

Ancient Athletics

Fall Term 2006 - CLST 300

Course Information

Professor: Michael Seaman
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Campus Mailbox: East College basement
Class Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 10:00 – 11:50
Class Location: Julian 368
Office: East College L-17
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00-1:00 and by appointment (with extra hours held prior to exams)
Office Phone: 658-4881, ext. 2 (best to contact me via e-mail)

Course Description

With the opening ceremonies in Turin, Italy of the 2006 Winter Olympics this past February, the modern Olympic Games turned 110 years old; they are a renewal, after a lapse of 1600 years, of the peaceful competition of the ancient Olympics, which continued for almost 1200 years (since 776 BC). We are well informed by ancient authors about the sites and facilities of ancient athletics, the sites, their monuments and programs and the history of these ancient contests. This course will study the world of sports in Greco-Roman Antiquity, with an emphasis on the social, political and economic impact the games had on ancient Greek and Roman civilization. Some themes of ancient athletics to be explored are: the origin of athletics, women in ancient athletics, motivations of athletes and their rewards, the architecture of athletics and the violence of ancient athletics. When appropriate, comparisons will be made between Greek and Roman athletics as well as between ancient and modern concepts of sports. Our time will be divided equally between ancient Greece, where we will look in depth at the ancient Olympics and the other pan-Hellenic athletic contests, and ancient Rome, home to the infamous gladiatorial contests and celebrated chariot races. No previous knowledge of ancient history is required.

Course Objectives

We will see, read, and learn what is known of ancient Greek and Roman athletics, especially in order to understand better ancient Greek Art, Athletics, and Politics, their relationship to each other and their contribution to peaceful competition. In this way, we may see in our own international sport an instrument to promote peace supplementing the efforts of the United Nations. Careful study of the primary literary sources, such as Homer, Pindar, Strabo, Lucian, Pausanias, Livy, Cicero, Seneca, Martial, Pliny, Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, and Plutarch, among others, as well as the material evidence consisting of athletic pictures on ancient vase paintings, ancient sculpture and other relevant artifacts, we will attempt to reconstruct the ancient Games. This course will foster critical thinking skills as well as historical inquiry and writing.

Course Requirements

Attendance and periodic participation is mandatory. Only one unexcused absence will be allowed. Any additional unexcused absence will lower a student's final grade by one percentage point (e.g. 87.4 to 86.4). Absences may be excused only with a notice from a doctor (if you are seriously ill, e.g. with a fever, please do not come to class). Though we will hold periodic discussions, this class is mostly lecture-based, in PowerPoint format with numerous slides of ancient art and architecture, and so you ought to take copious notes. Some of the more celebrated images may be given as image identifications on the exams and you might keep this in mind when taking your notes (any images that may possibly be required for identification on exams will be available for your review on Blackboard). One section of the exams may require you to recognize and comment on some of the more famous passages from the ancient sources, so you should make every effort to keep up with the assigned readings. A map quiz on the ancient Mediterranean, identical to a handout distributed on the second day of class, will be given on Tuesday, 12 September. The quiz on the ancient site of Olympia will be given on Thursday, 21 September. The midterm exam will be given in class on Thursday, 12 October, while the final exam is scheduled for Friday, 15 December from 8:30 to 11:30 AM. A six-page research paper written on a topic approved by me (a list of possible topics to explore will be distributed) is due on Tuesday, 21 November. Lastly, each student will prepare a fifteen-minute PowerPoint presentation on one of the topics listed below. The dates for these presentations are dispersed throughout the semester. Additional instructions for the presentations, including suggested bibliography, will be distributed in class. The student presentations form a supplement to the lectures and discussions and information from them may appear on the exams so you should take good notes during these presentations. The topics, with the presentation dates in parentheses, are as follows:

Greek Architecture

Temple of Hera, Olympia (9/14)
Starting Mechanisms in Ancient Greek Stadia (10/3)
Theatre of Dionysos, Athens (10/5)
Odeion of Pericles, Athens (10/5)
Athletic Facilities in Pergamon (10/26)

Greek Sculpture

Pedimental Sculpture, T. Zeus, Olympia (9/19)
Statue of Olympian Zeus by Pheidias (9/26)
Discobolus of Myron (9/26)
Doryphoros & Diodoumenos of Polykleitos (9/26)
Delphi Charioteer and St. Mark's Horses (9/28)
Apoxyomenos & Agias of Lysippos (11/9)

Roman Architecture

Baths of Diocletian (11/9)
Baths of Caracalla (11/9)
Colosseum (11/14)
Circus of Nero & Stadium of Domitian (11/28)
Circus Maximus (11/30)
Circus of Constantinople (11/30)

Grading

Grades will be calculated as follows:

5% Ancient Mediterranean map quiz
5% Quiz on the site of ancient Olympia (based on Swaddling, pp. 14-37)
10% Participation in periodic class discussions
15% Fifteen-minute oral presentation in PowerPoint format
15% Six-Page Paper
20% Midterm Exam
30% Final Exam

Required Texts

The following three books are required for the class and are available at the DePauw bookstore and all are on reserve in the library. At the writing of this syllabus, used copies are available online (e.g. at Amazon.com, Bookfinder.com, etc.). Periodically, I will place on Blackboard, or distribute in class, additional materials such as handouts with selections from ancient or modern texts. As previously stated, you may be examined on the material in these texts as well.

Futrell, A., *The Roman Games: Historical Sources in Translation* (Oxford, 2006).

Miller, S. G., *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources*. 3rd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2004).

Swaddling, J., *The Ancient Olympic Games*. 2d ed. (Austin, 1980).

Select Bibliography

The following list consists of additional recommended works, which you may wish to consult, particularly when researching your presentation and essay. Texts footnoted "L" below are on reserve in DePauw library; those footnoted "P" are available from my personal library.

Drees, L., *Olympia: Gods, Artists and Athletes* (New York, 1968).^P

Finley, M. I. and Pleket, H. W., *The Olympic Games: The First Thousand Years* (Edinburgh, 1976).^{P,L}

Futrell, A., *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin, 2000).^P

_____, *The Roman Games: A Sourcebook* (Oxford, 2006).^P

Gardiner, E. M., *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1930).^{P,L}

_____, *Olympia: Its History and Remains* (Oxford, 1925).^L

_____, *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (London, 1910).^L

Golden, M., *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1998).^P

Grant, M., *Gladiators* (New York, 1995).^P

Harris, H. A., *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (London, 1964).^L

Humphrey, J., *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (London, 1986).^{P,L}

Köhne, E., *Gladiators and Caesars: The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000).^L

Kyle, D., *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (New York, 2001).^L

_____, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden, 1987).^P

Mahoney, *Roman Sports and Spectacles: A Sourcebook* (Newburyport, MA, 2001).^P

Miller, S. G., *Ancient Greek Athletics* (New Haven, 2004).^{P,L}

_____, *Nemea: A Guide to the Site and Museum* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990).^{P,L}

Morgan, C., *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century BC* (New York, 1990).^L

Olivová, V., *Sports and Games in the Ancient World* (London, 1984).^P

Photinos, S., *Olympia: Complete Guide* (Athens, 1989).^P

Poliakoff, M. B., *Combat Sports in the Ancient World: Competition, Violence and Culture* (New Haven, 1987).^{P,L}

Potter, D. and Mattingly, D. J., *Life, Death and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1999).^{P,L}

Raschke, W., ed., *The Archaeology of the Olympics: The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity* (Madison, 1988).^{P,L}

Robinson, R. S., *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics* (Chicago, 1981).^P

Sansone, D., *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988).^{P,L}

Scanlon, T., *Eros and Greek Athletics* (New York, 2002).^{P,L}

_____, *Greek and Roman Athletics: A Bibliography* (Chicago, 1984).^L

Spivy, N., *The Ancient Olympics* (Oxford, 2004).^{P,L}

Sweet, W. E., *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook with Translations* (Oxford, 1987).^P

Tzachou-Alexandri, O., ed., *Mind and Body: Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece* (Athens, 1989)

Valavanis, P., *Hysplex: The Starting Mechanism in Ancient Greek Stadia* (Berkeley, 1999).^P

_____, *Games and Sanctuaries in Ancient Greece: Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea, Athens* (Los Angeles, 2004).^{P,L}

Wiedemann, T., *Emperors and Gladiators* (New York, 1995).^{P,L}

Yalouris, N., *Eternal Olympics: Art and History of Sport* (New Rochelle, NY, 1979).^P

Young, D. C., *A Brief History of the Olympic Games* (Oxford, 2004).^P

_____, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Revival* (Baltimore, 1996).^L

_____, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago, 1984).^P

Zissimou, T., *The Olympic Games in Antiquity* (Glyfada, Greece 2002).^P

Other Resources

The online version of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (<http://library.nlx.com>) contains concise entries on classical authors, gods, heroes, cities, and other classical topics. The printed version, 3rd edition, is available in the library reference area.

The Perseus Project (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>) contains an enormous number of classical texts, in the original and in English translation, and images. Students wishing to read more of the texts excerpted in Miller may wish to look here before purchasing books.

The Perseus Project also has an area of their web site devoted entirely to the ancient Olympics, which includes articles, QuickTime movies and slide shows (see <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Olympics>).

The Archaeological Institute of America maintains information about the ancient and modern Olympic Games on their website (see <http://www.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10198>).

The official web site of Olympia, Greece (when it is functioning) is <http://www.olympia.gr>. The official web site of the modern Olympic games is <http://www.olympic.org>. The official English language web sites of the upcoming Olympic games is Beijing (2008), Vancouver (2010), and London (2012) are <http://en.beijing2008.com>, <http://www.vancouver2010.com/en>, and <http://www.london2012.org/en>, respectively. The official web site of the Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy, which ran from 10 February to 26 February 2006, is <http://www.torino2006.org>. The official site of the US Olympic Team is <http://www.usolympicteam.com>.

The Internet Classics Archive (<http://classics.mit.edu/index.html>) contains many ancient texts and links to texts.

The University of Utrecht (Netherlands) maintains "Gladiator Site," a web site devoted to gladiatorial combat with good content, bibliography and links. The site is located at <http://www2.let.uu.nl/solis/kcv/gladiator>.

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1: In-class handouts

Thur., 24 Aug.: Introduction to Ancient Athletics; Organization and Bibliography; Evidence and Sources for Ancient Athletics

Oral Presentation topics chosen (first presentation in three weeks)

Week 2: Miller Introduction, nos. 1-2; *Iliad* of Homer, book 23 (posted on Blackboard)

Tue., 29 Aug.: Overview of Ancient Greek History and Culture

Sample map quiz of the ancient Mediterranean world distributed in class (map quiz in two weeks)

Thur., 31 Aug.: Bronze Age Athletics; Athletics in Homer's *Iliad*

Week 3: Swaddling pp. 7-12, 82-83

Tue., 5 Sept.: Athletics in Homer's *Odyssey* and other early Greek literature; The Rise of the Greek Athletic Festival

Thur., 7 Sept.: Ancient Olympics I: Origins of the Olympic Sanctuary and of its Games; The Site and Facilities of Olympia

Week 4: Miller nos. 3-19, 81-82, 87-112, 114-118, 179-181, appendix p. 201; Swaddling pp. 13-42, 53-55

Tue., 12 Sept.: Ancient Olympics II: Organization and Program of the Olympic Games

Map Quiz of the ancient Mediterranean world

Thur., 14 Sept.: Ancient Olympics III: Spectators, Officials, Rules, and Facilities

Oral Presentation: Temple of Hera at Olympia

Week 5: Miller nos. 83-86, 182-189; Swaddling pp. 42-52

Tue., 19 Sept.: Ancient Olympics IV: The Olympic Training and Trainers

Oral Presentations: Pedimental Sculpture of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia; Statue of Olympian Zeus by Pheidias

Thur., 21 Sept.: FILM: "The Real Olympics" (PBS)

Quiz on the plan of the ancient site of Olympia

Week 6: Miller nos. 20-27, 32-34, 37-72; Swaddling pp. 56-82, 83-89

Tue., 26 Sept.: Ancient Olympics V: Running and Field Events

Oral Presentations: Discobolus of Myron; Doryphoros and Diodoumenos of Polykleitos

Thur., 28 Sept.: Ancient Olympics VI: Combat Sports and Equestrian Events

Oral Presentation: Bronze Charioteer of Delphi and Bronze Horses of Venice's St. Mark's Basilica

Week 7: Miller nos. 73-80, 119-127, 243-247

Tue., 3 Oct.: The Other Crown Games: Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia

Oral Presentation: The Starting Mechanisms at Ancient Greek Stadia

Thur., 5 Oct.: The Money Games: The Panathenaia of Athens and others

Oral Presentations: Theatre of Dionysos, Athens; Odeion of Pericles, Athens

Week 8: Miller nos. 35-36, 113, 128-148, 163-175, 211-242, 248-256; Swaddling pp. 90-98

Tue., 10 Oct.: Athletes in Greek Society; Some Individual Athletes; Violence in Ancient Greek Athletics

Thur., 12 Oct.: Midterm Exam

Fall Break

Week 9: Miller nos. 149-162, 190-199; review Swaddling pp. 40-43; Futrell pp. 153-155

Tue., 24 Oct.: Women in Ancient Athletics

Thur., 26 Oct.: Overview of Hellenistic History and Culture; Athletes in the Hellenistic World

Oral Presentation: Athletic Facilities at Pergamon

Week 10: Miller nos. 200-210; Futrell pp. 1-58, 222-228

Tue., 31 Oct.: Overview of Ancient Roman History and Culture

Thur., 2 Nov.: Etruscan and Early Roman Athletics; The Romans and the Greek Games

Week 11: Futrell pp. 84-113, 115-119

Tue., 7 Nov.: A Day at the Roman Games

Thur., 9 Nov.: Roman Architecture for Entertainment and Leisure: Theatres, Cicuses, Amphitheatres and Baths

Oral Presentations: Apoxyomenos, Agias, and Farnese Heracles of Lyssippos; Baths of Diocletian; Baths of Caracalla

Week 12: Futrell pp. 59-67, 80-83, 113-115, 120-153, 156-159

Tue., 14 Nov.: Roman Gladiators I: Origins of Gladiatorial Combat; The Gladiators' Profession

Oral Presentation: Colosseum

Thur., 16 Nov.: Roman Gladiators II: Gladiators in Action; FILM: The True Story of Gladiators (History Channel)

Week 13: Miller nos. 28-31, 176-178; Futrell pp. 77-80, 218-221

Tue., 21 Nov.: "Fringe Activities" in the Ancient Greco-Roman World

Six-Page Paper due

Thur., 23 Nov.: *No Class - Thanksgiving Break*

Week 14 Futrell pp. 67-77, 160-218; Swaddling pp. 99-100

Tue., 28 Nov.: Imperial Roman Chariot Racing; Selections from the film "Ben Hur" (MGM)

Oral Presentation: Circus of Nero and Stadium of Domitian

Thur., 30 Nov.: Games in the Christian Era; The End of Ancient Athletics

Oral Presentation: Circus Maximus; Circus of Constantinople

Week 15: Swaddling pp. 100-106; Additional readings posted on Blackboard

Tues., 5 Dec.: The Afterlife of Ancient Athletics: The Origin and Authenticity of the Modern Olympic Games

Thur., 7 Dec.: FILM: "Gladiator" (Universal/DreamWorks)

The Final Exam is scheduled on Friday, 15 December from 8:30 to 11:30 AM