

## **CLAS 181B: THE GREEKS AND THEIR DANCES**

**Tu/Fr 1:30-3:00pm; Rabb 345**

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Office Hours: Tu/Fr 10:00-11:30 and by appointment

\* **DISABILITIES:** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me at the first meeting of the class.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Ancient Greek Culture was, to a significant extent, a dance culture. In the archaic and classical periods, women and men sang and danced in honor of the gods at important moments of their lives, such as marriage rituals and celebrations for athletic and martial victories. In classical Athens, most strikingly, the majority of the citizens participated in the choruses that the city sponsored for the public performances of drama and choral poetry. Dancing in a chorus was an honor, a pleasure, a right, and a duty for the male citizens, a ritual obligation and a significant social occasion for the women of the city. In this course, we will explore various aspects of this dance culture including different genres of choral poetry, tragedy and comedy (genres that incorporate choruses), and philosophical texts that reflect on the origins and the role of choral performance. We will discuss the occasions that call for choral performance, the identity of the dancers, the ethical, political, and philosophical messages of the poetry that accompanies their performance, and the role that the community attributes to their dance.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

You are expected to have read the assigned material before coming to class and be ready to participate in our ongoing discussion, offering your thoughts on them and their relation to the secondary material we will be reading. You will give two presentations: a) a

10min. presentation on one of the secondary readings summarizing and offering your evaluation of its argument; and b) a 30min. presentation on a day and material of your choice. For this longer presentation you will focus on the issues that you find most interesting in the assigned primary passages and you will comment on how the secondary readings address these issues. You may always contribute your own material (primary or secondary) as you will also lead the discussion that will follow your presentation. Finally, you will write a research paper (10-12 pages) which may stem from the longer presentation. I will meet with each one of you regarding the research and writing process and you will be asked to turn in a draft of the paper a few weeks before the final submission (see schedule).

\* Attendance is required. More than 3 unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your grade.

\* Late Essays will not be accepted without documentation of a medical or family emergency.

#### **EVALUATION**

Preparation, Participation, and Written Responses: 30%

Presentations and Leading of Discussion: 30%

Final Paper: 40%

#### **BOOKS**

##### **Required**

- S. Esposito (2003) *Euripides: Four Plays: Medea, Hippolytus, Heracles, Bacchae*, Boston University
- R. Fagles and W. B. Stanford (1984) *The Oresteia: Agamemnon; The Libation Bearers; The Eumenides*, Penguin Classics
- Aristophanes, *Four Comedies: Lysistrata, The Acharnians, The Congresswomen, The Frogs*, University of Michigan Press

## Optional

M. Barnard (1999) *Sappho: A New Translation*, University of California Press

C.D.C. Reeve, *Plato Republic*, Hackett Publishing Company; 3Rev Ed edition

## SCHEDULE

**\* All assignments are due on the days on which they appear**

**Tu. January 15:** Introduction

**Fr. January 18:** Songs, Gods, and Muses: Hesiod, *Theogony*

**Tu. January 22:** Ideal Performers and Ideal Effects of Choral Performance: *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*

Secondary Readings: Lonsdale, Steven H. "Homeric Hymn to Apollo: Prototype and Paradigm of Choral Performance" *Arion* 3.1 (1995) 25-40.

**Fr. January 25:** Female Rites of Passage and Dances of Military Training: Plato, *Laws*, Bk.2; Sappho fr. 1, 16, 31, 44; Alcman fr. 1, 3

**Tu. January 29:** Tyrtaeus fr. 8, 9

Secondary Readings

▪ Lardinois, A., "Subject and Circumstance in Sappho's Poetry" *TAPhA* 124 (1994) 57-84.

▪ Shey, H. J. "Tyrtaeus and the Art of Propaganda" *Arethusa* 9.1 (1976) 5-28.

**Fr. February 1:** Male Athletic Victories: Bacchylides fr.3, 5, 17, 18

Secondary Readings: Kurke, L. (2000) "The Strangeness of "Song Culture": Archaic Greek Poetry" 58-87 in Taplin, O. (ed.) *Literature in the Greek & Roman Worlds: A New Perspective*, (Oxford University Press)

**Tu. February 12:** Pindar *Olympian* 1, *Pythian* 1, *Nemean* 3, 5.

Secondary Readings: Kurke, L. "The Economy of *Kudos*," 131-163 in Dougherty, C. and Kurke, L. *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics*, Cambridge (Cambridge University Press).

**Fr. February 15:** Dancing like Women and Old Men: Emotions, Politics, and the Athenian Citizen - Athenian Tragedy: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

**Tu. February 19: No Class - Midterm Recess**

**Fr. February 22: No Class - Midterm Recess**

**Tu. February 26:** Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*

**Fr. February 29:** Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers*

**Tu. March 4:** Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

Secondary Readings: Foley, H. "Choral Identity in Greek Tragedy," *CPh* 98 (2003) 1-30.

**Fr. March 7:** Euripides' *Bacchae*

**Tu. March 11:** Euripides' *Medea*

**Fr. March 14:** Secondary Readings:

- Gould, J. (1996) "Tragedy and Collective Experience" 217-243
- Goldhill, S. (1996) "Collectivity and Otherness – The Authority of the Tragic Chorus: Response to Gould" 244-256 in Silk, M.S. (ed.) (1996) *Tragedy and the Tragic*, Oxford (Oxford University Press).

**Tu. March 18:** "Dancing" like the Poet: the Choral Voice of Authority - Aristophanic Comedy: Aristophanes, *Acharnians*

**Fr. March 21: No Class - Good Friday**

**Tu. March 25:** Aristophanes, *Frogs*

Secondary Readings: Foley, H.P., "Tragedy and Politics in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*" 117-141 in Segal, E. (ed.) (1996) *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*, Oxford (Oxford University Press).

**Fr. March 28:** Secondary Readings: Dover, K..J., “The Chorus of Initiates in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*” *Fondation Hardt, Entretiens* 38 (1991) 173-193.

**Tu. April 1:** The Origins, Erotics, and Dangers of Dance: Xenophon’s *Symposium* I-IV

**Fr. April 4:** Xenophon’s *Symposium* V-IX

Secondary Readings

Wohl, V. (2004) “Dirty Dancing: Xenophon’s *Symposium*” 337-363 in Murray P. and Wilson, P. (eds.) *Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousike in the Classical Athenian City*, Oxford (Oxford University Press)

**\*Essay Draft Due**

**Tu. April 8:** Plato, *Republic*, Bk.10

**Fr. April 11:** Aristotle, *Poetics* (selections)

Secondary Readings: Nehamas, A. “Plato and the Mass Media,” 279-302 in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*, Princeton (Princeton University Press).

**Tu. April 15:** Plato, *Laws*, Bk.2

**Fr. April 18:** Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk.8

Secondary Readings: Nightingale, A. “Liberal Education in Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*” 133-173 in Too, Y.L. (ed.) (2001) *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, (Brill).

**Tu. April 22: No Class - Pass Over/Spring Recess**

**Fr. April 25: No Class - Pass Over/Spring Recess**

**Tu. April 29:** Conclusions

**Fr. May 2: Final Essay Due (midnight)**