Athenian Democracy (HIST 412/512)

Winter 2019

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 10-11:20

185 Lillis

Prof. Lindsey Mazurek

In the beginning, what was democracy? In this course, we will examine the history of democracy in ancient Athens from its beginnings through the 4th century BCE. Beginning in 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 responded to changing political and social norms. We will also look at who Athenian democracy left out and what place slaves, immigrants, and women had in Athenian society. Students will also play the Reacting to the Past game related to the reconstitution of Athenian democracy in 403 BCE.

Students will read selections from Plato, Thucydides, and Xenophon, among others. In addition to their participation in the game, students will be expected to write a series of short papers and journal entries over the course of the term.