

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History  
Semester I, 1986-87

History 303

A History of Greek Civilization I

Kenneth Sacks

Course Description

This course deals with the history of Ancient Greece from c.776 B.C. to 404 B.C. During this period, the Greeks developed for Western Man the concepts of democracy and philosophy, as well as individual character and the freedom of social choice. Their advances in art and literature also proved to be fundamental to the development of these disciplines.

We shall attempt to appreciate the significance of these achievements through the extensive readings of records which they have left us -- histories, plays and philosophical tracts -- and through the use of slides to illuminate the art and architecture. The course, set within a framework of the political and military events, will stress the development of civilization and society. No background in Greek History is necessary.

Lectures: 2/week

Written Assignments and Examinations: 6 week, 12 week, and final exam.

Honors students and 4-unit non-honors students will also write papers.

Exams: Will be both objective and essay style. They will require an understanding of the fundamental questions, supported by evidence found in the readings and lectures.

Papers: 4-Unit non-honors students are required to write a seven page paper. A list of topics can be found at the back of the syllabus. You MUST write on one of these topics unless special permission is granted. Papers are due by December 3rd.

Honors students will work closely with me on paper topics or projects of your own choosing.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you register for 4 credits, you MUST do the required written work. If after having signed up for the fourth credit, you decide that you don't want to complete the written work, you MUST formally drop the credit, with the Registrar, by the 12th week of class. Otherwise, whether or not you complete the work, you shall be held responsible for it.

Grading: 3 units: approximately 30% for the 6 and 12 week exams, and 40% for the final. Consideration will be given for improvement and for participation in the section meetings.

4 units: approximately 20% for the 6 and 12 week exams and for the paper, and 40% for the final. Consideration will be given for improvement and for participation in the section meetings.

## History 303

Books to be purchased:

- Hesiod and Theognis (Penguin).  
 Herodotus, The Persian Wars (Modern Library).  
 Plutarch, The Rise and Fall of Athens (Penguin).  
Greek Lyrics, trans. by Richmond Lattimore (Phoenix, University of Chicago).  
 Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War (Modern Library).  
 J.M. Moore, Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy.  
 Aeschylus, The Oresteia (Penguin).  
 Sophocles, Three Theban Plays. (Penguin, Fagels ed.)  
 J.B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, A History of Greece, fourth edition (St. Martins)

Office: 4117 Humanities Building  
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Lectures: Unless otherwise noted, each topic or sub-topic will be the subject of a single lecture. Under each one are the readings due for that meeting. An asterisk (\*) signifies that the book is on reserve at H.C. White Lebrary.

- Sep. 4: Geography and Mycenaean Background  
 Bury, 1-51
- Sep. 9: Greece in the Dark Ages  
 Bury, 51-88
- Sep. 11: Light from the East  
 Hesiod, The Theogony
- Sep. 16: From Shame Culture to Guilt Culture  
 Hesiod, Works and Days  
Greek Lyrics, Archilochus 3, 24-29
- Sep. 18: The Polis  
 \*M.M. Austin, Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece,  
 49-81
- Sep. 23: The Age of Tyranny  
 Theognis, lines 27-52, 183-196  
 \*A. Andrewes, The Greek Tyrants, 31-65  
 Argos: Herodotus VI 127  
 Corinth: Herodotus V 92  
 Sicyon: Herodotus V 67-68; VI 126-130
- Sep. 25: Sparta: Evolution of a Closed Society  
and  
 Moore, 60-123, especially 75-82
- Sep. 30: Herodotus I 65-68; VI 52-60  
Greek Lyrics, Tyrtaeus 1 and 2, Alcman (all).  
 \*Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, especially chapter 6  
 Bury, 89-99

## History 303

- Oct. 2: Athens: Evolution of an Open Society  
and Moore, 143-166 (I-XXII). Also 208-246 selectively.
- Oct. 7: Moore, 185-191 (XLIII-L), and 276-288. Use 141-142 as reference.  
 Plutarch, Life of Theseus, chapter 24-36.  
 Plutarch, Life of Solon.  
 Herodotus I 59-64; V 55-78.  
Greek Lyrics, Solon 2-5; Anonymous Drinking Song 1  
 Bury, 115-140
- Oct. 9: Piety and Religion  
 Hesiod, Theogony  
 Herodotus I 46-56, 84-91; VI 61-84; IX 36-45.
- Oct. 14: Women in Archaic Greece  
Greek Lyrics, Archilochus 24 & 26, Semonides, 1, 4, & 5,  
 Anacreon 2, Praxilla, 2.  
 Hesiod, Theogony, lines 453-735.  
 Theognis, lines 457-460.
- Oct. 16: EXAM
- Oct. 21: Guest Lecture on Greek Sculpture
- Oct. 23: Herodotus the Historian/Coming of the Persians  
 Herodotus I 1-5; III 38; VII 133, 135; IX 15-16, 82, 107-122 on  
 the Persians: Herodotus I 95-122.
- Oct. 28: Ionia Fights for Freedom and Darius' Invasion of Europe  
 Herodotus V 1-38, 49-51, 55-65, 91-126; VI 1-49; 94-124.
- Oct. 30: Xerxes' Invasion: Europe in the Balance  
 Herodotus VII (all); VIII 1-117.
- Nov. 4: Politics and Diplomacy, 479-460  
 Moore, 166-170 (XXIII-XXVI). Also 246-255 selectively.  
 Thucydides I 89-95.  
 Plutarch, Life of Aristides, 22-27.  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Life of Cimon.  
 \_\_\_\_\_, Life of Pericles, 7-10.  
 Bury, 200-214.
- Nov. 6: Contemporary Zeal  
 Aeschylus, The Eumenides.
- Nov. 11: Development of the Athenian Empire and the Conflict with Sparta  
 Thucydides I 96-117, 128-138.  
 Moore, 167-168 (XXIV) and 247-251.  
 Moore, 202-207 (LXIII-LXIX) and 303-310.  
 Plutarch, Life of Themistocles, 20-32.  
 Bury, 215-244.

## History 303

- Nov. 13: The Athenian Achievement: Man as the Measure  
Plutarch, Life of Pericles.  
Moore, 170,171 (XXVII) and 254-256.  
Thucydides II 33-46.
- Nov. 18: The Athenian Achievement: Another View  
Moore, 19-51, esp. 37-47.  
Moore, 171-172 (XXVIII) and 255-257: use 141-142 as a reference.
- Nov. 20: What a Piece of Work is Man  
Sophocles, Antigone.
- Nov. 25: EXAM
- Dec. 2: Thucydides as Historian of His Times  
Thucydides I 1, 19-24, 65; II 47-55; III 36-50; IV 104-107;  
V 25-26, 85-116.  
Bury, 251-253.
- Dec. 4: The Origins of the Peloponnesian War  
Thucydides I 24-88, 118-146.  
Plutarch, Life of Pericles, 29-33.  
Bury, 245-251.
- Dec. 9: Archidamian War  
Thucydides II, III and IV.
- Dec. 11: The Disaster, 411-402  
Thucydides VIII  
\*Plutarch, Life of Alcibiades, 24-39.  
Life of Lysander, 1-15.  
Moore, 176-182 (XXXIV-XL) and 266-272.  
Bury, 288-322.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
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History 303

Mr. Sacks

Below are questions to help you prepare for lectures and examinations. I shall try to address these questions in my lectures; those preceded by an asterisk (\*) can, at least in part, be answered in the assigned readings.

- I. Introduction: Geography and Mycenaean Background
  - How does the geography of Greece and the history of the Bronze Age influence the development of Greek society?
- II. Dark Ages
  - \*What was Greek society like during this period?
  - \*What forces helped it move into the "light"?
- III. Light from the East
  - \*How are men and gods portrayed in the Theogony?
  - Consider the possible Eastern influence in the poem.
- IV. From Shame to Guilt Culture
  - What is Homeric shame culture?
  - \*How do Hesiod and Archilochus react against the arbitrariness of aristocratic rule?
  - Why does guilt culture arise in Greece and what does it mean?
- V. Polis
  - \*What does the term "polis" mean?
  - \*What constitutes a polis?
- VI. The Age of Tyranny
  - \*What is a Greek tyrant?
  - \*What factors account for their rise to power? Note especially the considerations of class conflict and racial tension.
  - \*What are the effects of tyranny on the development of the polis?
- VII-VIII. Sparta
  - \*What is the Spartan social system of agoge and syssition?
  - \*What is the Spartan political system and why was there no tyranny in Sparta?
  - \*What is Tyrtaeus trying to tell the Spartan soldiers?
- IX-X. Athens
  - \*What is the Solonic revolution?
  - What role does the Peisistratid tyranny play in the development of Athens?
  - \*How does the Cleisthenic settlement compare to post-tyrannical settlements in other poleis?
- XI. Piety and Religion
  - \*What is the role of Delphi in Greek life?
  - \*What is the place of religion in Greek society? How does it compare with the polis as a dominant institution?
  - Why are there no successful transcendental religions in Archaic/Classical Greece?

- XII. Ionic Philosophy  
What is the Greek Attitude towards men and nature?
- XIII. Women  
\*What were Greek men's attitudes towards women?  
\*What were Greek men's attitudes towards marriage?
- XIV. Herodotus and the Persians  
What are the tragic/archaic influences on Herodotus?  
\*What messages does Herodotus hope to convey to his reader about human nature and imperialism?  
What is the nature of the Persian empire which confronted Greece in 490?
- XV. Ionian Revolt and Darius' Invasion  
\*Did Darius have a long-standing plan to invade Greece?  
\*How did Greece react to the growing Persian threat?  
\*How did the Athenians win at Marathon?
- XVI. Xerxes' Invasion  
\*What were the varying Greek attitudes towards the Persian menace?  
\*Who deserves credit for the Greek victories?
- XVII. Politics and Diplomacy  
\*How did the Athenian empire come about?  
\*What is the Spartan attitude towards the Athenians and how does it change?  
\*What internal struggle within Athens affects her relations with Sparta?
- XVIII. Contemporary Zeal  
\*What is Aeschylus saying about contemporary attitudes towards men, gods, and relations with Sparta?
- XIX. Development of the empire  
\*By what methods does Athens strengthen her hold on the empire?  
\*How does Athens treat her subject states?  
\*What is the position of Athens in the Greek world in 446?
- XX. Athenian Achievement  
\*How does Athens become the School for Hellas?  
\*How does Athens become more democratic internally?
- XXI. Athenian Achievement: Another View  
\*What is the aristocratic view of the Athenian democracy?  
\*Can this picture be reconciled with that proposed by Pericles?
- XXII. What a piece of work is man  
\*How do Greek attitudes (especially those in Athens) reflect moderation, yet confidence, in life?  
What is the meaning of the Parthenon?  
\*What does Sophocles say about the force of human reason and divine moral law? How does his view compare with that of Aeschylus?

History

Mr. Sacks

XXIII. Thucydides

\*How does Thucydides' approach to writing history compare with Herodotus'?

\*What is Thucydides' view of human nature and imperialism?

XXIV. The Origins of the Peloponnesian War

\*What is Plutarch's explanation for the causes of the war and how do they differ from Thucydides'?

\*Does Thucydides' assessment make sense: does it appear accurate and complete?

XXV. The Archidamian War

\*What are the strategies of the Athenians and Spartans during the Archidamian War; how are they affected by unexpected circumstances?

XXVI. The Disaster

\*What factors forced the conclusion of the war in 405/4?

PAPER TOPICS FOR FOUR-CREDIT NON-HONORS STUDENTS  
(All reading materials are either those purchased for class  
or on reserve at H.C. White Library.)

1. The Birth of Greek Philosophy

How did the Greeks first come to think of philosophy?  
What were the kinds of philosophical questions that the early  
philosophers (that is, the pre-Socratics) posed?

READINGS:

Greek Lyrics: Xenophanes 1-2  
Bury, 198-199  
Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideal of Greek Culture, vol.1,  
150-184

2. The Meaning of the Oresteia

Discuss Dover's conclusions about the meaning of the Oresteia.  
Illuminate your discussion with passages drawn from the three plays.

READINGS:

Aeschylus, The Oresteia  
Kenneth Dover, The Greeks, 84-101

3. The Histories of Herodotus and Thucydides

What were the messages of Herodotus and Thucydides, and how were  
these messages affected by the different cultures and life-  
experiences of the two authors

READINGS:

Herodotus and Thucydides

4. Greek Strategy in the Persian War: The Significance of the  
Themistocles Decree

Is the Themistocles authentic?  
How does the question of its authenticity affect our understanding  
of Greek strategy?

READINGS:

Donald Kagan, Problems in Ancient History, vol. 1, 262-307

5. The Character of the Athenian Empire

How was the Athenian Empire accepted by the subject states?  
What methods did Athens employ in order to rule?

READINGS:

Donald Kagan, Problems in Ancient History, vol. 1, 377-411