

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
Classical Studies 2300 650: *SPORT AND RECREATION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD*
FALL/WINTER 2026-2027

NOTE THAT ALL TESTS FOR THIS COURSE ARE IN-PERSON

Time and Place of the Class: Asynchronous online. All lectures for the week will be uploaded by end-of-day Monday that week in the “Content” Tab on our course site.

Instructor, Teaching Assistants, and Office Hours: Posted on the course site

PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES: There are no prerequisites or antirequisites for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Few aspects of modern life reveal the influence of the ancient world as vividly as the Olympic Games and contemporary sports. This course examines athletics and spectacle in Ancient Greece and Rome, exploring their cultural and historical contexts while tracing how ancient ideas of competition continue to shape modern practices. Drawing on archaeology, art, poetry, primary literary texts, and modern scholarship, we will reconstruct the practices and ideologies that surrounded ancient sports. Topics include the origins and evolution of the Olympic Games, the violence of Roman spectacles such as gladiatorial combat and chariot racing, ancient views on gender and athleticism, connections between ancient and modern sports medicine, and the legacy of classical athletics in the formation of the modern Olympics.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- understand various kinds of ancient Greek and Roman sport and leisure activities
- identify and analyze ancient art which depicts sport and leisure activities
- interpret ancient literary sources

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- understand how recreational and sport activities are a product of time, events, and context
- understand the limits of ancient evidence
- appreciate how antiquity continues to influence modern societies

COURSE MATERIALS (all textbooks are required)

- Miller, S. *Ancient Greek Athletics* (2004), \$69.35 or \$44.00 for the Ebook
- Kyle, D.G. *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, (2nd ed. 2014), \$44.30
- Miller, S. *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (3rd ed., 2004), \$55.25 or \$33.22 for the Ebook

https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2025&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/CLA2300

EVALUATION (all tests are multiple-choice, in-person, and non-cumulative)

Midterm 1, Thursday, October 8 th at 7:00 pm	15%
Midterm 2, Thursday, November 19 th at 7:00 pm	20%
Midterm 3, Thursday, February 4 th at 7:00 pm	25%
Final Exam (as scheduled by the registrar)	40%

- No makeups will be held for the midterms. If a student is given academic consideration for missing a midterm, the weight of that midterm will be shifted to the cumulative Final Exam.
- The makeup for the final exam will be held on Friday May 7th, 2027 at 6:00 pm. If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf

If a student misses both the final exam and the May 7th makeup, they will take the next in-person final exam in the April 2028.

Tentative Lecture Schedule

AGA = *Ancient Greek Athletics* textbook

Sport = *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*

Arete = *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (note: the *Arete* readings refer to **selections, not pages**)

Sep 7	Lecture 0. Introduction & The World of Greek Athletics Read: AGA 1-19; <i>Arete</i> §3-19
14	Lecture 1. Origins and Essences, Late Bronze Age Read: <i>Sport</i> 22-50
21	Lecture 2. Homer Read: AGA 20-30; <i>Arete</i> §1-2
28	Lecture 3. Events I & II: Running & Contact Sports Read: AGA 31-60; <i>Arete</i> §20-46
Oct 5	MIDTERM 1 (Thursday October 8th at 7:00 PM)
12	Fall Reading Week
19	Lecture 4. Events III & IV: Pentathlon & Equestrian Read: AGA 60-86; <i>Arete</i> §47-80
26	Lecture 5. Panhellenic Games Read: AGA 87-112
Nov 2	Lecture 6. The Olympic Games Read: AGA 113-128; <i>Arete</i> §81-118
9	Lecture 7. The Money Games, Sparta Read: AGA 129-149; <i>Arete</i> §119-127
16	MIDTERM 2 (Thursday November 19th at 7:00 PM)
23	Lecture 8. Athletics in Archaic Greece Read: <i>Sport</i> 70-90; <i>Arete</i> §128-148
Nov 30	Lecture 9. The Modern Olympics, Women and Athletics Read: <i>Sport</i> 91-103, AGA 150 - 159; <i>Arete</i> § 149-162
Jan 4	Lecture 10. Athletes and Heroes, Sport and Recreation Read: AGA 160-175; <i>Arete</i> §163-178
11	Lecture 11. Athletic Architecture & Education Read: AGA 176-195; <i>Arete</i> §179-189
18	Lecture 12. Hellenistic Sport, Professionals and Amateurs Read: AGA 196-215; <i>Arete</i> §190-223
25	Lecture 13. Politics and the Games, Athletics and Society Read: AGA 216-240; <i>Arete</i> §224-256
Feb 1	MIDTERM 3 (Thursday February 4th at 7:00 PM)
8	Lecture 14. The Roman Republic and Augustus Read: <i>Sport</i> 243-288
15	Reading Week
22	Lecture 15. Chariot-racing, Part I Read: <i>Sport</i> 289-298
Mar 1	Lecture 16. Chariot-racing, Part II
8	Lecture 17. Greek Athletics in the Roman Empire Read: <i>Sport</i> 314-323
15	Lecture 18. Gladiators, Part I Read: <i>Sport</i> 298-314
22	Lecture 19. Gladiators, Part II
29	Lecture 20. Gladiators, Part III
Apr 5	Lecture 21. Later Sports and Spectacles: Romans and Christians Read: <i>Sport</i> 329-347

COURSE NOTES:

- 1.** My office hours are listed on the BRIGHTSPACE course site, and you're always welcome to drop by. No appointment is needed! These hours are for you: to ask questions about the course, get help with assignments, or simply chat about how the material connects to current events (or anything else on your mind). You don't need to have a "big question" to stop in—even if you just want to say hello, that's perfectly fine. If my office hours don't fit your schedule, let me know and we'll set up another time that works.
- 2.** You need to have any accommodations in place at least one week before a test in order for that accommodation to be given for the test. I cannot let you retake tests taking into account accommodations that were not in place when the quiz was posted.
- 3.** In fairness to all students, there is no extra credit or re-weighting of grades; I do not reply to emails that ask for these. If you have a disability or some other special situation, I urge you to speak to both your student advisor and Accessible Education.
- 4.** Students must familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs posted on the Academic Calendar: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>. This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: Accessible Education. For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>. All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.
- 5.** For questions about course content or technical issues, contact your assigned course teaching assistant as indicated in BRIGHTSPACE.
- 6.** All course material will be posted to BRIGHTSPACE. Students are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/> For IT related issues, they may contact Western Technology Services Helpdesk directly: <https://wts.uwo.ca/helpdesk/>.
- 7.** Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.
- 8.** Request for a re-grade must be made within three weeks of the test being handed back.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Gradescope Review

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Electronic Devices

No aids are permitted for tests in this course. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering. The use of AI tools on the tests is not permitted.

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity.

“Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Academic Policies

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Brightspace:

All course material will be posted to OWL Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.