward the decoding of difficult primary source documents and material culture. This task will be the basis for much of the evaluated work in the course. Students will be tasked with examining the literature and exploring material remains and natural environments in order to describe some of the relationships between the individual and the community discussed therein and drawing useful parallels to similar circumstances in contemporary experience.
3. To gain an introductory understanding of the study of the humanities and how such study can enrich individual and collective experience.

Required Texts

For HNRS 103 & 337

Stanley Lombardo, *The Essential Homer* (Hackett 2000)

Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff, *Four Tragedies* (Hackett 2007)

Herodotus, *Histories* (Oxford 2008)

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Oxford 2009)

For HNRS 337

Christian Meier, *A Culture of Freedom* (Oxford 2011)

Paul Rahe, *The Spartan Regime* (Yale 2016)

All of the aforementioned texts are available through many local and online retailers. Use your own discretion when deciding where to purchase your texts. With permission, other translations of the texts of our primary source material are acceptable. Students are expected to purchase these materials by the first day of the course with no exceptions.

Course Requirements

* Semi-formal research annotations of select literature and site visits on a day-to-day basis throughout the program. These research annotations require a very high degree of industry and attentiveness.
* Two essays that synthesize research annotations compiled first prior to travel and then during travel.
* A final project that encapsulates that research and experience in the course (nine hours of labor)
* Exemplary citizenship in attendance and participation in course meetings, and appropriate conduct abroad

Summary of Grading Criteria

Research Annotations **30%** (submitted alongside other assignments)

Two Essays **20%** (10% each) **Due: 8/26 & 10/15**

Final Project **10% Due: 12/10**

Citizenship **40%**

Annotating the Readings

Your annotations will form the basis of your day-to-day scholarly industry in the course. Annotations are meticulous notes that you take down as you read and at the end of our site visits in Greece. What type of things do you note? Well, in all honesty, the list is potentially inexhaustible. However, at the bare minimum, you ought to find yourself transcribing direct quotes from the author or synopses of longer passages in your own words and an explanation for why you have transcribed the particular quote or passage. Keep in mind our central inquiry: what makes the relationship between individuals and their community productive (or counterproductive). Look to incorporate language in your annotations that situates your annotations analytically within this inquiry. During our daily excursions abroad, you will have the opportunity to reflect on a myriad of possible experiences, reflecting on art, architecture, geography, topography, and an assortment of other material and literary evidence.

Your annotations ought to serve as the basis by which you interact in our course meetings. Ideally, I would like to go around our classroom at WWU, asking individual members of our course to share what they feel is the most impactful note that they took from the readings for which we are all responsible for having completed that particular day. As we proceed around the room, be prepared to jot down the page number whence your peers have noted something compelling! You may very well add their contribution to your own annotations. Thus the course has a community-based cooperative component. We help each other learn. It’s a thing. While we are abroad, I would like to be able to ask each of you to relate a specific experience that you are intending to encode at our debriefings.

How much is enough? This is an impossible question to answer. But as a general rule of thumb (setting the bar very low, which I dislike doing very much) let’s aim for **at least a single, full annotation (approximately 60 words) for every ten pages that you are responsible for reading**. Thus, I expect you to provide an annotations from across the length and breadth of the assigned reading. For our time abroad, look to encode three to four complete reflections on the field work for that day. That said, I would very much appreciate a high level of industry! The more annotations, the better!

Schedule of Readings and Assignments at WWU

Please be prepared to discuss at our 1 to 3 PM meeting **through having read and annotated**:

8/22: *The Essential Homer*; *A Culture of Freedom*

8/23: *Four Tragedies*; *A Culture of Freedom*

8/24: *Histories*; *The Spartan Regime*

8/25: *The Peloponnesian War*; *The Spartan Regime*

9/2: **Submit First Essay and a digital version of your annotations by 11 PM!** (Canvas/Email)

First Essay Description

Your first essay is your opportunity to collect your thoughts and insights into the relationship between individuals and their communities that we have explored through our readings. You are free to discuss any aspect of this relationship that you found compelling, whether it is a broadly political, social, or economic relationship or any combination of those conceptual categories, e.g. sociopolitical, socioeconomic, etc. Through your annotations, your essay ought to rest on a foundation of references to the readings. Look to use your annotations to form an evidentiary basis for your musings. Intellectuals tend to prefer well-informed opinions, dontchaknow? Tying your ideas around a broadly thematic centerpiece is advisable.

Schedule of Assignments at Athens Centre

Your day-to-day workload during our time in Greece will be primarily concerned with producing daily annotations of our field experiences and site visits. You are expected to encode your experiences in the same manner in which you have become accustomed to annotate our readings.

Final Project

The Final Project will serve to encapsulate your experiences and studies during the program. It can take a variety of forms as suits your artistic vision, from an essay to painting to poem. We shall be discussing a myriad of possibilities. Please submit your complete annotations alongside your Final Project.

**Due by 12/9** (Canvas/Email)