**SYLLABUS: CLASSICS 3205**

**RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD**

**Autumn 2022**

**Course overview**

**Classroom information**

Format of instruction: in person lecture and discussion

Meeting Days/Times: Tuesdays-Thursdays 2:20-3:40 pm

Location: 490 Marathon Hall

**Instructor information**

Instructor: Sophia Degrecia

Email address: classics@osu.edu

Phone number: 614 292-2744

**Course description**

Ancient Greek and Roman writers were among the first in history to theorize and challenge the concepts of race, ethnicity, and gender on which their societies rested and to propose alternatives to them from within the intellectual matrices of science, ethnography, and philosophy. This course is an introduction to these concepts, and to the social and political practices that stemmed from them. Ancient notions, after all, continue to shape modern debates, given the foundational role of the classics in many areas of ideological interest. Specifically, this course will examine how notions of ethnic or racial difference were embedded in, or maintained by, forms of imperial rule, especially in the Roman empire; how gender was theorized by Greek intellectuals but also used as a basis for exclusion of women from the political sphere at Athens; and how various theorists pushed back against or challenged dominant ideas in these areas, even if that did not lead to lasting social change (e.g., by Herodotos in the realm of ethnicity, and Plato and Aristophanes in the realm of gender). Students will learn how to analyze the relevant concepts, but also how to study them against the background of social practice and the intellectual goals of ancient authors. The goal will be for students to understand how notions about such human taxonomies were socially constructed, used, and challenged.

**Course learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

* understand how different classical ideas about race, ethnicity, and gender emerged from different intellectual and political matrices of ancient thought
* correlate different theories of race, ethnicity, and gender to social practices of inclusion and exclusion, whether relating to citizenship in Athens and Rome or to imperial hegemony of one people over another
* recognize how different groups benefited from, or were oppressed or excluded by, these different ideas when put into practice
* grasp the power of intellectual critique to challenge dominant notions and carve out spaces of inclusion, even if only liminal ones, in the domains of philosophy and literature

**General Education**

**GE Category: Race, Ethnicity and Gender Foundation**

**GOAL 1**: Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how historically and socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, and gender, and possibly others, shape perceptions, individual outcomes, and broader societal, political, economic, and cultural systems.

**Expected Learning Outcomes**

1.1 Successful students are able to describe and evaluate the social positions and representations of categories including race, gender, and ethnicity, and possibly others.

1.2 Successful students are able to explain how categories including race, gender, and ethnicity continue to function within complex systems of power to impact individual lived experiences and broader societal issues.

1.3 Successful students are able to analyze how the intersection of categories including race, gender, and ethnicity combine to shape lived experiences.

1.4 Successful students are able to evaluate social and ethnical implications of studying race, gender, and ethnicity.

**GOAL 2**: Successful students will recognize and compare a range of lived experiences of race, gender, and ethnicity.

**Expected Learning Outcomes**

2.1 Successful students are able to demonstrate critical self-reflection and critique of their social positions and identities.

2.2 Successful students are able to recognize how perceptions of difference shape one’s own attitudes, beliefs, or behavior.

2.3 Successful students are able to describe how the categories of race, gender, and ethnicity influence the lived experiences of others.

This course will hone students’ analytical skills for thinking about race, ethnicity, and gender by asking them to identify and work with those concepts in a context that is at once familiar and radically different: classical antiquity. Students will be expected to understand how those concepts were defined differently and applied within societies organized very differently from our own: Athenian democracy and the Roman empire. How did they function to include and exclude people based on taxonomies of ethnicity and gender? How were different social groups impacted by these concepts? The course will also consider how ancient writers modulated or directly challenged the hierarchies of power created by these taxonomies. Even if their thinking did not result in meaningful social change, the course will explore the power of critical self-reflection and critique and how ancient narratives could expose and explore the injustices and inequalities baked into classical modes of social organization. Ultimately, classical writers treated these taxonomies as ethical problems to be explored, which is why they are ideal for the GE purposes of this course.

**Course materials**

All course materials will be placed on the course website. The course will focus on close readings of insightful ancient texts and exploratory discussions of their main ideas, not on the acquisition of knowledge in bulk from modern handbooks.

**Class meetings**

Our meetings will include both lectures and discussion. Discussion – especially the exploration of Greek ideas and their modern equivalents – is an essential part of the course. Bring the assigned readings for each unit to class (whether in hard copy, printouts, or electronic versions). You must read the relevant texts *before* the discussion. Do not use social media during class time. You may also not record the classroom discussions.

**Attendance**: Attendance will be taken at every class meeting, and students are expected to attend each class. Each student is permitted two unexcused absences. Any student with three or more unexcused absences may see his or her final grade reduced. Note that absences beyond the allotted two are excused only for medical and family emergencies. All students requesting such excuses will be required to provide written documentation in advance of the absence, if possible.

**Assignments and grades**

Your **final grade** for the course will be calculated via the following formula: quizzes: 25%; classroom participation and preparedness: 15%; papers: 60% See above for the impact of unexcused absences on your grade.

Quizzes will be given without warning at the beginning of class. Their purpose will be to ensure that you are doing the readings, which is essential if we are to discuss them. They will cover the readings assigned and discussed in the week before the quiz, including on the day of the quiz. The quizzes will focus mostly on factual information (who, when, what) and the contents of texts, so that the discussions can focus on their interpretation and evaluation. I will drop the lowest quiz grade in the calculation of the final grade. I imagine them occuring every two weeks or so, amounting to a total of no more than six (see schedule below for suggested dates).

As this is a course about ideas, including speech and persuasion, **participation in classroom discussion is essential**. This includes doing the reading in advance, being able to answer basic questions about them, and, most importantly, having thought about the implications of these ideas, their strength, weaknesses, and relevance, and being willing to take on the questions that are posed in class about them. To faciliate your preparation for the classroom discussion, you will be given **study questions** to accompany each set of readings, for each week. If you have thought about these questions and have preliminary answers to them, you should have little problem with the participation component of the course.

Your main assignments for this course will be **a series of six short papers** assigned every two weeks. These will start out short (in the form of responses to specific readings or answers to specific questions) and will build up to more synthetic arguments (drawing on a number of texts read for the course), so building up from 2-3 pages long to 3-5 pages long. Sample assignments might include comparing the underlying assumptions about the religions of foreign groups in contemporary texts (e.g., the Hebrew Bible and the Presocratic philosophers); critically examining the political regimes that ancient writers deemed as “natural” to foreign versus domectic groups (e.g., in Herodotos); exploring the tension between the rhetoric of citizenship for women and the political and legal norms that gave it substance or limited women’s rights in practice (e.g., comparing Athenian legal texts with the scenarios of Aristophanes). The overarching goal of the papers will be to excavate our sources’ underlying assumptions, to identify ideologically significant silences as well as things that are explicitly said, and to understand how ideology and social practice shape each other. I will give students separate instructions for the qualities that I am looking for in a good paper.

**Grading scale**

93–100: A

90–92.9: A-

87–89.9: B+

83–86.9: B

80–82.9: B-

77–79.9: C+

73–76.9: C

70 –72.9: C-

67 –69.9: D+

60 –66.9: D

Below 60: E

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Ethnography; the debateover *nomos-physis* (culture-nature); and geographic determinism**

Tuesday, August 23, 2022 Thursday, August 25, 2022

Readings from Xenophanes of Kolophon; Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*; Herodotos, *Histories*; and Aristotle, *Politics*.

**Week 2: Athenian democracy and citizenship: inclusions and exclusions**

Tuesday, August 30, 2022 Thursday, September 1, 2022

Readings from C. Blackwell, ‘Athenian Democracy: An Overview’ & ‘The Assembly’; Ellen Wood (‘Demos versus “We, The People”: Freedom and Democracy Ancient and Modern’); and video presentations by Melissa Schwartzberg (‘What did democracy really mean in Athens?’) and Brett Hennig (‘What if we replaced politicians with randomly selected people?’)

Pop Quiz #1 may be given in this week.

**Week 3: Women and Athenian political ideals**

Tuesday, September 6, 2022 Thursday, September 8, 2022

Readings: Perikles’ Funeral Oration & the Plague at Athens in Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Paper #1 due on Thursday, September 8, 2022.

**Week 4: The social life of Athenian women; skin color and the construction of gender at Athens**

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 Thursday, September 15, 2022

Readings: D. Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens*, ch. 9: ‘Full Citizens: Female’; Sarah Bond, ‘Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color’; Maria Sassi, *The Science of Man in Ancient Greece* (selections); Tim Whitmarsh, ‘Black Achilles.’

Pop Quiz #2 may be given in this week.

**Week 5: Female citizenship on trial**

Tuesday, September 20, 2022 Thursday, September 22, 2022

Readings: pseudo-Demosthenes, *Against Neaira*.

Paper #2 due on Thursday, September 22, 2022.

**Week 6: Imagining an occupy movement by women**

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 Thursday, September 29, 2022

Readings: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*.

Pop Quiz #3 may be given in this week.

**Week 7: Imagining a political take-over by women**

Tuesday, October 4, 2022 Thursday, October 6, 2022

Readings: Aristophanes, *Assembly Women*.

Paper #3 due on Thursday, October 6, 2022.

**Week 8: An argument for the equality of women**

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 Thursday, October 13, 2022 (No Class, Autumn Break)

Readings: Plato, *Republic* (books 1 and 5); *Laws* (selections); Arlene Saxonhouse, ‘The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato.’

Pop Quiz #4 may be given in this week.

**Week 9: Ethnicity, Justice, and Athenian empire**

Tuesday, October 18, 2022 Thursday, October 20, 2022

Readings: Ian Morris, ‘The Greater Athenian State’; Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, selections (The debate at Sparta; The Mytilene debate; The Melian dialogue).

Paper #4 due on Thursday, October 20, 2022.

**Week 10: Ethnicity, difference, and Roman citizenship**

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 Thursday, October 27, 2022

Readings: Livy, *History of Rome* (the myth of the foundation); Cicero, *On Behalf of Archias the Poet*; Emperor Claudius, decree on the admission of Gauls to the Roman Senate

**Week 11: Narratives of inclusion and exclusion in the Roman polity**

Tuesday, November 1, 2022 Thursday, November 3, 2022

Readings: Pliny, *Natural History* 3.5 on the centrality of Italy; Juvenal, *Satire* 3 on all “those people” coming to Rome; Statius, *Silvae* 4.5 Ode to Septimius Severus, a senator of North African origin; Nandini Pandey, ‘Roman Roots of Racial Capitalism’.

Pop Quiz #5 may be given in this week.

**Week 12: Universal Romanness?**

Tuesday, November 8, 2022 Thursday, November 10, 2022

Readings: Aelius Aristeides, *Regarding Rome* (selection); Caracalla, *Antonine Constitution*, 212 AD, with Cliff Ando, ‘Law, Citizenship and the Antonine Revolution’; Tony Honoré, ‘Roman Law AD 200-400: From Cosmopolis to Rechtstaat?’

Paper #5 due on Thursday, November 10, 2022.

**Week 13: The Roman birth of German nationalism?**

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 Thursday, November 17, 2022

Readings: Cassius Dio, *Roman History* (the battle of the Teutoberg Forest); Tacitus, *Germania*; Nancy Shumate, *Nation, Empire, Decline: Studies in Rhetorical Continuity from the Romans to the Modern Era* (selection); Martin Ruehl, ‘German Horror Stories: Teutomania and the Ghosts of Tacitus.’

Pop Quiz #6 may be given in this week.

**Week 14: Ancient notions of race and modern debates**

Tuesday, November 22, 2022 Thursday, November 24, 2022 (No Class Thanksgiving)

Readings: B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (selections); Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (selections).

**Week 15: TBD**

Tuesday, November 29, 2022 Thursday, December 1, 2022

TBD.

Paper #6 due on Thursday, December 1, 2022.

**Week 16: TBD**

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 (Last day of regularly scheduled class)

TBD.

TBD.

**Other course policies**

**Academic integrity policy**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

* Committee on Academic Misconduct (<https://oaa.osu.edu/academic-integrity-and-misconduct>)
* Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (go.osu.edu/ten-suggestions)

**Student Services and Advising**

University Student Services can be accessed through BuckeyeLink. More information is available here: <https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/>

Advising resources for students are available here: <http://advising.osu.edu>

**Statement on Title IX**

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <https://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)

**Commitment to a diverse and inclusive learning environment**

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

**Your mental health**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learn, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. No matter where you are engaged in distance learning, The Ohio State University’s Student Life Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) is here to support you. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, on-demand resources are available at go.osu.edu/ccsondemand. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766, and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The Ohio State Wellness app is also a great resource available at go.osu.edu/wellnessapp.

**Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities**

Requesting accommodations: The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Accessibility of course technology: This course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system). If you need additional services to use this technology, please request accommodations with your instructor.

* Canvas accessibility (go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility)