

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CLASSICS PROGRAMME
CLAS 404: Topics in History and Historiography
30 Points
FULL YEAR 2014
3 March – 15 November 2014



Trimester dates

Trimester dates: 4 March to 15 November 2014

Teaching dates: 4 March to 17 October 2014

Mid-trimester break 1/3 (Easter): 18 April to 4 May 2014

Mid-year break: 3–13 July 2014

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 23 August to 7 September 2014

Examination/Assessment Period: 18 October to 15 November 2014

NB: Students who enrol in this course must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Location: OK 526

Wednesday, 9-11am

One two-hour seminar per week.

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: James Kierstead, OK 511, james.kierstead@vuw.ac.nz,

Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4pm

Tutors and Office Hours: TBA

Classics Programme Administrator: Tania Hayes, tania.hayes@vuw.ac.nz, 04 463 5319.

Communication of additional information

Additional information on changes will be conveyed to students via Blackboard and the Classics noticeboard.

Prescription

A period or topic of ancient history and/or historiography for presentation, discussion and contextual analysis.

Course content

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the classical Athenian democracy (508-322 BC). It introduces students to the basic facts about Athenian democratic chronology and institutions, and then turns to broader issues and questions about how we should describe the Athenian democratic system and how we should evaluate it.

The course is divided into two main parts: the first covering the basics (mainly chronology and institutions), and the second raising a series of questions. These questions are of two sorts: questions about what Athenian democracy was really like, and questions about how we might assess it. Weekly topics include the legal system, leadership, and democratic and anti-democratic ideology. Readings are drawn both from ancient sources and modern scholarship, and will engage us in issues not only of textual interpretation and historical fact, but also of positive and normative political theory.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. orient themselves in the main themes and debates in the study of Athenian democracy. They will be aware of the main trends in scholarship on the topic over the last half-century or so, and be able to draw on arguments supporting either side of the various debates.
2. show a familiarity with the key literary sources for the period, including Pseudo-Aristotle, Pseudo-Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Aristophanes. They will be able to situate passages in these texts and comment on them in an informed way, showing an understanding of their ideological underpinnings.
3. develop their own views about Athenian democracy, in a way that shows a thorough understanding of a few primary sources and a good sense of the secondary literature. They will be able to contribute to broader debates about democracy by drawing on detailed and well-grounded knowledge of classical Athens.

Teaching format

The course will be organized around a single weekly seminar, two hours in length. The first half of each seminar will be student-led (each student will have the chance to lead two seminars; see below under 'Assessment'). To make sure that we have good discussions, each student should make sure they do the appropriate amount of reading for each seminar. Each week every student should read a) the original source material listed; and b) two out of the three secondary sources listed. We will try to ensure that every secondary reading has been tackled by at least one student each week (besides the presenter). The student who is leading the session should read all of the readings listed for that week. In the second hour of each seminar, I will take the lead, continuing the discussion on our readings and from time to time adding some extra material for our consideration.

Mandatory course requirements

Besides achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, there are no mandatory course requirements.

Workload

You should expect to spend about 300 hours total on work for this course, including class time. On a given week, you should spend 2 hours in class, about 6 hours on reading, 4 hours on assignments, and 4 hours on revision every week over the weeks of instruction.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Commentary (OR essay, as above): 2-4000 words. Choose any source passage listed below and write a commentary on it, covering its context and drawing out its ideological assumptions or implications.	20	2, 3	21/05/14
2	Essay (OR commentary, as above): 2-4000 words. Choose any seminar question listed below and write an answer to it, constructing a clear argument and showing awareness of the related secondary readings.	20	1, 3	19/10/14
3	Two Presentations: 20-30 minutes each. Present a summary of all the readings for the seminar, following this up with criticisms and questions; act as facilitator for the conversation that ensues.	10	1, 2	TBA
4	Final Examination (two hours): In Part 1 (1 hour), discuss a brief passage taken from one of the sources we covered during the trimester; in Part 2 (1 hour), write an essay in response to any of the seminar questions (except the one you answered in your previous essay).	50	1, 2, 3	TBA

Marking Criteria

Group Work: There is no formal or assessed group work for this course. However, for the sake of class discussions I would like it to be the case that every reading gets read by at least one person (besides the presenter) every week. I would be grateful if you could arrange for this to happen among yourselves.

Commentary: For your commentary, you should select one of the passages listed below. You should start by briefly discussing the context of the passage you are studying within the work it comes from, as well as the known facts about the author and date of that text (such information can be gleaned from the introductions of standard translations of your text, as well as from reference works such as the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*). You should spend most of your commentary offering a detailed reading of your passage. Discuss the genre of

the piece, and how that might affect your reading (especially in the case of comedy). Look out for recurring themes or ideas. Finally, try to tease out the ideological assumptions or implications of your passage, perhaps linking them to some of the broader issues we will be concerned with in this course. It shouldn't be necessary to consult scholarly commentaries for this exercise; if you are keen to, I can give you some pointers.

Essay: Your essay should take the form of a reasoned argument in response to one of the questions below. You will get points for using primary material (both the passages I set you and those discussed in the secondary readings), and for showing awareness of relevant secondary literature. You will also get points for the coherence, plausibility, and originality of your argument. Finally, it will help your grade if your essay is clearly expressed and well structured: it should proceed methodically through a series of arguments to a conclusion. The primary and second readings I set you should be enough for you to write a good essay, although you will also get credit for any extra reading that you do (assuming that reading is relevant and employed in a reasonable way). Note finally that you will not stand to lose any marks if you go against the view of much of the literature, or of the course coordinator – indeed, you may gain points for novelty!

Presentations: When it's your turn to present, you should do all the readings for that session and take detailed notes. During the session itself, you will have 20-30 minutes to perform two tasks. The first is to provide a synopsis of the readings – an important contribution to the coming discussion, since not all of your peers will have read all of the readings for that week. Your second task will be to offer a few criticisms or objections to the various pieces, in a way which might stimulate debate. Finally, for the rest of the first hour of the class you will be asked to guide the discussion (though you do not have to take a very active role in it yourself). The grade for your presentation will be based on coverage of the set readings; the clarity of your summaries; and the quality of your questions or objections.

Exam: The examination will be two hours long, and will consist of two parts. You should spend the first hour on Part 1, in which you will be asked to write a brief commentary on a passage excerpted from one of the source passages set for the course. You should spend the second hour writing a short essay in response to one of the questions set for the course. For both the commentary and the essay, the marking criteria will be the same as those listed for the full-length commentary and essay above, except that allowance will be made for exam conditions (e.g. you will not be expected to give page-references or quotations from the readings!)

Note: You must submit one full-length essay and one commentary, though which order you do them in is up to you. You may write your full-length essay and commentary (or your exam essay and commentary) on topics that you have covered in your presentations. However, you must not write your exam commentary or essay on the same topics that you addressed in your full-length commentary and essay. So, as an example of a permitted combination, say you write your full-length essay on 'How should we study Athenian democracy?' and your full-length commentary on the passage in Aristophanes' *Wasps*. You may also have presented on those topics, but you may not submit answers on these topics in either part of the exam. If you do, you risk getting no marks!

Submission and return of work

Essays and commentaries should be submitted only in electronic form via the Blackboard site. Note that Turnitin employs anti-plagiarism software. I will endeavour to return all your written work within two weeks from when you give it to me. I will also try to give you a grade for your presentations within a day or two.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Extensions are normally granted only in cases of (a) illness, in which case you must submit a doctor's note; (b) serious emergency of some sort, in which case you should come to see me in person if possible.

Penalties

If you don't have an extension, you will lose 5% of your grade as soon as midnight of the due date passes, and an additional 5% every subsequent midnight that your essay/commentary has not been submitted. However, the penalty will not be applied after your grade reaches 25%. (So say you submit an essay 7 days after the deadline, and your pre-penalty grade is 50%. You would get 25% for that essay, not 15%).

Set Texts/Recommended Reading

The set texts for this course – passages from the sources, chapters of books and articles – are listed in the schedule below. You should be able to find translations of the sources yourselves, either in the library or bookshop in Penguin, Oxford World's Classics, or Loeb editions, or online (e.g. from the Perseus Project). The ten books immediately below contain at least two of the set readings each.

Balot, *Greek Political Thought* (Oxford, 2006)

Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oklahoma, 1991)

Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens* (Oxford, 1999)

Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, 1989)

Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, 1998)

Ober, *Democracy and Knowledge* (Princeton, 2008)

Ober, Raaflaub, and Wallace, eds. *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, 2007)

Robinson, ed. *Ancient Greek Democracy* (Oxford, 2004)

Robinson, *Democracy Beyond Athens* (Cambridge, 2011)

Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge, 1988)

You might find it helpful to buy one or two of these books, though buying all of them would probably not be in your financial interest! You should work with each other to secure copies of these books from the library and to share them with each other as necessary. I am looking into getting extra copies of these books; as a last resort, you can ask to borrow my personal copies of these volumes. All readings not from these books will be available as scanned documents on Blackboard.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications

- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

Schedule

*= in Robinson 2004

**= in Ober, Raaflaub and Wallace 2007

Part 1. The Basics: Chronology and Institutions

When was Athenian democracy? Where did it come from? How did it work?

1. *Framing the Debate* (March 5th)

How should we study Athenian Democracy?

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.35-46

Rhodes 2003, Chapter 6, 'How to Study Athenian Democracy'

Samons 2004, Chapter 7, 'Democracy and Religion'

Ober 2008, Chapter 1, 'Introduction: Dispersed Knowledge and Collective Action'

2. *The Foundations of Greek Democracy* (March 12th)

To what extent was the classical Athenian democracy a consequence of archaic Greek ideas and practices?

Homer, *Odyssey* 2.1-159

Raaflaub 1988, 'Homer and the Beginning of Political Thought in Greece'*

Morris 1996, 'The Strong Principle of Equality and the Archaic Origins of Greek Democracy'*

Robinson 1997, Chapter 3, 'Archaic *Demokratiai*'

3. *The Athenian Transition to Democracy* (March 19th)

When, how, and why did Athens become democratic?

Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.55-96

Wallace 2007, 'Revolutions and a New Order in Solonian Athens'***

Ober 2007, 'The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 BC'***

Raaflaub 2007, 'The Breakthrough of *Demokratia*'***

4. *The Constitution through Time* (March 26th)

What were the main phases and changes in the Athenian constitution in the classical period?

Pseudo-Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 1-41

Ober 1989, Chapter 2, 'A History of the Athenian Constitution'

Hansen 1991, Chapter 3, 'The Athenian Constitution Down to 403 BC'

Rhodes 1980, 'Athenian Democracy After 403 BC'

5. *The Main Institutions* (April 2nd)

What were the main institutions through which popular power at Athens manifested itself?

Pseudo-Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 42-69

Hansen 1991, Chapter 6, 'The Assembly of the People'

Hansen 1991, Chapter 9, 'The Magistrates'

Hansen 1991, Chapter 10, 'The Council of Five Hundred'

6. *The Legal System* (April 9th)

To what extent, and in what ways, was the system of courts a central part of the Athenian democratic order?

Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 403-759

Dow 1939, 'Aristotle, the Kleroteria, and the Courts'

Hansen 1991, Chapter 8, 'The People's Court'

Lanni 2006, Chapter 2, 'Athens and its Legal System'

7. *The Greek Democratic Context* (April 16th)

To what extent was Athens exceptional/typical of the democracies that existed in the classical Greek world?

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 6.34-41

Robinson 2011, Chapter 2, 'Classical *demokratiai* in Western and North-Western Greece'

Robinson 2011, Chapter 4, 'The Spread of Democracy in the Classical Period'

Robinson 2011, Chapter 5, 'The Nature of Classical Democracy Outside Athens'

Part 2.1. Issues and Questions: Describing Athenian Democracy

What were the most important groups within Athens? How did they interact? How did they make up a workable city-state?

8. *Leadership* (May 7th)

Who was in charge in democratic Athens?

Aristophanes, *Knights*, 131-728

Finley 1973, Chapter 2, 'Athenian Demagogues'

Sinclair 1988, Chapter 6, 'The Hazards of Leadership'

Sinclair 1988, Chapter 7, 'The Rewards of Leadership'

9. *Rhetoric* (May 14th)

Why was public speaking so important in democratic Athens?

Plato, *Gorgias*, 447a-465e

Ober 1989, Chapter 3, 'Public Speakers and Mass Audiences'

Ober 1989, Chapter 4, 'Ability and Education: The Power of Persuasion'

Yunis 1996, Chapter 1, 'Athenian Intellectuals Examine Rhetoric and Democracy'

10. *Class* (May 21st)

How useful a concept is class in analyzing classical Athens?

Menander, *The Grumpy Old Man*, 1-620

Ober 1989, Chapter 5, 'Class'

Hansen 1991, Chapter 5, 'The People of Athens'

Wood 1988, Chapter 1, 'The Myth of the Idle Mob'

11. *Attika* (May 28th)

How important is the Attic countryside in understanding Athenian democracy?

Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 172-566

Osborne 1985, Chapter 4, 'Demes and Democracy: Local Politics and the Politics of Locality'

Jones 1999, Chapter 2, 'The Demes'

Jones 1999, Chapter 3, 'The Isolation of the Demes'

12. *Athens the Polis* (June 4th)

How did Athens succeed in functioning more or less as a unified city-state?

Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1

Hansen 1991, Chapter 4, 'Athens as a City-State and as a Democracy'

Sinclair 1988, Chapter 3, 'The Responsibilities of the Citizen'

Ober 2008, Chapter 4, 'Aggregation: Networks, Teams, and Experts'

Part 2.2. Issues and Questions: Evaluating Athenian Democracy

How democratic and free was classical Athens? Was it a force for liberty, or a force for oppression? What were the contemporary arguments for and against the democratic system?

13. *Outsiders* (July 16th)

How should the exclusion of women, slaves, and foreigners from the political community impact our view of Athenian democracy?

Aristophanes, *Women at the Assembly*, 1-571

Osborne 1995, 'The Economics and Politics of Slavery at Athens'*

Jameson 1997, 'Women and Democracy in Fourth-Century Athens'*

Ober 1998, 'Essence and Enactment: Aristophanes'

14. *Freedom* (July 23rd)

Was classical Athens a liberal, or an illiberal, democracy?

Plato, *Apology*

Dover 1976, 'The Freedom of the Intellectual in Greek Society'

Sinclair 1988, Chapter 2, 'The Privileges and Opportunities of the Citizen'

Ober 2000, 'Quasi-Rights: Participatory Citizenship and Negative Liberties'

15. *An Imperial Democracy?* (July 30th)

How fairly can Athens be called a liberator/oppressor of other Greek states?

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 5.84-116

De Ste. Croix 1954, 'The Character of the Athenian Empire'

Bradeen 1960, 'The Popularity of the Athenian Empire'

Balot 2006, Chapter 5, 'Imperialism'

16. *Athenian Democratic Ideology* (August 6th)

What were some of the main features of democratic ideology in Athens?

Plato, *Protagoras*, 320c-328d

Balot 2006, Chapter 3, 'Democratic Political Thinking at Athens'

Ober 1989, Chapter 7, 'Dialectics and Discourse'

Osborne 1994, 'Ritual, Finance, Politics: An Account of Athenian Democracy'

17. *Criticizing Athenian Democracy* (August 13th)

What were a few of the main lines of attack adopted by critics of the democracy?

Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*

Ober 1998, Chapter 1, 'The Problem of Dissent: Criticism as Contest'

Balot 2006, Chapter 4, 'Criticizing Democracy'

Roberts 1994, 'Introduction'

18. *Some Alternatives* (August 20th)

Discuss the viability and appeal of the alternative visions of an ideal society offered by Plato OR Aristotle.

Plato, *Republic*, Book 5

Balot 2006, Chapter 6, 'Fourth-Century Revisions'

Balot 2006, Chapter 7, 'Aristotle's Political Thought'

Ober 1998, Chapter 4, 'Justice, Knowledge, Power: Plato'