

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Classical Civilization: Greece - 28218

Last update 20-10-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Classical Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Andrea Rotstein

Coordinator Email: andrea.rotstein@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: by appointment (in person or remotely)

Teaching Staff:

Prof. Andrea Rotstein

Course/Module description:

This course offers an exploration of ancient Greek culture, with a focus on literature through selected readings from foundational texts. We will examine systems of belief and values, social practices, and cultural institutions—including theater, athletic and poetic competitions, music, nutrition and the art of rhetoric.

Course/Module aims:

to examine and evaluate the contribution of ancient Greek culture to the shaping of Western civilization, local culture and individual experience, through a beginners acquaintance with its main characteristics and key literary works.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- *Identify and explain key concepts in ancient Greek culture;*
- *Become familiar with the main literary genres and authors of ancient Greek literature, and assess their contribution to the shaping of Western culture;*
- *Recognize elements of ancient Greek culture that continue to resonate in contemporary society;*
- *Assess the relevance of issues and values emerging from the study of ancient Greek culture to contemporary individual and social experience.*

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal lecture; discussion based on texts that students read or listened to in translation prior to each session.

During the semester you will be required to submit a short reading report presenting your impressions on an ancient source of your choice. The report may be submitted in written form, as a podcast, video clip, illustration, or other medium. Summaries of content will not be accepted. Detailed instructions will be provided at the beginning of the course.

You will be asked in the final class to briefly present an oral argument on one of the issues of ancient Greek culture discussed throughout the term. Detailed instructions

will be provided at the beginning of the course.

The final assignment will be an in-class written multiple-choice exam.

Course/Module Content:

1. Introduction; the development of writing; how did ancient Greek literature come down to us?

2. Religion and Mythology; how was the universe created?

Reading: Selections from Hesiod's "Theogony"

3. Nutrition; how are feasting and philosophy connected?

Reading: Excerpts from Hesiod's "Works and Days"

4. Oral Poetry and Epic; Homer—did he ever exist?

Reading: Book 1 of the "Iliad" (Book 2 also recommended)

5. Women in Ancient Greece; why is there a gap between female figures in mythology and literature and their status in real life?

Reading: Book 9 of the "Iliad" (Book 6 also recommended); selections from misogynistic poetry (e.g., Simonides of Amorgos poem 7)

6. Sport in Ancient Greece; how are sport and poetry connected?

Reading: Excerpts from Book 23, full reading of Book 24 of the "Iliad", and one ode by Pindar

7. Ancient Greek Theater; Greek tragedy as a therapeutical tool?

Reading: "Ajax" by Sophocles

8. Tragedy and Comedy; what is their connection to politics?

Reading: "Plutus" by Aristophanes

9. The Art of Speech; Rhetorics as the TED talks of antiquity?

Reading: Lysias' First Speech; Gorgias' "Encomium of Helen"

10. Music and Poetry Competitions: "Greek Idol" of Antiquity?

Reading: Selections from Greek lyric poetry

11. Happiness: what do the Stoic and Epicurean schools have to say?

Reading: Selections from lyric poetry and/or Epicurean and Stoic philosophy

12. Hellenistic Judaism: What links Jerusalem to Alexandria?

Reading: "The Exodus" by Ezekiel the Tragedian

13. Final Session: summary through debating (with prior preparation by students)

Required Reading:

The list of primary sources is detailed in the syllabus, short handouts will be added during the course.

For the secondary sources required (chapters by Dwora Gilula and Margalit Finkelberg) see Hebrew section.

Additional Reading Material:

On Moodle, handouts and by the lecturer's recommendation.

Grading Scheme:

Written Exam % 60

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 30 %

Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 10 %

Additional information:

None