

Course Title: Women's Studies: Goddess of Ancient Greece: The Goddess, The Priestess, Ritual and Women in Ancient Greece

Course Code: WGST 320 / HIST 320

Credit Hours: 3

Location: Classroom 1, Main building

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Office Hour: by appointment

Office location: by appointment

Syllabus

Course Description:

This course questions the prevailing historical view of Athenian women as second-class, even invisible, citizens, and the feminist analysis of matriarchal societies crushed by patriarchal marauders. Then it introduces a new analysis of women's lives in ancient Greece, with particular attention to cult festivals, and explores its relevance to today.

Course Overview:

The prevailing view of Athenian women in antiquity is one of second-class status, of submission, of silence, of invisibility. Gleaned through interpretations of accounts by historians, orators and poets of the Classical and Hellenistic eras, this view was appropriated in recent decades by feminism (primarily in academia) with the intent of supporting a belief built on a particular interpretation of artifacts from archeological projects widely written about in the 1970s. This thesis described the violent overthrow and subsuming of peaceful, matrifocal, matriarchal Goddess-worshipping societies in Old Europe by sky-god worshipping marauders out of the north, bearing arms and imposing patriarchy. As a result, humanity, innocence, and the standing of women suffered irreparable damage.

However, through a re-interpretation of the same archeological data, new analyses of other information, consideration of our own cultural filters, plus a closer examination of the complex and fascinating nature of the feminine deities in the Greek pantheon, and an introduction to the cult festivals celebrating these goddesses and the priestesses who led them, the course will reconsider the meaning of these entities to both men and women of ancient Greece. In doing so, we will seek to reconsider, perhaps re-construct, the traditional view of women's lives in ancient Greece. We will also consider what relevance this study and its shifting perspectives might have on women's lives in today's world.

Course Objectives:

- Students will research and deliver oral presentations on the origins, attributes and actions of Greek mythological stories and relevant figures.
- Students will attend classes regularly, having read the assigned materials and engage in lively discussion on the topic presented- *attention and participation in class discussion is critical and will comprise the greatest percentage of the student's grade*. Rather than the lecturer/passive recipient model, we find that a symposium setting offers a richer environment for the exchange of students' thoughts, opinions, and interactions with these ideas — often involving the imagination — and is more effective.
- Students will keep a class notebook to maintain the through-line of class discussions, as well as additional information gleaned from trips as it pertains to class topics.
- Students will visit a variety of sites with historic, cultural and mythic importance, in the Cycladic Islands, including Temple of Demeter on Naxos, the Temple of Artemis of Delos, the ruins of the ancient Minoan civilization at Akrotiri on Santorini, and other sites in Athens and Paros.
- Students will complete two thoroughly researched oral reports during the semester on assigned topics.
- Students will collaborate on a final project, including a written research paper and presentation, focusing on one chosen facet of the topics studied.
- Students will attend and contribute to a celebration, designed by students in the symbolic celebratory manner of the ancient Greeks, as the culmination of the semester's work at the final class meeting.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course:

- Students will be able to demonstrate insight into the nature and meaning of myth and demonstrate familiarity with the rich store of mythic stories surrounding the Greek goddesses plus the gender-fluid god, Dionysos.
- Students will be able to appraise the relationship between myth and ritual, the function of ritual in culture and the development of personal identity in ancient societies.
- Students will be able to summarize recent scholarship focusing on the role of the priestess and cult religious practice spanning the seven centuries prior to the Theodosian decree of 393 CE.
- Students will be able to analyze the roles accorded to women of the time, both through a modern lens and through historical perspectives.

- Students will be able to examine four major cult festivals: Athena Polias, the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Arkteia, and the Great Dionysia, and the roles of women therein.
- Students will be able to make arguments for the influence and effects of women's roles in cult festivities as those cult festivities impacted the lives of Greek women from girlhood to maturity.

Main texts

Portrait of a Priestess, Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece, by Joan Breton Connelly (Princeton University Press, 2007)

The Myth of the Goddess, Evolution of an Image, by Anne Baring and Jules Cashford (Penguin Books, 1991)

The Greek Myths, by Robert Graves (Penguin Books, 1955)

Assignments

Goddess Class Notebook

This notebook is a creative project meant to highlight important points of class discussions and field trips. Contents suggested for inclusion are class notes and students' extensions of ideas discussed. Notes on museum and site visits with comments relating to class materials, sketches, brainstorming diagrams, quotations, etc.

Oral Presentations

Twice throughout the course, students will be asked to research and deliver an oral presentation on a given topic. Students are expected to research their topic thoroughly and using reliable sources, compile, rehearse and present their material, thereby practicing the ancient Greek art of oration.

Final Group Project (and Research Paper)

After gaining instructor approval of a group's chosen topic, students will collaborate to research their topic. They will generate a report and brief presentation of the material. Students should be sure to use and correctly cite reliable sources. This project will be graded on thoroughness and evidence of student analysis. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a zero grade, please be sure to cite your work correctly and submit only original material.

Weighted Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and Participation	40% Class Notebook
Reflections	10%
Oral Reports (2)	10% (each- 20% total)
Final Group Project	20%
Final Research Paper	10%

Grading Scale, Attendance and Make-up, Late Work, Academic Integrity, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policies:

Students are required to abide by HISA's Academic policies first introduced and explained at the school and class orientation. See the attached policy sheet.

Reference Materials:

The Nature of Greek Myths, by G. S. Kirk (Penguin Books, 1974); *Theogony and Works and Days*, by Hesiod, trans. M. L. West (Oxford University Press, 1988); *The Women Warriors: For Decades Scholars Have Searched for Ancient Matriarchies. Will They Ever Find One?*, by Lawrence Osborn, (*Lingua Franca*, 11/97, <http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9712/nosborne.html>); *The Odyssey, The Iliad*, by Homer, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin Classics, 1996); *Lysistrata*, by Aristophanes, trans. Paul Roche; *Medea and The Bacchae*, Euripides, trans. Paul Roche; *The Landmark Herodotus and The Landmark Thucydides*, by Robert Strassler (Quercus, 2007). Various representations of women engaged in cult activity in ceramic and other arts.