

Classics 167M: Democracy Past and Present

LCHAS 160

MW 3:25-4:40

University of Rochester

Department of Religion and Classics

Fall 2017

Instructors:

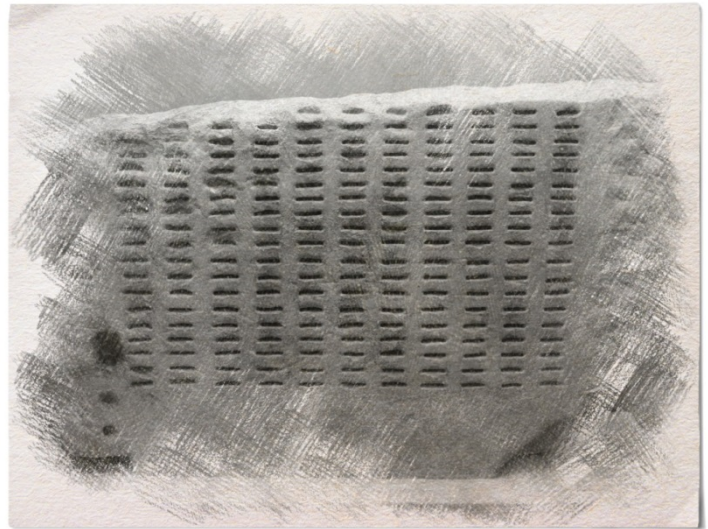
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Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 & by
appt



Course Description

This course is one (of two) Meliora Seminars at the University of Rochester, meant to expose students, in the intimate environment of the seminar (characterized by a close-knit group of people who meet to discuss a particular topic in-depth), to the concept of Athenian Democracy. Democracy is one of those terms that is easy to define but hard to say exactly what that definition means and even harder to put into action. In this course, we will explore all the various parts of the Athenian Democracy that ran from roughly the end of the 6th century (with the reforms of Cleisthenes) to the second half of the 4th century (with the subjugation of the Greek mainland to the Macedonians), how it came into being, and what the Athenians thought about their great experiment. Through this exploration, we will—perhaps—come to better understand our modern world and our own system of government, which do not shy away from embracing the term, if not necessarily the ideals of, democracy.

The general format of the course will consist of short lectures, readings from both ancient and modern writers about democracy, discussions of the readings and democracy, short writing assignments, oral presentations, and a final project analyzing an ancient inscription. There will be a final exam during exam period.

Course Goals

Democracy had many moving parts and arose in a historically and philosophically rich milieu. It is my hope that you will find something rewarding intrinsically in studying this particular period and concept. By the end of this course, students:

1. will be able to outline the major historical events and actors that brought about and changed Athenian democracy. Particular emphasis will be placed on socio-economic factors.
2. will be able to describe the various parts of Athenian Democracy and how they functioned together to create a system of “Rule by the People.”
3. will be able to critically read ancient sources for our knowledge of Athenian democracy.
4. will learn to read modern scholarship with an eye to understanding how the author constructs his argument.
5. will have an opportunity to contemplate modern democracies both via comparison with how ancient Athens functioned as well as via contemplation of the values that democracy anywhere requires.
6. will have an opportunity to improve their academic writing and their oral communication skills.

Course Requirements (in no particular order)

1. **Attendance, Participation, Short Written Assignments:**
As a seminar about democracy, you will be expected to be actively engaged during class. This means that you must come to class not only having already read the material, but having thought about it, taken notes on it, and formulated questions and ideas about it which will form the basis of our discussion. Reading ancient source and modern scholarship is not easy, though. In order to help facilitate our discussion, and help you to grow as a scholar, there will be short written assignments that accompany the various readings. You must complete at least five of the ancient readings assignments and the two required modern scholarship assignments to receive full credit. (15%)
2. **Panel Questions and Write-up:** Over the course of the semester, we will have three panel discussions with members of the community who will discuss their roles within a

- democratic society. Each student will be assigned to write up five questions to pose to one of these guests and then, after the panel, you will write a feature article covering the panel discussion. You will only be assigned one of these over the course of the semester; there will be a handout to help you along the process. (15%)
3. **Oral Presentation:** The work of Athenian Democracy was done orally, in front of peers. Athenians all shared the right and responsibility to share their ideas and opinions and to listen to those of others. In this course, you will have the opportunity to relive this experience through one of several experiences that ancient Athenians would have undertaken: a symposium on the topic of justice, a debate about whether to go to war, proposing a new law on citizen status, a trial (on a murder or a charge of impiety), or a funeral oration. (15%)
 4. **Citizen Project:** To get you thinking about what it was to be a citizen in ancient Athens, you will each be given an individual that you must research and write a 2 page report on how they would view their role within Athenian society. (10%)
 5. **Inscription Project:** Over the course of the semester, you will be pick out an inscription from Athens, research its text and context, and write an analytical essay about the significance of the inscription for better understanding Athenian democracy. (25%)
 6. **Final Exam:** A cumulative exam consisting of important terms, people, and ideas, as well as an essay. (5%)
 7. **Attendance at the Romanell Lectures:** In September, there will be a series of lectures given by Philosophy Professor Richard Feldman on Rationality, Evidence, and Public Discourse. Among the most important elements of a properly functioning democracy is the existence of rigorous, open debate about issues that matter. Professor Feldman will be discussing just how just debate is possible. The dates for these lectures are: Thursday, Sept. 7; Thursday, Sept. 14, and Monday, Sept. 18—all from 7-8:30 PM (10%)

Course Miscellanea

1. If you have any sort of disability (e.g., physical, learning, etc.), please contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can work together to help you get the most out of this course. I am more than happy to make any appropriate and necessary accommodations.
2. **General Academic Honesty Policy:** I assume that all work submitted for this class will be your own, honestly completed, and that you will not do anything to prevent your classmates from doing their best work. Anything less, including, but not limited to, using any web resources other than what is expressly allowed (ask if you have questions), plagiarism and fabrication of information, copying someone else's work, or learning what is on an exam prior to the exam period (except what I provide) will be considered a violation of the University Academic Honesty Policy and will be dealt with quickly and appropriately. If you are unfamiliar with the policy, which has recently been updated, you can read it here: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/> If you have any questions about what constitutes appropriate collaboration, do not hesitate to consult with me.

3. Please turn off your cell phone/blackberry/iPhone/texting during class. If you choose to take notes on your laptop, please do not surf the web or use the internet while in class. Use of these forms of electronic media during lecture is not allowed; it is a distraction for us and for other students in the classroom.
4. Attendance: You are expected to attend class. If you must miss class for any reason, including religious observance, athletics, music, or family emergency, please contact me. Excessive unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade.

Course Schedule: Lecture Topics and Readings

- **Additional or different readings may be added to the syllabus as the semester progresses. Refer to Blackboard for specific and updated readings. What you see here is only a preliminary list.**
- **Please bring paper copies of the texts that we are working with. It may seem old-fashioned, but writing on a text, underlining, and being able to flip back and forth is important when reading a text critically.**
- **The Readings listed here and on Blackboard are to be read prior to the class for which they are listed.**
- **Readings with an asterisk also have a Written Assignment on blackboard—you must do at least five of these over the course of the semester; Readings with a double asterisk have a Written Assignment that must be completed, they are modern scholarship**

Wednesday, Aug. 30—Introduction to the class

Wednesday, Sept. 6—Democracy vs. Oligarchy: Reading—Ps. Xenophon*; Herodotus

Monday, Sept. 11—Geography of Athens and Attica; Citizenship: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians, 42

Wednesday, Sept. 13—The Boule and The Ekklesia: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 43-49

Monday, Sept. 18—Archons and other administrators: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 50-62

Wednesday, Sept. 20—The Judicial System: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 63-69—Citizenship Project Due

Monday, Sept. 25—**Panel 1**—Citizenship in the United States

Wednesday, Sept. 27—Athens' Mythical Past: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 1-4

Monday, Oct. 2—Natural Equality, Solon's Reforms: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 5-13

Wednesday, Oct. 4—Solon's Reforms: Reading Modern Scholarship**

Wednesday, Oct. 11—Discussion: What does it mean to be equal?

Monday, Oct. 16—Freedom from Tyranny, Peisistratus and his sons: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 14-19

Wednesday, Oct. 18—Discussion: What is Freedom?

Monday, Oct. 23—Discussion about Preparing and Delivering an Oral Presentation

Wednesday Oct. 25—Paideia, Cleisthenes' Reforms: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 20-22
Monday, Oct. 30—Cleisthenes' Reforms discussion: Readings of Modern Scholarship**
Wednesday, Nov. 1—Oral Presentation: Symposium
Monday, Nov. 6—Open Debate, Early Fifth Century: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 23-26
Wednesday, Nov. 8: Oral Presentation: Law on Citizenship
Monday, Nov. 13: **Panel 2**—The Judicial System in the United States
Wednesday, Nov. 15—Euboulia (good deliberation), Fifth Century Glory: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 27-28
Monday, Nov. 20—Oral Presentation: War Debate
Monday, Nov. 27—Oral Presentation: Funeral Oration
Wednesday, Nov. 29—Rule of Law, The End of the Fifth Century: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 29-38.2
Monday, Dec. 4—Oral Presentation: Trial
Wednesday, Dec. 6—Harmony, The Fourth Century: Reading—Constitution of the Athenians 38.3-41
Monday, Dec. 11: **Panel 3**—Deliberation and Decision Making in American Politics
Wednesday, Dec. 13: Final Discussion/Final Exam/Other?
Dec. 18: Final Project Due