The Ohio State University
First-Year Seminar Program
Course Proposal

Course Information

1. Attach a syllabus that includes the following (sample syllabi can be found at http://firstyearseminars.osu.edu):

    - the course goals
    - a brief description of the content
    - the distribution of meeting times
    - a weekly topical outline
    - a listing of assignments
    - grade assessment information (A-E or S/U)
    - required textbooks and/or reading list
    - the academic misconduct and disability services statements (sample statements can be found at http://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/asc-syllabus-elements)

Instructor Information

2. Attach a brief biographical paragraph that includes the current research interests, teaching awards and honors, and undergraduate courses taught by the participating instructor(s).

Tom Hawkins, Classics
_____
Proposer's Name and Primary Academic Unit (please print)

Associate Professor
_____
Proposer's Title

hawkins.312@osu.edu
_____
Proposer's e-mail Address

Feb. 26, 2024
_____
Submission Date

_____
Approval of Department Chair of Academic Unit (please print)

Please return this form and any attachments to Todd Bitters, bitters.4@osu.edu, no later than MARCH 1.

ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY: THE GAME
Arts and Sciences 1138.**, First-Year Seminar
1 Semester-hour Credit
Day/Time   Room

Instructor Name: Tom Hawkins   **Office Hours: TBA**
e-mail: hawkins.312@osu.edu

Course Description

We travel back in time to ancient Greece, where the foundations of democracy were laid in order to share a role-playing experience of some of the key debates that would determine the future of democracy as a political theory and as a practical template for actual governance. As we work through this project together, we will have three primary aims:

- Learn the earliest history of democracy in ancient Greece (key players, debates, dates, etc.)
- By studying a version of democracy quite different from the structures of democracy in the US, we will better understand the range of possible variations within the umbrella concept of democracy.
- We will be better informed citizens who are better able to analyze, critique and participate in the political debates that are shaping our world and charting a path for our future.

To achieve these goals, we will follow the structure of a game created by the Reacting to the Past Consortium, which has designed a host of similar games for a huge range of key historical moments across the globe. The designers of *The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 BCE* assume that we have no prior experience of either ancient Greek history or role-playing games. Thus, our class is organized around four units. We begin with four preparatory sessions in which we will get to know each other, learn about the mechanics of the game, and study the relevant historical context of ancient Athens. Next, we have six weeks of the game itself, with topics and debates prepared in advance for us. After the game has concluded, we have three sessions of debriefing and expanding upon our thinking about democracy with discrete readings about how ancient political theories inform and shape our contemporary realities. And finally, our final session will be built around a micro-game that will take us to a closely related Athenian prequel to 403 BCE, which had been our central focus of our longer game.

Texts

The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 BCE, 4th edition, by J. Ober, N.J. Norman and M.C. Carnes. W.W. Norton and Co., 2015.

Course Policies

This class offers an unusual and gamified approach to studying history. Like any role playing game, the full effect can only be achieved if everyone does their part. To that end, attendance and participation are critical. Everyone will be expected to:

- Attend every class session – our game requires all of us to be present and active
- Be ready to play your assigned role (some weeks will require more than others)
- Write two, one-page papers (your role will determine the due date)
- Deliver two short speeches on behalf of your party's agenda

Grading

This course will use a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grade. A Satisfactory grade will be assigned to any student who achieves at least 70% of the following points.

Attendance: 70 points (5 points per session)
Papers: 10 points (5 each)
Speeches: 10 points (5 each)
Participation: 10 points

Academic Misconduct

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/**.

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. 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; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Biographical Statement

After brief careers as an engineer and a classical guitarist, Tom Hawkins joined the Classics Department at OSU in 2005, where he teaches undergraduate courses on ancient Greek myth and literature and their enduring legacies. He has written one book (and co-edited another) on aggressive, humorous, raunchy and satirical literature from ancient Greece and another on how Greco-Roman antiquity has been adapted by Haitian authors. He is currently working on a project focused on nostalgia – about Homer's *Odyssey* in an era of climate change. In 2015 he was selected (with Ken Rinaldo, Art and Technology) as part of the Executive Dean's Interdisciplinary Team Teaching Project to co-develop 'Odysseus in the Oculus Rift', and in 2016 he won a Ratner Distinguished Teaching Award.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 – General introduction to The Game and our plan for the semester
READ: Selections from Plato's *Republic* (*The Threshold of Democracy*, 95-147)

DUE: ***

Week 2 – Assignment of roles and jobs; logistics of the Game; Plato on *Dêmokratia*
READ: Selections from Plato's *Republic* (*Threshold*, 147-199)
DUE: ***

Week 3 – Historical Context for The Game
READ: Introduction and Historical Background (*Threshold*, 2-52)
DUE: ***

Week 4 – Ancient Athenian *Dêmokratia* – how it worked
READ: Pericles' 'Funeral Oration' (*Threshold*, 89-94)
DUE: ***

Week 5 – Game Session 1: Reconciliation Agreement
READ: Selection from Xenophon's *Hellenica* (*Threshold*, 226-235)
DUE: ***

Week 6 – Game Session 2: The Electorate
READ: Selection from Plato's *Protagoras* (*Threshold*, 200-202; and review pp. 147-171)
DUE: ***

Week 7 – Game Session 3: Social Welfare
READ: Selection from Xenophon's *The Economist* (*Threshold*, 213-226)
DUE: ***

Week 8 – Game Session 4: Trial Day
READ: Plato's *Apology* (pdf on Carmen) and review *Threshold* 118-147
DUE: ***

Week 9 – Game Session 5: Governance
READ: Selection from Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (*Threshold*, 202-208)
DUE: ***

Week 10 – Game Session 6: Remilitarization and the Restoration of the Athenian Empire
READ: Selection from Plutarch's *Life of Cimon* (*Threshold*, 209-213)
DUE: ***

Week 11 – Debriefing on The Game
READ: 'Lessons of Demopolis', by Josiah Ober
DUE: ***

Week 12 – Rules or Citizens
READ: 'Rules of Citizens', by Melissa Lane
DUE: ***

Week 13 – Opposites of Democracy
READ: 'Why We Love Tyrants', by David L. Smith, 2018 and 'The Lure of Fascism' by Jonathon Wolff, 2020
DUE: ***

Week 14 – Concluding Micro-Game: 'Athens Besieged'
READ: Details TBA
DUE: ***