

# Greek 265: Topics in Greek Literature

## SYLLABUS

### General Information

- Spring 2011
- Meeting Time: TTh 2:00-3:15 (?)
- Meeting Place: 100 Clough
- Instructor: David Sick
- Office: Halliburton 407
- Office Hours:

I am generally on campus everyday. If you want or need to speak with me, feel free to stop by my office. Many times I can meet with you without an appointment. If I am busy, I will tell you; so please do not be offended. We can then set up an appointment to meet at another time. During my office hours I will be available unless an unforeseen difficulty arises.

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00-2:00, in 407 Halliburton; Friday, 3:00-4:00, ἐν τῇ χθονὶ τῇ μέσῃ (τῷ κατείῳ)

- Telephone: (901) 843-3907 (*office*), (901) 276-2261 (*home*) Εἰ ἐν ἀπορίᾳ ἵσταῖ ο, ὥσπερ τις τοῦ Σωκράτους μαθητῆς, ὅμοιοι με καλέσαι ἄν πρόποι.
- Degree Requirements: The course fulfills the fourth foundation in the Rhodes curriculum, namely to read and interpret literary texts (**F4**). It also counts toward a major or minor in Greek and Roman Studies.

### Objectives

The primary goal of this class is to cultivate the student's ability to read, understand, and interpret Greek literature. The class must, moreover, fit with the rest of the offerings of the department. For this reason, we will focus on Herodotus' *Histories*. From the fifth century BCE, Herodotus' work, for practical purposes, is the oldest extant example of prose in Western civilization. He was known in antiquity as both the father of history and the father of lies. The two titles give some indication of the respect he was afforded for his primacy but also the criticism he received for his factual inaccuracies. We will want to examine and discuss Herodotus methods as a writer of history. Herodotus furthermore is our primary source for many of the non-Greek cultures around the Mediterranean. A sort of early ethnographer, he described such peoples as the Persians, the Egyptians, the Scythians, the Thracians, and the Libyans. Since one of my areas of research has been ancient Iranian religion and myth, we will compare some of Herodotus' accounts of the Persians with the literary and epigraphic sources the Persians themselves left behind.

For our reading to be most beneficial, to both you and me, I think it is important that we draw upon our (both yours and mine) strengths and interests. Although I have chosen the texts and made out a tentative reading schedule for the class, when we come to the end of the semester, I will allow the class to choose the final portions of the *Histories* we read in class together.

## Approach

We have in this class a variety of abilities and experiences in the study of Greek. How, you may ask, can we mix y'all together in a great omnium-gatherum of Hellenity? Credit must be given for work and preparation, not only final results. For any of us to acquire skills in a second or even third language, we must interact with the target language regularly. As humans, we have the innate ability to become proficient in any language, since languages themselves are a product of the human animal. You are expected to spend at least **two and ½ hours** per class period (on average) in preparation of the assignment. You may occasionally need to spend more or less time. Since, however, our educational system demands evaluation, I must also assess the quality of your interaction with the text. This assessment will be made through the journal, exams, and research paper.

## Course Requirements

- Hints:

Some very helpful hints from Prof Morrell on improving the productivity of your reading in Greek and Latin:

- Before you begin reading a new passage, take time to recreate the context of your reading by going back and reviewing the material that you read in the previous session. Go through your notes to familiarize yourself with the vocabulary and contextual issues you confronted while reading the previous selection. Finally, read through your summary. It may be helpful to glance back over several previous entries, just to reacquaint yourself with the diction and syntax of the author.
- Skim over the passage you are reading and look for proper nouns. While you make mental notes about the persons and places you will encounter, be sure to observe the case of the proper nouns. The case will often give you clues about the roles the people or places will play.
- As you read, try not to stop each time you encounter a word that looks unfamiliar. Develop the habit of reading entire sentences or sections before you begin looking up words. You will find that the meaning of a word you have seen before often comes back as you read further and develop a clearer sense of what is happening in the text. After you have been through a section, begin consulting the lexicon by looking up words you have never or seldom seen before. Avoid immediately looking up words you have looked up several times before. First try to derive their meaning from context.
- Take time to record questions you have or observations. Feel free to take notes on unusual or rare vocabulary items you are not likely to encounter very often. As you go back and review an entry in your journal before your next session, the unusual vocabulary items will often best remind you about the context.

- Once you have been through a selection, go back and read it through one more time before you write a summary. You will squander much of your effort if you consistently neglect to review at the end of a session. The second time through the text is ultimately the most important, because the “input” will be more comprehensible, and the process of acquiring the language will function best during this second time through the text.

- Journal:

The most important goal of this class is to develop the student’s ability to read Greek, and, thus, the largest part of the student’s grade should derive from his or her work toward that goal. In other words, if you regularly read, review, and generally prepare for class, you will be successful in this class. Yet, I need a means to measure your preparation, and thus you will need to keep careful notes in a continuous format of your preparation.

On one level, you should keep notes of the words with which you were unfamiliar, the grammatical forms you did not recognize, the constructions that you found difficult to understand or which were ambiguous. You may also wish to provide actual translations to some sections or summaries of content. I would prefer not to see a complete translation of the text written out without other notes. Such an approach often prevents students from working through the text in class.

At times I would expect your journal to demonstrate a higher level of interaction with the text: you might write a paragraph or two of reaction to the texts. Thus, for example, if we were to read Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, you might address some of the following questions: What is the significance of the three roads? Does Oedipus truly want to discover his origins? How do you believe a specific scene was staged? You might even spend a paragraph or two discussing the differences in meaning which result from ambiguities of grammar or variants in the text itself. In short your journal should read as your commentary to the text--linguistic, literary, historical, personal, etc. Your journal does not have to solve every problem the text presents to you but it should show that you were thinking about the text when you were preparing for class. We will use the questions and reactions in your journals as the guide to our class meetings. **I will provide an example of a nifty journal entry on our first day of reading.**

**Every page of your journal should indicate the number of hours you spent working for each session and for the entire semester or it will not be accepted.** Your hours of preparation will be a major item upon which you are evaluated in this class. My standard calculation for hours of work outside class is three hours for every class meeting, for a T-Th class. However, since we must build in time for review for the exams and for completion of the research paper, I expect at least **2 and ½ hours** (on average) in preparation for each regular class meeting.

**I will collect, review, and grade your journals on every day on which there is an exam.**

- Schedule of Assignments and Readings:

*Note: We will not read every assignment in its entirety in class. We will read over important sections and take questions on difficult sections. Students are nonetheless responsible for the*

*entirety of the assigned reading. Assignments are to be read in the original Greek unless otherwise indicated. Items marked with † will be provided by the instructor.*

- 1/13 Introduction to Class; Introduction to Herodotus and Persia
- 1/18 Prologue, 1.5.1-4 (Nagy, pp. 1-3); introduction to Nagy's commentary (pp. xv-xix)
- 1/20 Gyges I, 1.8.1-4, 1.9.1-3, 1.10.1-3 (Nagy, pp. 3-6)
- 1/25 Gyges II, 1.11.1-5, 1.12.1-2, 1.14.1-3 (Nagy, pp. 7-10)
- 1/27 Croesus, 1.47.1-3, 1.48.1-2, 1.53.1-3 (Nagy, pp. 31-34)
- 2/1 Persian Customs I, 1.131.1-3, 1.132.1-3, 1.133.1-4 (Nagy, pp. 45-47)
- 2/3 Persian Customs II, 1.134.1-2, 1.136.1-2, 1.137.1-2 (Nagy, pp. 48-50)
- 2/8 Persian Customs III, 1.138.1-2 (Nagy, p. 51); Yasna 29, Yasna 44, Mithra Yasht (English)†
- 2/10 **Translation Exam I; Journals Due**
- 2/15 Cambyses, 3.16.1-7, 3.32.1-4 (Nagy, pp. 86-89); Herodotus 3.1-38 (English, pp. )
- 2/17 Rise of Darius, 3.85.1-3, 3.86.1-2 (Nagy, pp. 99-101); Herodotus 3.61-84 (English, pp.)
- 2/22 Scythian Customs I, 4.3.1-4, 4.23.1-5 (Nagy, pp. 101-103); Behistan Inscription of Darius (English)†
- 2/24 Scythian Customs II, 4.62.1-4, 4.71.1-5 (Nagy, pp. 106-9)
- 3/1 Scythians and Amazons, 4.111.1-2, 4.112.1, 4.113.1-3, 4.114.1-4 (Nagy, pp. 111-114)
- 3/3 Persians in Macedonia, 5.18.1-5, 5.19.1-2, 5.20.1-5 (Nagy, pp. 124-128)
- 3/8 Beginnings of the War, 5.49.1-4, 5.50.1-3 (Nagy, pp. 131-133)
- 3/10 **Translation Exam II; Journals Due**
- 3/14-3/18: **σχολή ἐ αρινή: μαθηταί τήν γλῶσσαν Ἑλληνικήν παρὰ τῆ θάλασσα ἄ σκήσουσιν.**
- 3/22 Ionian Revolt I, 5.97.1-3, 5.105.1-2, 6.9.3-4 (Nagy, pp. 137-141)
- 3/24 Ionian Revolt II, 6.15.1-2, 6.16.1-2, 6.21.1-2 (Nagy, pp. 141-143)
- 3/29 Herodotus, Books 1-4 (English)
- 3/31 Herodotus, Books 5-9 (English)
- 4/7 **No regular class meeting; individual appointments to discuss research projects**

4/12 Dream of Xerxes I, 7.12.1-2, 7.15.1-3, 7.16b.1-2 (Nagy, pp.160-163)

4/14 Dream of Xerxes II and the Hellespont, 7.17.1-2, 7.18.1-4, 7.35.1-3 (Nagy, pp. 163-5, 166-7); Inscriptions of Xerxes (English)†

4/19 Student Choice #1 (from Nagy)

4/21 ἡ ἔορτή ἡ τοῦ πάσχα

4/26 Student Choice #2 (from Nagy)

4/28 Student Choice #3 (from Nagy)

5/6, 9:30 a.m. **Translation Exam III; Journals Due**

5/7 **Research Paper Due by 5:30 p.m. to D. Sick's office (Halliburton 407)**

- Exams:

There will be three exams covering the readings from each section of the course. These exams will be enjoyable because students will have an opportunity to review the reading from the previous weeks. In the main they will consist of translation of passages we have read together in class, although there may be a few questions of grammar or culture, or occasionally short, previously unseen passages may be included. No books or notes may be used in completing the quizzes. ***Students may NOT dance the pyrrhiche in victory after the exam.***

- Research Paper:

In lieu of a final exam, students will write a 5-7 page paper about one or more of the readings from the class. Although the paper will be interpretative in nature, four to six secondary modern sources should be consulted and included in the bibliography. All citation of primary texts must be in Greek. I will provide a more detailed explanation of the requirements for this paper later in the semester, and we will schedule individual meetings in the course of the semester to discuss possible topics for the paper.

- Grading:

The final grade for this class will be computed by weighting the required components.

Attendance and Participation	20%
Journal	30%
Exams	30%
Research Paper	20%

\*Late assignments will be marked down 3% per day beginning with the day itself.

\*I will excuse absences for illnesses, other crises, and important extra-curricular events.

**Students must notify me of their reason for absence**, however. Illness must be complete for the day of absence. Students may not attend other classes, extra-curricular activities, or social

events on the day of absence. Students will also be given several chances to make-up unexcused absences by attending special events related to the class.

### Course Materials

- Primary Texts:

*Herodotus Reader* (I and II), ed. Blaise Nagy. (Newburyport, Mass.: Focus Publishing, 2011)

Herodotus, trans. R. Waterfield. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008)

- Secondary Texts:

a Greek dictionary, preferably Liddell-Scott-Jones, but Yanni's *Greek Dictionary of New Age Music* is also acceptable