

Course Assessment Plan for Classics 323, Ancient Greek Religion

Classics 323 will be assessed in order to determine how well it is meeting the general principles and specific General Learning Objectives of the Arts and Humanities category of the General Education Curriculum as well as objectives within the undergraduate program of the Department of Greek and Latin.

Assessment will take place after the next quarter in which the course is taught and thereafter biennially, assuming the course is taught often enough (typically, the course is offered every other Autumn quarter, but on occasion is offered during a Spring quarter instead, in which case it will be assessed at that time).

Classics 323 will be assessed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Chair of the Department of Greek and Latin, unless one of them is the instructor of the course, in which case another faculty member will be substituted. The following procedures and indicators will be used in assessing the course:

- 1) Student evaluations, both the quantitative SEI and discursive statements written by the students (anonymously) at the end of the course
- 2) Written report of class visit by a peer evaluator
- 3) Review of current essay exams and quizzes and of a sampling of answers that students wrote for the essay exams
- 4) Review of course syllabi for each iteration of the course.

Items 3 and 4 will be maintained on file in the Department so that the progress of the course can be monitored and evaluated as the course evolves and to enable the department to address any major concerns or drift from the established goals and standards. These materials will also be valuable should a different instructor from the originating instructor be assigned to teach the course

How Classics 323 Meets the Learning Goals and Objectives of the "Arts and Humanities Historical Studies" component of the General Education Program

Arts and Humanities Historical Studies coursework is intended to "develop students' knowledge of how past events influence today's society and help them understand how humans view themselves." Students are expected to "acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity; display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding; and think, speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts." (Taken from the General Education Program Learning Goals and Objectives, last updated 12/27/2007). Classics 323 does so as follows:

- ...develop students' knowledge of how past events influence today's society and help them understand how humans view themselves:

In Classics 323, we will examine, among other things, how Greek religion significantly influenced the development of Christianity in ways that are still evident in many contemporary forms of Christianity (e.g., the centrality of a symbolic sacrificial meal that unites worshippers in both ancient Greek religions and in Christianity). We will also examine the manner in which religious beliefs and practices, by their very nature, provide important sources of identity for worshippers, individually and as groups, and how this potentially leads to either heightened unity or divisiveness between groups (a pattern played out repeatedly in the contemporary world).

- ...acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity;

In Classics 323, we will look closely at the ways in which Greek religious beliefs and practices were inextricably intertwined with other important Greek social phenomena (e.g., politics, athletic competitions, inter-familial alliances) and how religion both motivates and validates other choices made within a society or group.

- ...display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding

In addition to examining the relationship between Greek religion and early Christianity and the ways in which religions underpin identity (which I have already mentioned), Classics 323 will look at issues that are relevant to virtually all religions (and indeed to many non-religious phenomena cross culturally) such as the common human desire to ascribe events to divine or supernatural agency – a desire attested to nowadays even in many of the more popular television shows and movies marketed to college-aged students. In many lecture/discussions within the course, I will be drawing on examples of phenomena similar to those we are studying for the Greeks, that are taken from other cultures, ancient and contemporary, from around the world (for example, our study of purification procedures will draw on comparanda from Judaism, from tribal Africa and from contemporary America).

- ...think, speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts:.

This will be done largely via the essay exams in the course, although the instructor will also strongly encourage discussion during class.