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.
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 lifestyle.
- 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 test 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.

- Group Presentation (10%): Upon completion of week 2
- Test (30 %): Upon completion of week 3
- Reflection paper (10%): Upon completion of week 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 society, economy, politics and arts  
B. Great Greeks: Significant personalities involved in music, arts, literature, science and politics  
C. Cuisine: Introduction to Greek products, the Mediterranean diet and food related traditions  
D. Language, culture, history and traditions

#### 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 Antetokoumpo).
B3. Politicians and Tycoons: Kapodistrias, Venizelos, Karamanlis, Papandreu, 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

**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/](https://whyathens.com/the-panathenaic-stadium/)

**Lycabettus Hill:** The highest point of Athens offering the best view to the city. 
More info: [https://whyathens.com/lycabettus-hill/](https://whyathens.com/lycabettus-hill/)

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

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

**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](https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en)

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

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

**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](http://aedik.gr/the-canal/the-history-of-the-canal/?lang=en)

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

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. 

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. 

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. 

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

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. 

Piraeus: The Port of Piraeus is the largest Greek seaport and one of the largest in Europe. 
More info: http://www.piraeus-greece.org/

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 castle like Palace of the Grand Masters. 
More info: http://www.rodosisland.gr/

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

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. 

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/

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.


**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/

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


**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/

**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

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


**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/

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6. **Course Calendar: May-June 2020**

Please note that for various reasons daily course activities could be rescheduled. While in Greece, make sure to check the course announcements on Quercus, daily!

1. **Friday, May 8**
   - 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
   - Welcome dinner

2. **Saturday, May 9**
   - Group activity: Walk to the Panathinaiko Stadium and Lycabettus Hill

3. **Sunday, May 10:** Free day

4. **Monday, May 11:** Class 10-13:00: lecture

5. **Tuesday, May 12:** Class 10-13:00: lecture

6. **Wednesday, May 13** Class 10:00-13:00: lecture
7. Thursday, May 14
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 15
09:00-10:30 Visit the Greek Parliament, Guided Tour by Parliament staff
11:30-13:30 Visit to the Acropolis & Dionysus Theater. On-site lecture.
14:00-15:30 Acropolis Museum. On-site lecture.

9. Saturday, May 16: Free day (Optional visit to Sounio)

10. Sunday, May 17: Free day
11. Monday, May 18
Class 10:00-13:00 Lecture

12. Tuesday, May 19
Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture

13. Wednesday, May 20
Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture & Guest speaker

14. Thursday, May 21
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 22
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 23: Free day (Optional visit to Marathon)

17. Sunday, May 24: Free day

18. Monday, May 25
Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture

19. Tuesday, May 26
Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture & Guest speaker

20. Wednesday, May 27
Class: 10:00-13:00 Lecture
Evening cultural group activity

21. Thursday, May 28
09:00-11:00 Visit to Benaki Museum. On-site lecture
12:30-14:30 Street Art tour of Athens

22. Friday, May 29
Class: 10:00-13:00 Test
Group dinner or evening out (optional)

23. Saturday, May 30: Trip to Rhodes (via ferry from Piraeus port)
24. Sunday, May 31
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. Monday, June 1
Breakfast in Hotel
Visit to the University of the Aegean: Meeting professors and students
Visit to the Old Town: Palace of the Grand Master and the Archeological Museum of Rhodes;

26. Tuesday, June 2
Breakfast in Hotel
Bus trip to Kallithea Springs, Lindos and Askleipio. On-site lectures
Meeting former mayor of Lindos, Giorgos Tharenos and visit to the Acropolis of Lindos
Visit to the village of Askleipio: guided tour to the local folklore museum, a traditional house and tasting of local dishes.

27. Wednesday, June 3
Breakfast in Hotel
Trip to the island of Simi.
Guided architecture tour to the famous restored houses of the island.
Group lunch (optional)

28. Thursday, June 4
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)

29. Friday, June 5
Check out from hotel in Rhodes
End of Course
Submission of papers (final due day: June 15)

7. Bibliography-Readings

A. READINGS BEFORE MAY 12

Greece-Land (Required)
Module: Greece Today, Greek Society
**POL300Y0-Modern Greek Culture: People, Tradition, Language and Cuisine**

**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**


**B. READINGS OF WEEK 1**

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

**Modules:** Greece Today  
**Topic:** Greek Language
**C. READINGS OF WEEK 2**

*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*

*Module: Greece Today*  
*Topic: Survey on Greek people beliefs about various contemporary societal, cultural and political challenges*  
*Author: Thodoris Georgakopoulos, journalist, writer.*  
*Publication: DiaNEOsis*  

*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*

*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*

*Module: Greek Cuisine*  
*Topic: Mediterranean diet*  
*Author: Artemis P. Simopoulos*  
*Publication: American Society for Nutritional Sciences.*  
*URL: -
Check daily the course announcements on Quercus for additional notes, readings and videos

  **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

  **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

  **Module:** Greek Society, Greece Today
  **Topic:** Street art in Athens
  **Author:** Myrto Tsilimpoundidi, social researcher, photographer, Department of Social and Political Thought, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.
  **Publication:** Laboratorium. 2015. 7(2):71–91
  **URL:** Quercus/readings

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

   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

   Module: Greek Society, Greece Today
   Topic: Tourism, Economy
   Author: INSETE
   Publication: insete.gr

   Module: Greece Today
   Topic: Greek as a second language
   Author: Nikos Papandreou
   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
   Module: Greece Today
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.thepsrueeats.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/

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