

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 quiz 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 or 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: Maria Callas, Melina Merkouri, Theo Angelopoulos, George Papanikolaou, Yannis Antetokoumpo, Soccer vs Basketball.

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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 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/castle.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 of 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. Course Calendar: May-June 2019

1. Friday, May 10

Arrival in Athens airport/Bus Transfer to CYA

Orientation Session by CYA staff /Check-in CYA apartments

Lunch in the CYA cafeteria/Neighborhood Walk by CYA staff

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Welcome dinner

2. Saturday, May 11

Group activity: Walk to the Panathinaiko Stadium and Lycabettus Hill

Group dinner (optional)

3. Sunday, May 12: Free day

4. Monday, May 13: Class 10-13:00: Lecture A1

5. Tuesday, May 14: Class 10-13:00: Lecture A2

Visit to the Acropolis, Dionysus Theater and the Acropolis Museum. On-site lecture.

6. Wednesday, May 15

Class 10:00- 13:00 Lecture

16:00-17:30 Visit to the Benaki Museum. On-site lecture

7. Thursday, May 16

08:00 Bus departs for Nafplio

09:30 Short stop at the Isthmus Canal

10:45 Visit the Pallamidi Fortress. On-site lecture.

12:00 Walking Tour of Historical Nafplio. On-site lecture

13:00-15:00 Free time and lunch in Nafplio

15:00 Bus departs for Epidaurus

15:30-17:00 Visit the archaeological site of Epidaurus. On-site lecture

19:00 Return to Athens

8. Friday, May 17

Visit the Greek Parliament, Guided Tour by Parliament staff

9. Saturday, May 18: Free day

10. Sunday, May 19: Free day

11. Monday, May 20

Class 10:00- 13:00 Lecture

12. Tuesday, May 21

Class: 10:00- 13:00 Lecture

13. Wednesday, May 22

Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture & Guest speaker

14. Thursday, May 23

07:30 Bus departs for Distomo Village, Hosios Loukas Monastery and Delphi/On-site lectures

Lunch on the way.

16:00 check-in hotel

15. Friday, May 24

09:00 Bus to Delphi site and museum/On-site lectures

13:00 Lunch in Arachova (optional)

18:30 Return to Athens

16. Saturday, May 25: Free day

17. Sunday, May 26: Free day

18. Monday, May 27

Class: 10:00- 13:00 Lecture

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19. Tuesday, May 28

Class: 10:00- 13:00 Lecture & Guest speaker

20. Wednesday, May 29

Class: 10:00- 13:00 Lecture

Evening cultural group activity

21. Thursday, May 30

Field trip and group activities in Athens/ On-site lecture

22. Friday, May 31

Class: 10:00- 13:00 Lecture./Student presentations

Group dinner (optional)

23. Saturday, June 1: Trip to Rhodes (via ferry from Piraeus port)

24. Sunday, June 2

Arrival in Rhodes

Meeting with Agapitos Xanthis (director of the Greek National Tourism Organization).

Check in hotel and orientation.

Midday walk to the centre of Rhodes.

Evening walk to the Old Town (Medieval City).

Group dinner (optional)

25. Day 25- Monday, June 3

Breakfast in Hotel

Visit to the University of the Aegean: Lecture by professors Vasilisa Kourtis-Kazoulis and Eleni Skourtou;

Meeting with UofA students

Visit to the Old Town: guided tour to the Palace of the Grand Master and the Archeological Museum of Rhodes; Visit to the Aegean Institute of the Law of the Sea and the Maritime Law; lecture by the director of the Institute Nikos Skourtos

26. Day 26- Tuesday, June 4

Breakfast in Hotel

Bus trip to Kallithea Springs, Lindos and Asklipeio. On-site lectures

Meeting former mayor of Lindos, Giorgos Tharenos and visit to the Acropolis of Lindos

Visit to the village of Asklipeio: guided tour to the local folklore museum, a traditional house and tasting of local dishes.

27. Day 27- Wednesday, June 5

Breakfast in Hotel

Bus trip to Melissokomiki (Honey production and Museum) and Greek yogurt factory “Aplos”

Group lunch (optional) at Seven Springs or the Butterflies Valley

Meeting with architect Anastasia Papaioannou.

Lecture/ preparation of the visit to Simi

Group Dinner (optional)

28. Day 28- Thursday, June 6

Breakfast in Hotel

Trip to the island of Simi.

Guided architecture tour to the famous restored houses of the island.

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Group lunch (optional)

29. Day 29- Friday, June 7

Check out from hotel in Rhodes

End of Course

Submission of papers (final due day: June 14)

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