

POL300Y0-Modern Greek Culture: People, Tradition, Language and Cuisine

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1. Course Description

Hellenic civilization has influenced the world since the ancient times. Starting from their remarkable contributions in fields such as philosophy, science, architecture, history, music, literature and politics, Greeks continue to impact our everyday lives through their language and culture. It is impossible to celebrate the liberties and responsibilities of democracy, to engage the spirit of the Olympic games, to enjoy the flavours of Mediterranean cuisine or to feel the magic of a theatrical play, without revealing their Greek connections.

This course is intended for anyone who wishes to explore Modern Greek culture both in the context of the Mediterranean and European regions and with reference to the continuing Greek contributions to world civilization. Important aspects of the contemporary Greek culture and values will be examined along with elements of the Greek language, literature, food and arts.

Students will experience living in glorious Athens, a European megalopolis surrounded by significant monuments and museums, before traveling to Rhodes and the Dodecanese to learn more about the Hellenic tradition and enjoy the beauty and hospitality of the Greek islands.

The course is taught in English and there are no Greek language requirements.

2. Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The main objective of the course is to familiarize students with modern Greece and its culture, the people, their language, values and traditions. Through lectures, readings, interaction with distinguished Greek professionals and educational excursions to sites of historical and cultural importance, students will have the opportunity to explore and analyze critically contemporary Greece. They will discover unknown aspects of a culture that remains resilient to regional and international challenges.

Students will develop a basic familiarity with the Greek language by learning some daily expressions and discovering a plethora of Greek words used in various languages to encode complex concepts and scientific terms. They will learn about the life and achievements of important Greeks in the fields of art, literature, science, politics, sports and economics. They will be also introduced to the secrets of Mediterranean and Greek cuisine and will observe how Greeks use their local products in their diet and how they preserve their cultural traditions in various aspects of their lives.

While most part of the coursework -lectures and excursions- will be offered in Athens and mainland Greece, the course involves also a six-day trip to the island of Rhodes and Simi. Thus, students will have the opportunity to compare two opposite sceneries and lifestyles: the vivid rhythms of a European multicultural metropolis and the relaxing atmosphere of the Aegean islands where East meets the West and where history and tradition coexist with the Mediterranean nature.

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Major learning outcomes of the course, include:

- Understanding of the connection and continuity between ancient and modern Greece.
- Exploring the impacts of global and regional challenges such as the ongoing financial and refugee crisis, to Greek society and life style.
- Familiarity with famous Greeks and key events in recent Greek history.
- Understanding of the enduring influence and the vast contributions of the Greeks in fields such as culture, economy, politics, science, arts, sports, theatre and cuisine.
- Developing intercultural awareness by understanding the western and eastern influences. of the Greek civilization as well as the cultural exchanges between Greeks and their neighbours.

3. Assessment

Includes a quizz based on topics that will be covered in lectures and readings; a reflection paper or presentation based on class visits and the students' experiences and observations; a research paper based on themes discussed throughout the course. Readings and paper guidelines will be available before the beginning of the course.

- Quiz (25%): Upon completion of Modules 1 and 2
- Reflection paper/ presentation (25%): Upon completion of Modules 3 and 4
- Research Paper (40%): Due one week after course completion
- Participation (10%): Based on the overall performance and coursework

4. Methodology

The course blends conventional and experiential learning. It includes lectures, discussions and presentations (by the course instructor, students and guest speakers) as well as visits to various sites and interaction with Greek academics and other professionals.

5. Course Outline

5.1 Modules

- A. Greece Today: Introduction to the country's geography, language, society and culture
- B. Great Greeks: Significant personalities involved in music, arts, literature, science and politics
- C. Cuisine: Introduction to Greek products, the Mediterranean diet and local food related traditions
- D. Social life, traditions, tourism and economy

5.2 In-class lectures

- A1. Introduction to Greek geography, culture, religion and the Modern Greek alphabet
- A2. Introduction to recent Greek history and useful everyday phrases in Greek
- A3. Greek politics, economy and the "National Greek Issues"
- B1. Greeks in the Arts, Science, Sports and Entertainment (e.g. Maria Callas, Melina Merkouri, Theo Angelopoulos, George Papanikolaou, Yannis Antetokounmpo).

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B2. Greek Literature and Music: Cavafy, Kazantzakis, Seferis, Elytis, Ritsos, Tsitsanis, Chatzidakis, Theodorakis.

B3. Politicians and Tycoons: Kapodistrias, Venizelos, Karamanlis, Papandreou, Onassis, Niarchos

C1. Made in Greece: Olive oil, mastic, feta, yogurt, herbs, fruits and vegetables, seafood, well-known Greek dishes

C2. Food and tradition: Ancient, Byzantine and Modern Greek gastronomy/ from fasting to feasting; major holidays and unknown-local Greek dishes

D1: The Greek economy and social life/ hospitality and tourism/

D2. Nostos'and the Greek Diaspora/ Naval tradition and life in the Greek islands

5.3 Sites/ Excursions/ Field trips

1. **Panathenaic Stadium (a.k.a. Kallimarmaro)**: a multi-purpose stadium in Athens. One of the main historic attractions of the city where the first modern Olympic games took place; it is the only stadium in the world built entirely of marble.

More info: <https://whyathens.com/the-panathenaic-stadium/>

2. **Lycabettus Hill**: The highest point of Athens offering the best view to the city.

More info: <https://whyathens.com/lycabettus-hill/>

3. **The Acropolis of Athens**: A sacred rock with ancient temples considered the important monuments of Western civilization

More info: <http://www.acropolisofathens.gr/aoa/>

4. **Dionysus Theatre**: a major theatre in Athens, considered to be the world's first theatre, built at the foot of the Acropolis

More info: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Theatre-of-Dionysus>

5. **Acropolis Museum**: an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens.

More info: <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en>

6. **Benaki Museum**: Dating back to antiquity and the Byzantine period, the Benaki Museum collection gives a captivating overview of Greek history throughout the ages.

More info: <https://www.benaki.gr/index.php?lang=en>

7. **Nafplio**: One of the most beautiful towns in eastern Peloponnese, Nafplio was the first capital of modern Greece between 1823 and 1834.

More info: <http://www.visitnafplio.com/>

8. **Isthmus Canal**: One of the most important projects of modern Greece, the canal of the Isthmus of Corinth, was completed 25 centuries after the conception of its idea.

More info: <http://aedik.gr/the-canal/the-history-of-the-canal/?lang=en>

9. **Palamidi Fortress**: The fortress of Palamidi in Nafplio is a true architectural masterpiece. built during the Venetian occupation in the early 19th century.

More info: <https://www.kastra.eu/castleen.php?kastro=palamidi>

10. **Epidaurus**: one of the most popular archaeological sites in Greece. Located on the north eastern side of Peloponnese, Epidaurus is mostly famous for its Ancient Theatre. This theatre was constructed in the late 4th century BC to host religious ceremonial events in honor of god Asclepius.

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More info:

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/culture/world_heritage_sites/sanctuary_of_asklepios_at_epidaurus

11. **Greek Parliament:** At Syntagma square, in the centre of Athens an austere Neoclassical building facing the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier houses the Parliament of Greece.

More info: <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/>

12. **Distomo:** A tiny Greek village on the Greek mainland where on June 10, 1944, one of the most brutal events in all of World War II took place.

More info: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/greek-village-remembers-nazi-massacre-amidst-reparations-row-1.3102574>

13. **Monastery of Hosios Loukas:** one of the most important monuments of Middle Byzantine architecture and art which has been listed on UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

More info: http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/culture/world_heritage_sites/monastery_of_hosios_loukas

14. **Delphi:** At the foot of Mount Parnassos, lies the Pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Delphi, which had the most famous oracle of ancient Greece. Delphi was regarded in ancient times as the centre of the world.

More info: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/393>

15. **Arachova:** a beautiful town on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, constructed at an altitude of 950 metres. Due to the three ski centres of Parnassus that are located in close distance to Arachova, this town is the most popular winter destination in Greece.

More info: <http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/mainland/arachova>

16. **Piraeus:** The Port of Piraeus is the largest Greek seaport and one of the largest in Europe.

More info: <http://www.piraeus-greece.org/>

17. **Rhodes island:** Rhodes, the largest of Greece's Dodecanese islands, is known for its beach resorts, ancient ruins and remnants of its occupation by the Knights of St. John during the Crusades. The city of Rhodes has an Old Town featuring the medieval Street of the Knights and the castlelike Palace of the Grand Masters

More info: <http://www.rodosisland.gr/>

18. **Old Town (Rhodes):** Medieval walls enclose an enchanting microcosm, a place where different eras, cultures and architectural styles meet.

More info: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/493>

19. **University of the Aegean (Rhodes):** The University Unit of Rhodes hosts the School of Humanities consisting of the Departments of: Primary Education, Sciences of Pre-school Education & Educational Design and Mediterranean Studies.

More info: <http://www1.aegean.gr/aegean2/index.html>

20. **Palace of the Grand Master (Rhodes):** The most prominent historical and architectural landmark of the medieval city of Rhodes is the Palace, the administrative seat and residence of the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Hospitaller.

More info: <https://rhodos.gr/places-to-visit/knights-palace-of-the-grand-masters/>

21. **Archeological Museum of Rhodes:** The Archaeological Museum of Rhodes is located in the Medieval City of Rhodes. The museum is housed in the monumental edifice that was the hospital of the Knights of Saint John. Construction of it was begun in 1440 and brought to completion in the time of the Grand Master d'Aubusson.

More info: <https://www.gtp.gr/TDirectoryDetails.asp?ID=854>

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22. **Aegean Institute of the Law of the Sea:** Founded in 1991, this independent research center is affiliated with the University of the Aegean and supervised by the Ministry of Justice. The Aegean Institute is headquartered in the Medieval City of the island of Rhodes and equipped with a comprehensive specialized library and a documentation center on the law of the sea and maritime law.

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/180882795330136/>

23. **Kallithea Springs (Rhodes):** Kallithea Springs are located at the bay of Kallithea, just 9km from the City of Rhodes. Known since antiquity for their therapeutic properties, the thermal springs of Kallithea were utilized by the Italians, in the early 20th century, being very popular and attracting visitors from all over the world.

More info: <http://www.kallitheasprings.gr/>

24. **Lindos (Rhodes):** Lindos is a town on the Greek island of Rhodes. It's known for its cliff-top acropolis, which features monumental 4th-century gates and reliefs from about 280 B.C.

More info: <http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/destinations/lindos>

25. **Asklipio village (Rhodes):** Asklipio is located 64 km southeast of Rhodes capital. This lovely mountainous village is built amphitheatrically and stands out for its unique natural surroundings. The most important feature of the village is the Medieval Castle which was built by the knights of Saint John in the 13th century.

More info: <http://www.rhodesnow.com/rhodes-guide/pages.php?id=182&lang=english>

26. **Melissokomiki/ Bee Museum (Rhodes):** The Beekeeping Company of the Dodecanese produces and packages beehive products of more than 70 beekeepers from the nearby area. It has also founded the Bee Museum which is the only one in Greece.

More info: <https://beemuseum.gr/>

27. **APLOS factory (Rhodes):** A dairy foods company that produces high quality local products, including fresh Greek yogurt.

More info: <http://www.aplos.eu/?lang=en>

28. **Valley of the Butterflies (Rhodes):** A nature park with walking trails that offers a summer home for many butterflies.

More info: http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/nature/fauna/butterfly_valley_of_rhodes

29. **Seven Springs (Rhodes):** Set amid dense woodland, this is one of the most picturesque locations on the island. Seven natural springs flow through a valley to create a small lake.

More info: <https://www.greeka.com/dodecanese/rhodes/rhodes-hills-and-parks/rhodes-seven-springs.htm>

30. **Simi island:** Symi is a Greek island, part of the Dodecanese island group. It's known for the harbor at Symi Town, surrounded by colorful neoclassical houses. On the southwest coast, the 18th-century Monastery of Archangel Michael Panormitis is a major Greek Orthodox pilgrimage site with a Byzantine museum. More info: <https://symi.gr/en/>

6. Bibliography-Readings (To be updated in Spring 2021)

A. Predeparture Readings

Greece-Land (Required)

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Module: Greece Today, Greek Society

Topic: Geography, geology

Authors: John Frederick Haldon, Loring Danforth, Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg, John S. Bowman, The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Publication: Encyclopaedia Britannica

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece>

Greece-People (Required)

Module: Greece Today, Greek Society

Topic: Society and culture

Authors: John Frederick Haldon, Loring Danforth, Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg, John S. Bowman, The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Publication: Encyclopaedia Britannica

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Climate#ref26452>

Government and Society and Cultural Life (Required)

Module: Greece Today, Great Greeks, Greek Society

Topic: Culture, Politics

Authors: Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg, John S. Bowman

Publication: Encyclopaedia Britannica

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Agriculture-forestry-and-fishing#ref26462>

Cultural Life (Required)

Module: Greece Today, Great Greeks, Greek Society

Topic: Culture, Politics

Authors: Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg, John S. Bowman

Publication: Encyclopaedia Britannica

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Agriculture-forestry-and-fishing#ref26462>

Greece-History (Required)

Module: Greece Today, Great Greeks, Greek Society

Topic: History

Authors: John Frederick Haldon, Loring Danforth, Richard Ralph Mowbray Clogg, John S. Bowman, The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Publication: Encyclopaedia Britannica

URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Cultural-institutions#ref26384>

Recommended

Kalyvas, S. (2015). *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

B. READINGS OF WEEK 1

Check daily the course announcements on Quercus for additional notes, readings and videos

Babiniotis, G. (2006). *The Greek Language. Diachronic Evolution and Present. Its Role in the European Union*

Modules: Greece Today

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Topic: Greek Language

Author: George Babiniotis, Linguist, University of Athens

Publication: <https://babiniotis.gr/>

Chatzidakis, M. (2016). Street art conservation in Athens: Critical conservation in a time of crisis

Modules: Greek Society, Greece Today

Topic: Street art in Athens

Author: Maria Chatzidakis, Department of Conservation of Antiquities & Works of Art, Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Athens, Greece

Publication: Studies in Conservation, 61:sup2, 17-23, DOI: 10.1080/00393630.2016.1201757

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2016.1201757>

Georgakopoulos, T. (2017). What Greeks believe

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Survey on Greek people beliefs about various contemporary societal, cultural and political challenges

Author: Thodoris Georgakopoulos, journalist, writer.

Publication: DiaNEOsis

URL: <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2017/04/greeks-believe-in-2017/>

Liakos, A. (2007). Historical Time and National Space in Modern Greece. Historical Time and National Space in Modern Greece

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Modern Greek national history

Author: Antonios Liakos

Publication: Hayashi Tadayuki and Hiroshi Fukuda (Eds) Regions in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present, Sapporo, Slavic Euroasian Studies 15, 2007, 205-227

URL: http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no15_ses/11_liakos.pdf

Plantzos, D (2017). Caryatids lost and regained: Rebranding the classical body in contemporary Greece

Module: Greek Society, Greece Today

Topic: Classical Culture in contemporary Greece

Author: Dimitris Plantzos National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Publication: Journal of Greek Media & Culture Volume 3 Number 1

URL:

<https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/intellect/jgmc/2017/00000003/00000001/art00001>

Simopoulos, A. P. (2001). The Mediterranean Diets: What Is So Special about the Diet of Greece? The Scientific Evidence

Module: Greek Cuisine

Topic: Mediterranean diet

Author: Artemis P. Simopoulos

Publication: American Society for Nutritional Sciences.

URL: -

C. READINGS OF WEEK 2

Check daily the course announcements on Quercus for additional notes, readings and videos

Critchley, S. (2019). Athens in Pieces: The Happiest Man I've Ever Met.

Modules: Greek Society, Greece Today

Topic: A story about Greece's monasteries and what is like to be a monk

Author: Simon Critchley: philosophy professor and author.

Publication: NY Times, online edition

URL: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/03/opinion/mount-athos-monks.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FGreece&action=click&contentCollection=world®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=collection

Kiortsi, F., Mavroidis, K. (2019). Kostas Gavras on Tragedy, Power and Filmmaking in Greece

Module: Great Greeks

Topic: Greek cinema

Author: Florentia Kiortsi, Kostas Mavroidis

Publication: Greek News Agenda

URL: <http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/interviews/filming-greece/6955-kostas-gavras-on-tragedy,-power-and-filmmaking-in-greece>

Maltezou, R., Georgiopoulos, G. (2019). Greek parliament calls on Germany to pay WW2 reparations

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Greek national issues, WWII reparations

Author: Renee Maltezou, George Georgiopoulos

Publication: Reuters

URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-germany-reparations/greek-parliament-calls-on-germany-to-pay-ww2-reparations-idUSKCN1RT1PL>

Norris, M (2019). Greek to Me: The Comma Queen on the pleasures of a different alphabet

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Greek language

Author: Mary Norris (author, journalist)

Publication: New Yorker, January 14, 2019 issue/ headline "To the Letter."

URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/01/14/greek-to-me>

Tsilimpounidi, M. (2015). "If These Walls Could Talk": Street Art and Urban Belonging in The Athens of Crisis

Module: Greek Society, Greece Today

Topic: Street art in Athens

Author: Myrto Tsilimpounidi, social researcher, photographer, Department of Social and Political Thought, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.

Publication: Laboratorium. 2015. 7(2):71-91

URL: Quercus/readings

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Varvarrigou, M. (2019). Remembering Melina – 25 Years After

Module: Great Greeks

Topic: Melina Merkouri

Author: Mariana Varvarrigou

Publication: Greek News Agenda

URL: <http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/topics/culture-society/6945-remembering-melina>

D. READINGS OF WEEK 3

Check daily the course announcements on Quercus for additional notes, readings and videos

Georgakopoulos, T. (2016). Greeks and the Refugee Problem

Module: Greece Today

Topic: The refugee crisis, Greek society

Author: Thodoris Georgakopoulos, journalist, writer.

Publication: DiaNEOsis

URL: <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2016/02/study-greeks-refugee-problem/>

Greek News Agenda (2019). Between a “glorious past” and an “authentic present”: a brief overview of tourism in modern Greece

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Tourism, economy

Author: Greek News Agenda

Publication: Greek News Agenda

URL: <http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/topics/culture-society/6969-tourism-modern-greece>

INSETE (2017). Contribution of Tourism to the Greek Economy 2016-2017.

Module: Greek Society, Greece Today

Topic: Tourism, Economy

Author: INSETE

Publication: insete.gr

URL: http://www.insete.gr/portals/0/meletes-INSETE/01/2018_SymvolhTourismou-2017_EN-Summary.pdf

Papandreou, N. (2003). Growing Up Bilingual

Module: Greece Today

Topic: Greek as a second language

Author: Nikos Papandreou

Publication: Pantheon Books, Essay for Collection Entitled: The Genius of Language

URL: <http://npapandreou.gr/en/83/>

Livaditi, I. (2017). Rethinking Greece: George Prevelakis on Contemporary Hellenism as a “cultural sediment” linking Europe with the emerging multipolar world

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Module: Greece Today

Topic: Greek geopolitical condition

Author: Ioanna Livadidti

Publication: Greek News Agenda

URL: <http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/interviews/rethinking-greece/6346-georges-prevelakis>

Useful Websites for The Module Greek Cuisine

An Introduction to Greek Food and Greek Cooking

Module: Greek cuisine

Topic: Greek cuisine

Author: thespruceeats.com

Publication: thespruceeats.com

URL: <https://www.thespruceeats.com/greek-food-history-1705413>

Greek Gastronomy Website

Module: Greek Cuisine

Topic: Greek Products

Authors: George Pitas, Bilio Tsoukala

Publication/ URL: <http://www.greekgastronomyguide.gr/en/>

Topic

More online sources will be used according to the topics of discussion each day.