

## **Ancient Greek Festivals**

**CLSS 848 / HSAR 831 / ARCG 844 / RLST 858**

**Thursdays, 3:30-5:20**

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One of the most prominent expressions of ancient Greek piety was the festival, in which poetry was sung, athletic and artistic contests were held, animals were sacrificed, and group identities were negotiated and reaffirmed. In the Archaic and Classical periods, c. 750-323 BCE, festivals could be minor, local, single-day undertakings, or week-long, multi-city affairs; yet in each instance, they were an expression of identity, community, competition, and devotion to the gods. Poetry and sculpture served to commemorate these events long after the festival itself had passed, and early literary genres and artistic styles took root within and developed alongside the festivals, gods, and individuals that they were intended to commemorate. Bringing together literary, archaeological, art historical, and anthropological evidence, this interdisciplinary seminar will consider Archaic and Classical Greek festivals within the social and religious contexts in which they were performed. We will pay particular attention to the literary and historical texts (Hymns, the "recension" of Homeric Epic at the Panathenaic festival, Attic tragedy and comedy performed during festivals to Dionysos, Epinician, etc.) and the visual representations that depict the major festivals in Greece, as well as to the particular ways that festivals exploited visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, or gustatory reactions in their worshippers.

An overseas trip to Greece, funded generously by Yale's Institute for Sacred Music, will take place from **November 15-26**; it is a **required** component for those taking the course for credit. This opportunity is meant to afford valuable experience on the ground, so to speak, in the sacred spaces studied during the course of the semester. In Greece, we will divide our time between Athens, Attica (Eleusis, Brauron), the Peloponnese (Olympia, Isthmia), and Delphi. Each student will be expected to deliver two on-site presentations of about 20 minutes, one related to his/her research paper, and another that will be assigned by the two instructors. Each presentation should be accompanied by a one-page handout that provides the class with pertinent information, such as a site plan, literary text, and relevant bibliography.

Working Itinerary:

- November 15-16: Depart US night of 15, arrive in Athens on November 16<sup>th</sup>.
- November 16: Evening: Akropolis Museum, if open late. Overnight Athens.
- November 17: Depart Athens; head to Brauron in AM (Festivals to Artemis). Drive after to Delphi (2.5 hours from Attica). Overnight Delphi.
- November 18: Delphi: Site and Museum I. Overnight Delphi.
- November 19: Delphi: Site and Museum II. Depart afternoon for Olympia via Patras (3 hour drive). Overnight Olympia.
- November 20: Olympia: Site and Museum I. Overnight Olympia.
- November 21: Olympia: Site and Museum II. Overnight Olympia.
- November 22: Depart Olympia, return to Athens via Isthmia (stop for lunch, site, museum). Overnight Athens.
- November 23: Akropolis in morning, including Theater of Dionysos. Afternoon and evening: Thanksgiving dinner at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for all students, hosted by ASCSA
- November 24: National Archaeological Museum, AM; Athenian Agora & Kerameikos, afternoon. Alternatively: Epigraphical Museum, Goulandris Museum.
- November 25: Final day in Athens, field trip to Eleusis site and Museum in morning. Evening for packing.
- November 26: Return USA from Athens.