

Modern Greek H250

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I have taught this course for about six years with much success as Classics H223. Students, who have taken this course, often apply for the Honors Athens class. The course is challenging in that it asks students to think about the construction of identities over two thousand years by looking at interdisciplinary texts. We begin by asking how we can know the past. Then we move to a theoretical discussion of national, ethnic, gender, and racial identity and then we examine in detail texts of literature, history. Thus students acquire knowledge on how to analyze texts of epic, tragedy, lyric poetry, short story, history, and the novel. We look at how these different modes of textuality represent identity, examining the difference between history and myth, art and practical discourses. There is much emphasis on discussion and class debates.

The assignments ask students to think critically about the difference between modern and ancient form of identification. Was there a national identity in Homer? If not, why not? What did Pericles mean by Athenian citizenship? Do we have anything similar to this construction? Why do modern novels present their characters as shaky and volatile? Why do they portray identities as confused or unstable? Does literature problematize identity or is identity itself paradoxical? Is discursive writing superior in conveying reality to art? Or does art, with its refracted gaze, offer us something missing in history?

Unlike a regular course, students are asked to think as much about the modes of representing the world as the representation itself. They will have to appreciate the different ways that societies, in this case within the Greek tradition, come to look at the self in relationship to the other.

The course should fulfill the Arts and Sciences GEC requirement. I am seeking this status for the course.