Creating a Greek State

In this course, we will examine the history of democracy in ancient Athens from its beginnings through the 4th century BCE. As early as the 7th century BCE, Athenians began to govern themselves. Over the next 300 years, that democracy changed, fell, and reappeared as Athens went through rebellions, reforms, and war.

In this course, we will trace the ways that democratic ideas and practices changed over time. We will study key democratic institutions like law courts and assemblies and how they functioned. We will also look at who Athenian democracy left out and what roles slaves, immigrants, and women played. Students will read selections from Plato, Thucydides, and Xenophon, among others, and write a series of short papers and journal entries over the course of the term. Students will also play the Reacting to the Past game related to the reconstruction of democracy in 403 BCE.

No prerequisites. Course is open to undergraduate and graduate students.

Course Goals

In this course, students will 1) develop a familiarity with the major institutions, ideas, and practices that supported Athens’ democracy, 2) Engage critically with primary sources to identify underlying assumptions, perspectives, and biases prevalent in Archaic and Classical Athens, 3) Engage with contemporary scholarly debates surrounding issues of democracy, inclusion, and justice in Classical Athens, 4) Synthesize their learning from primary and secondary sources to formulate research questions and arguments, and 5) express ideas and arguments orally in order to persuade others.

INSTRUCTOR
Dr. Lindsey Mazurek
311 McKenzie Hall
Email: lmazurek@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-11:30 AM, or by appointment.
Campus Resources for Illnesses, Accessibility, and Mental Health

I intend for this class to be an accessible and inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate any problems with the format or requirements of this course due to an illness, disability, or other extenuating circumstance, please let me know as soon as possible. I am happy to meet with you and find a way for you to participate successfully in this course.

- If you need help accessing accommodations on campus, contact UO’s Accessible Education Center. They are located in 164 Oregon Hall and can be reached at 541-346-1155 or through their website at https://aec.uoregon.edu/

- If you are struggling with mental health issues or substance abuse problems, counseling and support is available to all UO students in the Counseling Center: https://counseling.uoregon.edu/

- If you need access to health care services and/or help understanding your medical insurance options, visit the Student Health Center on 13th Ave or check out their website at https://health.uoregon.edu/

If you need help but are unsure where to go or who to ask, please come see me in office hours and I will do my best to connect you with campus or community resources.

Academic Misconduct

My policy is to assume that all of my students are acting honestly and ethically until proven otherwise. When presented with evidence to the contrary, however, I will refer cases to the Dean of Students and/or the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards as appropriate.

From the Dean of Students: “The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.”
Class Engagement (20%) - Besides obvious elements like daily attendance, preparation, and participation, which in a small class are of great and obvious importance, the “engagement” grade is meant to encourage you to find and articulate your own interests in antiquity and to share these with your peers and instructors both in and out of class. Your job is to speak up in class. Ask a question! Respond to another student’s question! Bring in a newspaper article to share with the class! Ask your professor if you’re having trouble participating.

Short Papers (35%) - Over the course of the term, students will write two 4-5 page papers. The first will answer a question of the professor’s choosing, and the second will examine a question developed by the student to prepare for the Athens 403 game (see below). These papers must advance an original argument based in a critical reading of ancient texts and contemporary scholarship, not only summarizing the author’s argument and evidence but also offering comparisons and critiques based on our readings and discussions in class. I expect you to conduct outside research for this project. Specific instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Quizzes (10%) - You will also be assessed on your familiarity with course readings and basic factual knowledge of Athenian political thought and history during five multiple choice quizzes. These quizzes will be short and straightforward. Students will complete this assignment on Canvas outside of class hours.

Athens 403 Game (35%) - As a final project in this class, we will play a role-playing game that asks students to take on roles as members of the Athenian Assembly at the time of Socrates’ death. The game requires two speeches of 2 pages each, which must contain at least 3 citations of ancient texts or secondary sources, and a 3-page reflection paper (due during the final exam period). Each speech is 30% of your Athens 403 grade, and your paper is worth 20%. The remaining 20% of your grade is dedicated to participation in the game, and will also assess your tactics, strategy, and fidelity to the time period and role assigned. See Game Addendum at the end of the syllabus.

Course Policies - I intend my classes to be safe spaces for discussing difficult and intellectually challenging issues. This requires you to treat your classmates and me with respect: allowing others to speak, debating respectfully, avoiding raised voices and/or hurtful language, and refraining from posting about other students on social media. Everyone has the right to express their thoughts, challenge their own opinions, and change their mind as we progress through the semester: it is your responsibility to provide your classmates with the respect and freedom to experiment and learn. Students who violate these guidelines will be given one warning and then either removed from the classroom or referred to university administration, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Late Work Policy - All assignments must be turned in to the professor by the beginning of the class period on the due date. After class begins, your work is considered late. Unexcused work can be submitted up to 24 hours after the original deadline at a 7% grade penalty (i.e., an A+ paper turned in late will become a A- paper if turned it at the end of class). Excused late work is limited to personal illness that requires a doctor’s visit, an unexpected family emergency, and religious holidays. If you need to turn in work late due to a university extracurricular activity (i.e. athletic event, participation in a conference), please make prior arrangements with your instructor and provide appropriate documentation.
Recording Policy
Recording of class sessions without the express written permission of the instructor is not only prohibited, it is illegal. Students caught recording without permission will be removed from the classroom; further action may be taken as deemed necessary by the professor. If you would like to record lectures or need to do so for medical reasons, you must get permission in writing. (Emailed requests are fine).

Electronics Policy
Research has shown that the majority of students learn better by writing out notes longhand. Please print out your readings and bring them to class. I strongly discourage electronics in my classroom unless the Accessible Education Center has suggested you use one to facilitate your participation in this course. During class, I ask that you place all electronic devices, including phones, laptops, and tablets, into your bag. If you plan to use a computer, please take a seat at the back of the room to minimize disruption, unless you need to be in the front due to eyesight or accessibility issues. You may find an internet blocking software like SelfControl helpful.

Grade Policies
The grade scale in this course will follow the Department of History’s guidelines: https://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/grading-policy/.

In general, please communicate any issues with the professor as soon as possible. Emergencies happen. If you anticipate a problem with a course deadline, contact your section leader as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements. The earlier you communicate, the better your outcome will probably be. Not all requests can be honored.

No extra credit will be granted without extenuating circumstances.

Strategies for Success
Reading - Do the reading! Do the reading! Do the reading! The easiest way to succeed is to keep up with the assigned readings for this course. Make sure you complete the assignment before you come to lecture or section. You will be able to follow our discussions better if you are already familiar with the material. Repetition helps you learn, so it may be helpful to read a difficult piece twice.

It is important that you practice active reading. Highlight or underline key points or events in your text. If there is a word you don’t know (and there will be many!), look it up. You can use a reputable dictionary like merriam-webster.com or the university library website. If there is something you don’t understand, ask your section leader or professor. The very best student I’ve ever had came into class every day and said “I didn’t understand ANYTHING!” She always had a long list of questions, and frequently pointed to specific paragraphs she found difficult. It is my goal to make all of this understandable.

Take Good Notes - During lecture, it is important that you pay attention and take notes, preferably by hand. Each lecture and discussion will have a general theme that links all of the specific texts, sites, and people together. Try to identify the theme as you listen. Note the who, what, where, when, and “why this is important” of the people and places we discuss. At the end of class, try to summarize the conversation in two sentences. This will help you synthesize your knowledge. During discussion, make sure to listen to your classmates carefully. What questions and topics pop up? What parts of the reading do they focus on? Jot down the key insights the section leader and your classmates raise. These will help you generate ideas for your papers.

Make a Plan: It can be easy to let deadlines sneak up on you, but timeliness is very important in the quarter system. You should expect to put about 10 hours of work per week into this class. I recommend making a schedule and identifying where and when you will complete your 10 hours of work.
**Required Texts**

- **Legal Speeches** = Wolpert and Konstantinos, *Legal Speeches of Democratic Athens*. (Hackett Publishing) 9780872209275 ***
- **Plato** = Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates* (Penguin), 9780140449280

*A note on editions*: The starred books (contemporary ones) must be purchased in the most recent edition. If you would like, many ancient texts can be found as free e-books or online at [perseus.tufts.edu](http://perseus.tufts.edu). If you are proactive, you should be able to check these books out of the library (even your local one!). If you have trouble obtaining these books, please come speak to me so we can find a solution. Reading is required and not having the book is not a valid excuse.

**Reading and Assessment Schedule**

*Reading assignments are due and will be discussed on the day listed*

| Week 1 — Welcome! | Jan. 8: Syllabus Overview
|                  | Jan. 10: Who do Athenians think they are?
|                  | - Euripides, *Ion*
|                  | - Hall, “The Discursive Dimension of Athenian Identity.” (Canvas) |

| Week 2 — Developing the Athenian Polis | Jan 15 - Solon the Lawgiver
|                                       | - Ober pp. 53-67
|                                       | - Boardman: Introduction (1-12)
|                                       | - Plutarch, *Life of Solon* (Canvas) |
|                                       | **-Quiz 1: Greek Map, Reading for Jan. 17 (Due before class on the 17th)** |
|                                       | Jan 17 - Growing Pains: Tyrants, Rebels, and Cleisthenes
|                                       | - Herodotus, *Histories* (selections on Canvas)
|                                       | - Boardman, pp. 13-46
|                                       | - Ober pp. 68-94 |
**Weeks 3-4**  
**Democratic Institutions**

Jan. 22: The Sites of Democratic Actions  
- Lang, “The Athenian Citizen: Democracy in the Athenian Agora.” (Canvas)  
- Hurwit, “Tyranny, Democracy, and the Archaic Acropolis” (Canvas)

Jan. 24: Athenian Assemblies  
- Hansen, “The Assembly of the People,” pp. 12-50 (Canvas-use reading guide)  
- Ober, 104-55

*** Quiz 2 Due ***

Jan 29: Inclusion and Exclusion  
- Vlassopoulos, “Free Spaces: Identity, Experience, and Democracy in Classical Athens.” (on Canvas)  
**OR**  
- Forsdyke, “Exile, Ostracism, and the Athenian Democracy.” (on Canvas)

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**Weeks 4 - 5**  
**Greek Laws and Legal Proceedings**

Jan 31: Courts and Rhetorics  
- Wolpert and Kapparis, “Introduction” pp. ix-xxix  
- Ober, 156-77.

- Lysias, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (1-17 in Wolpert and Kapparis)

***Paper 1 Due ***

Feb. 5: Citizenship and its Discontents  
- Kennedy, “Metic Women, Citizenship, and Marriage in Athenian Law.” (on Canvas)  
- Ober, 270-78.

- Pseudo-Demosthenes, *Against Neara* (187-227 in Wolpert and Kapparis)

*** Quiz 3 Due ***

Feb. 7: Athenian Women  
- Henry and James, “Woman, City, State: Theories, Ideologies, and Concepts in the Archaic and Classical Periods.” (on Canvas)  
- Xenophon, *Oikoumenikos* (Selections on Canvas)

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**Weeks 5**  
**The Persian and Peloponnesian Wars**

Feb. 12: Persian Wars  
- Boardman, “Greek Historians” 214-39  
- Herodotus, *Histories* (Selections on Canvas)

***Paper 2 Due ***

Feb. 14: Peloponnesian Wars  
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Selections on Canvas)  
- Xenophon, *Hellenika* (selections on Canvas)  
- Plato, *Apology*

*** Quiz 4 Due ***

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**Week 6**  
**Democratic Ideas and Ideals**

Feb. 19: Utopia  
- Plato, *Republic* (selections in Athens 403 Game Book)  
- “Aristotle,” *Athenian Constitution* (selections in Athens 403)

*** Quiz 5 Due ***

Feb. 21: NO CLASS - MLK HOLIDAY

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**Weeks 8 - 10**  
**Athens 403**

Feb. 26: Game Session 1: Reconciliation Agreement  
Feb. 28: Game Session 2: Nature of the Boule  
Mar. 5: Game Session 3: Citizenship  
Mar. 7: Game Session 4: Restoring the Empire  
Mar. 12: Game Session 5: Trial of Socrates  
Mar. 14: Game Session 6: Open Session
Athens 403: The Threshold of Democracy

Students will engage in a historical role playing game that examines Athens at a formational moment in the development of democracy. Through “playing” Athens 403, students will engage critically with historical sources, experiment with the institutions of Athenian government and law, and examine Athenian history as the outcome of multiple social, legal, historical, and political factors.

Playing the Game

Students will be assigned roles by their professors. Each role has a defined historical purpose and set of victory objectives. Most students will be assigned to a faction. Simply put, students will win the game by achieving as many of their victory objectives as possible. In order to do so, however, students must persuade other members of the Athenian Boule to vote for their victory objectives. Students will do so through two speeches given in the assembly (each 33% of the student’s Athens 403 grade) and participation in class debates (20% of the student’s Athens 403 grade).

Speeches

Every student is required to present two prepared speeches as part of the game. These speeches should be 5-10 minutes in length (3-5 double spaced pages), and use at least 3 pieces of evidence (quotes, examples) from the historical and literary sources we have covered in class in order to persuade other members of the Boule to vote with you. These speeches should be impassioned and well-reasoned, much like the speeches real Athenians would have made in the Boule. These speeches should propose, support, or oppose legislation. You will post a pdf of your speech (including citations) on Canvas by 12 AM the day of class so that other factions have some opportunity to prepare a response. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of your grade. Your speech will be assessed based on in-class presentation quality (25%) and intellectual and argumentative merits (75%). Speeches will not be rescheduled except for medical emergencies.

Debates

Students should be prepared to respectfully question and argue with the legislation put forth by their peers. In addition to their two more formal speeches, students are expected to actively participate in class debates about legislation, trials, and the nature of the Boule. In order to receive a B or higher on the participation grade for Athens 403, each student is required to speak in a manner that substantively contributes to class discussion each day. This may take the form of a prepared speech, an incisive question, an impromptu rebuttal, etc. A rubric for class discussion is outlined on the next page.

Attendance

Because the game requires the presence of its players in order to function properly, attendance policy will be strict in the last few weeks of the course. Attendance cannot be made up. Absences will only be excused for a valid medical reason or by special permission from your professor. Remember, showing up is not sufficient. In order to win the game, you must play the game!

WINNING THE GAME

Each role has defined three or four victory objectives. A student wins the game by achieving their legislative aims. In order to win, students must persuade other students that their defined path to victory is the best one for the Athenian state, and speak to the concerns of other roles.

Students will achieve these objectives through clear communication and an understanding of Greek culture and history. The Greeks were swayed by arguments based on the traditions of the past. You should make ample use of the ancient sources we have used in class, and supplement them with the arguments you’ve read in secondary literature.

Most of all, students need to be willing to argue persuasively and find reasonable solutions without compromising their victory objectives. In addition to the passionate speeches factions will prepare, students will win points (assigned by the instructor) for excellent engagement in class debates, representing their faction well, and influencing others.

Students who win will receive a 3% bonus in their Athens 403 grade.
Grades

Requirements for Athens 403

In order to earn an A, students will...

Student papers will show a strong understanding of Greek history and culture. These papers apply factual knowledge into a compelling and convincing argument that is well reasoned, with a clear thesis and strong evidence. Students will cite their sources clearly and according to Chicago guidelines. These sources will be clearly analyzed and directed towards the main thesis. These essays will be original work that demonstrates critical thinking, strong writing and communication skills, and an excellent grasp of English mechanics and grammar. The paper will be turned in on time and be of an appropriate length.

In presenting these speeches, students will go far beyond simple reading. Student presentations will be impassioned and imaginative, using rhetorical flourish and impeccable reason. Students will engage with their audience and speak according to the best of their ability. During debates, students will present reasoned and respectful challenges to each others’ arguments that draw upon clear and concrete pieces of evidence.

In order to earn a B, students will...

Student papers will show an understanding of Greek history and culture. These papers apply factual knowledge into a reasoned argument, with a thesis that is not fully clear or one that has lacks deep support in the evidence. Students will cite their sources clearly and according to Chicago guidelines. These sources will be partially analyzed and have some connection to the thesis. These essays will be original work that demonstrates critical thinking, good writing and communication skills, and a grasp of English mechanics and grammar. The paper will be turned in on time, but may diverge from the length restrictions in a small way.

In presenting these speeches, students will go beyond simple reading. Student presentations will be polished, indicating that the student has practiced the speech before delivering it in class. Students will engage with their audience and speak according to the best of their ability. During debates, students will present respectful challenges to each others’ arguments that draw upon general themes in the course rather than specific evidence.

In order to earn a C, students will...

Student papers will show a basic understanding of Greek history and culture. These papers largely present factual knowledge within the context of a weak or unclear argument, with a thesis that disappears after the first paragraph. Students will cite their sources clearly and according to Chicago guidelines. These sources lack thorough analysis, and are generally dissociated from the paper’s argument. These essays will be original work that demonstrates some critical thinking, below-average writing and communication skills, and a shaky grasp of English mechanics and grammar. The paper will be turned in on time, but may diverge from the length restrictions in a significant way.

In presenting these speeches, students will not go beyond simple reading. Student presentations will be rough, indicating that the student has never read this speech out loud before. Students will engage with their audience and speak according to the best of their ability. During debates, students will present respectful challenges to each others’ arguments that draw upon general themes in the course rather than specific evidence.