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Classics 331: Sparta and Athens

Spring 2008  
Office Hours:  
Mon: 2:45-4:15  
Th: 2:45-4:15

## SYLLABUS

### A. Overview

This course concentrates on the two greatest poleis of ancient Greece, Sparta and Athens. The course has two general aims: to create a narrative of the histories of these two city-states for the archaic and classical periods; and to study specific problems within the context of that narrative. Recurring themes include the role of myth in history, the place of the individual in totalitarian and democratic societies, and Spartan and Athenian imperialism. The starting-point in each case comes from the evidence and the explanations that the ancient sources provide.

### B. Reading

1. These books have been ordered and are available at the College Store.

Aristotle	<u>Constitution of Athens</u> (Cambridge)
Herodotus	<u>The Histories</u> (Penguin)
Plutarch	<u>Plutarch on Sparta</u> (Penguin)
Thucydides	<u>The Landmark Thucydides</u> (Free Press)
Xenophon	<u>A History of My Times</u> (Penguin)

There are also readings on electronic reserve; the password for the course is 5644jc.

### C. Assignments

Reading assignments vary a great deal. It is always a good idea at least to preview the reading before class on Monday. I will let you know every week in advance what reading should be done before class on Monday and Wednesday; all the reading must be done before the weekly discussion sections. For these you will have a set of questions that will direct you to particular topics.

There are four papers. For the first three, there will be assigned questions; for the final paper you may write on a topic of your choice. **TURN PAPERS IN WHEN THEY ARE DUE.** My standard policy is to drop the grade by one-third for every day a paper is late.

## E. Background Information

### 1. Language

No knowledge of Greek is assumed. You are responsible for terminology introduced and used in the course of the semester.

### 2. Dates and Places

Chronology is the foundation of history. You will not be tested directly on dates, but keep a running chronology and make a timeline in your notes so that you can keep track of the sequence of events. Take advantage of all the ancillary materials (maps, chronologies, sketches of sources) in the back of the various translations. If you are not familiar with the basic geography of the Greek world, make sure to study the maps.

## F. Summary of Classes and Discussions

### 1. Introduction

#### Week 1

February 11: Introduction  
13: Greek History and Society  
Sections: Ancient and Modern Historiography

#### Week 2

February 18: Lycurgan Sparta  
20: Spartan Society

### WINTER CARNIVAL

#### Week 3

February 25: Athenian Democracy  
27: Athenian History  
Sections: Spartans and Athenians

**FIRST ESSAY DUE**

### 2. Herodotus and the Persian Wars

#### Week 4

March 3: Reading Herodotus  
5: Democracy and Aristocracy  
Sections: Cleomenes and Spartan Kingship

#### Week 5

March 10: The Persian Invasion  
12: Politics and Warfare  
Sections: Sparta and Athens in Herodotus

### 3. Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War

#### Week 6

March 17: Introduction to Thucydides  
19: The Pentacontaetia and the First Peloponnesian War  
Sections: Pausanias and Themistocles

**SECOND ESSAY DUE**

SPRING BREAK

Week 7

April 2: Pericles and the Funeral Oration  
4 The Mytilenian Debate  
Sections: Inside the Radical Democracy

Week 8

March 30: Cleon  
April 2: Brasidas  
Sections: Spartan and Athenian Intellectual Traditions

Week 9

April 14: Sicily  
16: Greek Religion  
Sections: The Sicilian Expedition

4. Xenophon and the Fourth Century

Week 10

April 21: The End of the War  
23: Introduction to Xenophon  
Sections: Theramenes

Week 11

April 28: The Aftermath of War  
30: Spartan Hegemony  
Sections: Lysander and Agesilaus

**THIRD ESSAY DUE**

Week 12

May 5: Leuctra  
7: Conclusions  
Sections: Spartan Land-Ownership

**The Final Paper is due Thursday, May 15 at Noon.**