

Classical Studies 125 - Community, Neighborhood and Family in Ancient Athens and Modern Philadelphia

Dr. Ralph M. Rosen, rosen@sas.upenn.edu

Subject/Discipline: [Classical Studies](#)

School: [University of Pennsylvania](#)

Project Area:

Spring 1996

1) January 17: Introduction

General discussion focusing on: what is the point of studying antiquity? what does it mean to say that we can "learn" from the past? what kind of knowledge can the humanistic disciplines, and Classics in particular, offer us? We will consider the notion of "classical culture" as a construct. How is the term "classical" used and abused in our own discourse? What makes fifth-century Athens an appropriate period to study for comparison to a modern urban culture? What is "interpretation?"

2) January 24: Democracy Ancient and Modern

- 1) Pseudo-Xenophon's *Constitution of Athens* ("The Old Oligarch"). [bulkpack]
- 2) Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* (selections). [bulkpack]
- 3) Sagan, *The Honey and the Hemlock: Democracy and Paranoia in Ancient Athens and Modern America*, pp. 1-34.
- 4) Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Classical Athens* pp. 1-23
- 5) Strauss, "The Melting Pot, the Mosaic, and the Agora," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* [seminar room]

Short essay topic: Based on the above reading assignments, what, if anything, is familiar to us as Americans and Philadelphians in the Athenian conceptions of democracy? Pay particular attention to practical, day-to-day manifestations of democracy.

3) January 31: The Ideology of Citizenship, Athenian and Modern

- 1) Thucydides, Pericles' "Funeral Oration" [bulkpack]
- 2) "Share and Rights: "Citizenship" Greek Style and American Style," text of lecture
by Martin Ostwald. [bulkpack]
- 3) Tyrrell and Brown, *Athenian Myths and Mythmaking*, pp. 189-215.
- 4) Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Classical Athens* pp. 24-48
- 5) Miscellaneous newspaper clippings on recent War Memorials.
[bulkpack]

Short essay topic: What are some of the differences and similarities between Athenian and American forms of commemorating war-dead, and what do they reveal about each culture's concept of citizenship?

4) February 7: Demes and Neighborhoods

- 1) D. Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica* , pp. 67-120. [bulkpack]
- 2) Sagan, *The Honey and the Hemlock: Democracy and Paranoia in Ancient Athens and Modern America*, pp. 320-35.
- 3) Adams, Bartelt etc., ch. 3, "Housing and Neighborhoods," pp. 66-99.
[seminar room]
- 4) Muller, Meyer and Cybriwsky, *Philadelphia: A Study of Conflicts and Social Cleavages*, pp. 1-33. [seminar room]
- 5) Miscellaneous clippings about "Philadelphia Regionalism," including the "Peirce Report" [bulkpack]

Short essay topic: Describe the particular interaction between local and central politics that you have experienced in your own cultural background. Are the issues you have read about this week in the context of Philadelphia and Athens redolent of your own experience in any ways? Be as specific as you can within the framework of a short essay.

5) February 14: "Human Nature," Morality and Politics I

- 1) Plato, *Gorgias*, pp. 75-149 (end).
- 2) Thucydides, "Melian Dialogue" [bulkpack]
- 3) Sagan, *The Honey and the Hemlock: Democracy and Paranoia in Ancient Athens and Modern America*, pp. 186-203, 228-47.

Short essay topic: Describe briefly the criticisms both Callicles and Socrates have of democracy, as revealed in the second half of the *Gorgias*. What do you think "citizenship" means to each of them?

6) February 21: "Human Nature," Morality and Politics II

- 1) Plato, *Republic*, pp.227-319; and editor's "Introduction," pp. xi-lxii.
- 2) Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, ch. 6: "Totalitarian Justice", pp. 86-119. [bulkpack]

Short essay topic: Does Plato's philosopher-king seem to you to be ideal ruler (as Plato would claim), or an uncompromising and dangerous dictator, as Popper would? Try to imagine such a ruler in Philadelphia: the mayor, e.g., as "philosopher-king." What are some of the positive and negative effects this might have?

7) February 28: Interpersonal Relations I

- 1) Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" [bulkpack]
- 2) K. J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour" [seminar room]

3) Fantham, et al., *Women in the Classical World*, pp. 68-135

4) Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* (selections) [bulkpack]

5) Wendy Kaminer, "Feminism's Identity Crisis" (from *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 1993) [seminar room]

Short essay topic: Compare Athenian conceptions of "family" and "household" to our own constructions of such concepts. Does Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* present a picture of marriage and family life that we recognize in our own society, or is it entirely alien to our sensibilities?

8) March 6: Interpersonal Relations II

1) *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, ed. Helene Foley, pp. 2-75 (text with commentary), 103-37 (interpretive essay).

2) Essays in back of volume: Marilyn Arthur Katz, "Politics and Pomegranates: An Interpretation of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter", pp. 212-42; Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality," 243-65.

Short essay topic: Why is an essay by Nancy Chodorow included in an edition of a Homeric Hymn?

9) March 20: Interpersonal Relations III

1) Plato, *Symposium*

2) D. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, pp. 1-71. [bulkpack]

3) Interview with David Halperin in *Favonius* [bulkpack]

4) Miscellaneous newspaper clippings on homosexuality. [bulkpack]

Short essay topic: Compare modern American with ancient Athenian attitudes towards homosexuality (male or female). How "gay" was/is the same-sex experience in Athens/America?

10) March 27: Education I

1) Aristophanes: *Clouds*

2) Weiler (1974), Chapter 5: "Politics and Education" (pp. 77-102)
[seminar room]

3 G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 15-58. [bulkpack]

4) Susan C. Jarratt, *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*:
Ch 4

"Sophistic Pedagogy, Then and Now" pp. 63-117. [bulkpack]

Short essay topic: Is it possible to describe an Athenian "ideology" of education?
How about for the Philadelphia public schools?

11) April 3: Education II

1) Plato, *Republic* (sections to be announced)

2) Selections from Benjamin Franklin on education [seminar room]

3) Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, Tipton, *The Good Society*, Ch. 5:
"Education: Technical and Moral", pp. 145-78. [seminar room]

Short essay topic: "On the whole Americans have done better in developing their educational resources for the transmission of specialized knowledge and skills than they have for citizenship." Comment briefly on this quotation. How did Plato address the conflict between "technical" and "moral" knowledge, and its transmission through education?

12) April 10: Public Events

[Short abstract of paper topic due today]

The following will be available in the seminar room:

1) R. Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theater*, pp. 1-30

2) S. G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia*, 1-48, 155-73.

3) Sophocles, *Antigone* [seminar room]

Short essay topic: In today's assignment you have seen several manifestations of public events that carried with them, in varying degrees, communitarian ideologies. What analogues to any of these can you find in your own experience?

How important are they to your sense of well being as a member of a community?

13) April 17: The Arts and Society

1) Aristophanes' *Frogs*

The following will be available in the Afro-American Seminar Room (4th Floor van Pelt):

2) Houston Baker, *Black Studies, Rap and the Academy* (1993)
(E184.7.B3.1993; also available in Rosengarten Reserve)

3) miscellaneous clippings

14) Assignment for April 24, 1996: Presentation of Papers

Return to some of the questions posed during the first class. Students will write a paper on any of the specific issues we studied during the semester, with particular focus on the general question about whether the study of a remote, and in this case ancient, culture can be useful for understanding our own culture, and possibly helpful in effecting social progress. Each student will speak for about 15 minutes about her/his paper topic.