

**College Year in Athens**  
**Fall Semester 2017**  
**Lewis and Clark Study Abroad Program**  
**Sports, Games and Spectacles in the Graeco-Roman World**

**Dates/Hours: Monday-Wednesday-Friday 11.00-13.00**

**Instructor: Dr. John Karavas**

**Course Description**

The aim of this course will be to explore the emergence and subsequent development of both athletic competitions and sports-based games and spectacles from the Bronze age through to the period of late antiquity. Within this wider spatial and temporal context, the course will subsequently focus on two separate thematic entities: Ancient Greek Athletics, with particular attention to the development and evolution of the main Ancient Greek athletic events over the ages, as well as an in-depth investigation of the particularities of Roman public spectacles and gladiatorial games.

Drawing on a variety of disciplines and available (primary) sources, from history and archaeology to modern sports studies, the course will primarily seek to examine the main purpose and function of these games and spectacles within the wider social, political, religious, cultural and intellectual context of the times, as well as their overall significance in the daily lives of the ancients.

In addition to in-class lectures and discussions, the course will also include a substantial on-site teaching component, with field trips to archaeological sites and museums of athletic significance (such as Olympia, Isthmia, Nemea, Delphi and Messene) where sessions will centre on the interpretation of the physical evidence.

**Main Bibliography (Textbooks)**

The standard prescribed textbooks for this class include:

A. Futrell, *Blood in the Arena* (1997).

A. Futrell, *The Roman Games: A Sourcebook* (2006).

D. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient world* (2006).

A. Mahoney, *Roman Sports and Spectacles: A Sourcebook* (2001).

**S.G Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics* (2004).**

*Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources*, ed. by S.G. Miller (2004).

In addition to the above, further background or specialist reading material will be introduced to students at the beginning of each separate thematic entity.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Wednesday, August 30**

General Introduction. Establishing the main parameters and aims of the course within its wider spatial and temporal context.

### **Monday, September 4**

Flashback: Sport in the Bronze Age and the Homeric tradition.  
Miller (2004): 20-30; *The earliest days of Greek Athletics* (off prints-moodle).

### **Wednesday, September 6**

The Origins of Ancient Greek Athletics – The Archaic period.  
Kyle (2006), 72-93; Miller (2004) 20-30.

### **Friday, September 8**

Documentary: The Ancient Olympics: Myth and Reality.

### **Monday, September 11**

The Major Games (Periodos): General Introduction  
Miller (2004) 87-95; Scanlon, Greek Athletics and Religion (moodle);  
Kyle (2006), 110-135. Miller (2004), 95-112; Olivova, “The Panhellenic games”  
(off prints-moodle); Kyle (2006), 136-149.

### **Monday, September 18**

Citizen/youth training and the role of the Gymnasium in Ancient Greece.  
Miller (2004), 176-195; Kennel, “Training Citizens in the Gymnasium” (off  
prints-moodle).

### **Wednesday, September 20**

Women in Greek Athletics.

Miller (2004), 150-159; Kyle (2006), 217-228.

Individual Competitions: Track and field events. (Re-enactments): Stadion, Diaulos, Dolichos, Hoplitodromos. Class will meet at the Panathenaic Stadium.

Miller (2004), 31-46

### **Friday, September 22**

The “Heavyweights” I: “Hand to Hand” athletic competitions (Re-enactments)

Wrestling – Class will meet at the Pankrateios Martial Arts Club.

Miller (2004), 60-84

### **Monday, September 25**

The “Heavyweights” II: Pankration & Boxing

Miller (2004), 60-84.

### **Wednesday, September 27**

**Mid-term Exam**

### **LESVOS BREAK**

### **Monday, October 30**

Ancient pentathlon: Javelin, Discus, Long Jump

Miller, 60-74.

### **Wednesday, November 1**

Other games and athletic activities in the Ancient Greek World.

Class will include the re-enactment of two team sports, Faininda and Harpaston.

### **Friday, November 3**

Equestrian competitions.

Mahoney (2001), 24-36.

### **Monday, November 6**

Roman public spectacles: The beginnings and subsequent development.  
Mahoney (2001), 1-10; Kyle (2006), 279-346.

### **Wednesday, November 8**

Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (I). Myth and Reality.  
Mahoney (2001), 11-23, 91-99; Kyle (2006) as above;  
Futrell (1997), chapter 1.

### **Monday, November 13**

Gladiatorial games in the Roman World (II).  
Futrell (2006), chapter 4.

### **Wednesday, November 15**

A Day at the Arena: Verus vs Priscus

### **Wednesday, November 22**

The end of Greco-Roman sports and spectacles; the advent of Christianity.  
Class Handouts; Futrell (2006), chapter 5.

### **Monday, November 27**

Between Ancient and Modern; the Revival of the Olympic Games.

### **Wednesday, November 29**

### **Final Exam**

### **Essays – Assessment - Grades**

Students will be expected to write one research paper, not more than 2.500 words, on subjects/topics relevant to this course. Details will be provided on the first day of classes. Assignments for topics will be decided by lot, one month before the deadline for the submission of essays. Papers must be properly documented and should include an appended bibliography. Credit will be given for originality, i.e. illustrations, maps etc, personal observation and evidence of independent reading-research.

### **The deadline for the submission of the final essay is Friday, December 1.**

No extensions will be granted.

### **Grades**

The mid-term grade will be calculated on the basis of the mid-term exam (70%) and with regard to student's attendance of and participation in classes (30%).

The final grade will be an average of the grades assigned for the mid Term grade (25%), the final essay (25%), the grade assigned for the final exam (35%) and of that assigned for class participation and attendance over the course of the semester (15%).

### **Class Attendance - Absences**

Student attendance is mandatory. All absences must be excused by the administration and not the instructor. Each unexcused absence will result in a lowered participation grade.

The instructor is available for individual consultation after class or by prior arrangement:

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