

Criminals and Saints: Power in Greek Political Life and Imagination



Odysseus kills Penelope's Suitors

190:3xx, Spring 2012

Place: TBA

Time: TBA

Prof. J. McGlew

jmcglew@rci.rutgers.edu

Ruth Adams 009

Office Hours by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Like U.S. political history, the history of the Greek city-states was intimately tied to the experience and idea of autocratic power – single political figures, who exerted extraordinary power at their own personal discretion. From their rise in the early Archaic Age (ca 800 B.C.E.) to their maturation in the Classical Age (479-323 B.C.E.), many Greek cities struggled with powerful individuals who exceeded their mandates or upstarts who imposed themselves on unwilling and frightened communities. Many constitutional innovations of their period can be understood as attempts to reshape the political infrastructure to make it possible to control individual political power. But the experience of autocratic power was by no means exclusively negative; Greek political life was dominated by a fascination for powerful figures as much as a fear of them. In fact, many Greek cities – and certainly the most successful – controlled

politically dangerous individuals by appropriating their power as much as destroying or suppressing them. The unlimited power (real and sometimes imaginary) of the single individual served as a valuable paradigm for the collective governments, however much they hated him. This course will explore this rich engagement with autocratic power in the political life and culture of the Archaic Age and Classical Ages; we will also be attentive to the memories and interpretations of this struggle in later periods.

The classes will mix lecture and discussion. The course will focus on works of history and literature produced in this period as well as surviving works of art and architecture. Most of our readings and material artifacts are products of the Greeks' struggles with autocratic power, as much as reflections on that struggle. We will aim to understand them as integral parts of the social, cultural and ideological world of archaic and classical Greece.

This course satisfies the core requirements: I,k,l,o,p,s,t,u,v. For Course and Core goals for the course, please see below.

COURSE TEXTS

Works, read in their entirety:

Aeschylus, Persians
Euripides, Suppliant Women
Aristophanes, Birds
Aristotle, Constitution of Athens
Plutarch, Life of Solon

As well as portions of the following:

Homer, Odyssey
Herodotus, Histories
Plato Republic

Requirements and Grading Policies

Your grade in this class will be based on a midterm (25%), a final (30%), a writing exercise in several stages (30% - see below for details) and class participation (15%). The midterm and the final will consist of multiple choice and essay questions.

The writing exercise will be an ongoing activity starting in the middle of the term and continuing until the end of the term; grades for the exercise will reflect the quality of your own paper as well as your contributions to a fellow student's paper, and your ability to take your peer's feedback into account.

This is the way the exercise will work: you pick a topic from a list of suggestions (these will be made available in week 7) and you write an outline of your paper that makes clear your major thesis, arguments and the supporting material you plan to use (the outline is due in week 9). On the basis of the outline and the instructor's suggestions, you will write and submit a first draft of your paper (due week 11). The drafts will then be circulated anonymously: each student will read the rough draft of a fellow member of the class and make suggestions (these will be due at the end of week 13). To help in that process, we will have an in-class workshop during week 12. We will then conduct a second in-class workshop during the 14 week, which will be intended to help you use the suggestions you have received to produce a final draft (approximately 10 pages), This final draft will be due during the final class of the term.

Attendance is required; a pattern of unexcused absences will be reflected in the final grade.

The grading scale is conventional: 90 or above = A; 86-89= B+; 80-85=B; 76-79=C+; 70-75=C; 60-69=D; below 60=F. Academic dishonesty will be treated in accord with the university's policies: see: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/instructors.shtml>.

PRELIMINARY CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Introduction

Week 2-3: Power, Justice; Good and Bad Cities: Homer's Odyssey Books 1,2, 6-9, 13-24

Week 4-7. Tyrants

Cypselids (Herodotus 5.92)

Polycrates (Herodotus Book 3)

Peisistratids (Herodotus 1.56-64; Aristotle, Constitution of Athens 1.1-19)

Paper topics made available on SAKAI.

Week 8: Lawgivers

Solon (Herodotus 1.30-33; Plutarch, Life of Solon)

Week 9: Founders and city-foundation (handouts & slides). Paper outlines due (and are circulated).

Week 10: The Case of Sparta; Kings, Tyrannicide and Liberation (Herodotus 1.65-68; handouts & slides. 1st in-class paper review.

Week 11: Interpretations of Persia (Aeschylus' Persians; Herodotus Book 1)

Week 12: Democracy (Euripides Suppliant Women; Plato Republic Books 8-9). Review outlines are returned.

Week 13: Week Tyrannicide and generalship, ostracism (Aristotle Constitution of Athens 20.1-22.) 2nd in-class paper review .

Book 14-16: Fantasies and fears of power: Aristophanes Birds; Plato's Republic Books 1-5)
Final papers due (final class day).

Final Exam: TBA

How to Succeed in this Class:

1. Do the reading before class.

In some classes it may not hurt to put off the assigned reading until after class. But our class time will largely be dealing with issues that come up in the reading, rather than simply providing an introduction to that material.

2. Read for meaning.

Don't get frustrated if you encounter lists of names and casts of characters that seem endless. Focus on important questions – questions that seem important to you and that you think will be important in class.

3. Come to class.

Even if you have not finished the reading, be sure to come to class: missing class will make the next class lecture seem much more difficult.

4. Review class discussions to prepare for midterms and final.

You cannot reread everything before the test. You will make better use of your time reviewing (preferably with others in the class) what we focused on in our discussions.

5. Talk to me.

If you find the reading difficult, if the class discussion makes little sense to you or you just seem unable to get a handle on this course, come see me in my office hours or ask for an appointment. I will glad to help in whatever way I can.

6. Talk to other people in the class.

You are invaluable resources for each other. Try to get to know someone else: talk over the material and study together. This makes the experience of studying less isolating, more fun and even more efficient.

Learning Goals for Classics Students:

- Classics is a broad discipline, characterized by its interdisciplinary nature. Pursuing Classics means acquiring a wide-ranging knowledge of the ancient world.
- Studying Classics involves coming to grips with the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations: their myths and literature; their social, military, political and cultural history; their philosophy; and aspects of their material culture. At every stage of this and other Classics courses, students are led to reflect on the many connections of Classics to the modern world, and how these ancient civilizations contributed to shape it.
- As many other Humanities disciplines do, Classics combines language study with the exploration of questions central to many social sciences. Classics students are led to ponder the mechanisms of human psychology, social organization, and historical evolution, and given an opportunity to appreciate the ways in which the individual and the community relate to, shape, and affect one another.

To better understand what studying Classics entails, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the core learning goals that motivate the teaching of

Classics, listed on the department website: <http://classics.rutgers.edu/>, and to contact the Classics undergraduate director with any questions.

CORE LEARNING GOALS:

Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience. (s1)

Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision. (s2)

Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry. (t)

Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly. (u)

Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (v)

Please Note:

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Ave, Suite 123, phone number 732-932-2848. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in enhancing your academic success in this course.