INSTRUCTOR: David Wilson

CLASS HOURS: Friday 1:30 – 4:30 LwH 3220

OFFICE HOURS: M/W/F 12:00 – 1:00 LwH 3212
(or by appointment dwilson@uwo.ca)

COURSE GRADE ASSESSMENT:

Midterm Test 30% (Oct. 21st)
Seminar Presentation 10%
Seminar Research Paper 60%

Seminar Papers Due: Dec. 16th

UWO Policies

Plagiarism
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

UWO Accessibility Policy
Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: http://accessibility.uwo.ca/

Mental Health
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

This seminar examines a pivotal period of Athens’ history in the 5th Century BCE with the primary emphasis on the archaeological evidence for the rise and fall of Athenian nationalism and empire as it played out within the urban centre. It begins in the early 5th C. at the time of the young democracy and the turbulent years of the Persian Wars, and the transformative effect that the victory at Marathon had on Athens’ self-image as a ‘world’ power.

In the decades immediately following the Persian Wars in the Early Classical period during the leadership of the statesman/admiral Kimon, a number of key public monuments in the Agora were erected: the Tyrannicides sculpture group, the Stoa Poikile, and the Theseion. Together they established the principal thematic programme of publicly commissioned monuments/buildings in the city, and had a fundamental influence on the iconography and symbolism of all subsequent building, sculpture and painting in the second half of the 5th Century. The military victories won by Athens against the Persians are repeatedly referenced in these monuments, both explicitly and allegorically through the prominence of Theseus and his role in the Amazonomachy and Centauromachy myths.

The ensuing Periklean building programme on the Acropolis begun just after 450 BCE with the Parthenon as its ‘crown jewel’ marks the high point and most overt of Athens’ public visual displays of national pride, and its perceived sense of pre-eminence in the Greek world. The moral content, visual language and meaning of the Pheidian sculptures that decorated the Parthenon are explored against the backdrop of Athens’ imperial aspirations abroad and to many non-Athenians, Greek and non-Greek alike, her increasingly hubristic behavior. We track the fall of Athens’ fortunes during the later 5th Century with the onset of the Peloponnesian War and the devastating plague of 429 and 427/6 BCE, looking at how such catastrophic events for the city were or were not reflected in the painting and sculpture of the period.

Finally we end appropriately with death and burial in Classical Athens, focusing on the Demosion Sema, the public burial ground of Athens’ fallen war dead, and the private burials elsewhere in the Kerameikos to question how Athenians dealt with death, defeat, and loss of empire in such a public and nationally charged forum.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- identify and date the major buildings and monuments of 5th C. Athens; the significance of their location/setting; and discuss the political/historical context in which they were built;

- identify iconography and subject matter of sculpture and panel/vase painting of 5th C. Athens in terms of the setting, and the individual characters and their possible narrative role (mythological or historical);

- address the possible symbolism and meaning of content/subject matter within its specific and larger social/historical context;
- to understand the important contribution archaeological evidence makes in examining and reconstructing the political and social history of 5th C. Athens.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES/TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

Students completing this course are expected to have acquired:

- an advanced understanding of the importance of historical perspective, and how social norms and customs and the construction and consumption of material culture (e.g. architecture, sculpture and painting) is a product of time, events and context;

- an understanding of how iconography/symbolism in any historical period may be used *inter alia* to signify cultural identity, political power, state nationalism, and historical memorial;

- the ability of critical visual analysis of archaeological evidence, and the results of such analysis, to formulate, develop, and argue an hypothesis/thesis based on this primary evidence;

- a developed understanding of the limits of archaeological evidence in the reconstruction of ancient societies and the restrictions the material record places on our ability to formulate hypotheses and interpretations;

- advanced oral communication skills through the oral *seminar presentation* of a scholarly argument/hypothesis using the archaeological and written evidence, and the appropriate and effective use of visual aids (publications, power point, etc.); the ability to lead and direct class discussion, and meet the challenge of questions/criticisms of seminar content;

- to have advanced written communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of an argument/hypothesis within the prescribed limits of the *research paper*; among the basic research skills acquired are the ability to collect relevant bibliography on a prescribed topic, critically engage with the scholarly literature with an assessment of the relative merits of an argument, and write a thesis in a format that includes a clear introductory statement of intent, a well-constructed and logical presentation of the argument including the relative merits of various scholarly opinions, and a conclusion that gives an assessment of the evidence and the author’s own evaluation of the evidence.
SEMINAR PRESENTATION

Every seminar should have a handout including:

- outline of presentation with key topics
- principal bibliography (1-2 pages in length) with an oral critical commentary on the scholarly sources at the start of the presentation
- list of primary sources if relevant to topic
- other useful information, e.g. dates, buildings, mythological content etc. to be covered

ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE PRESENTATION THE CLASS SHOULD BE GIVEN A VERY SELECTIVE READING LIST TO HELP FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH YOUR TOPIC.

SEMINAR PAPER (due Dec. 16th)

The final written paper should be approximately 4000 - 5000 words in length.

Use parenthetical in-text referencing style [ e.g. (Pollitt 1972: pp. 45-50) ]:

Illustrations (figures/plates) are encouraged; include a list at the end of the paper with bibliographic source: e.g. FIG. 1 or PLATE 1 – Ling 1991, fig. 48, pl. X.

SEMINAR TOPICS

1. The Theseion and Kimon in Early Classical Athens.
2. The Stoa Poikile in the Athenian Agora.
3. The Hephaisteion, Theseus, and Democracy in the Athenian Agora.
5. Athena as a national symbol in 5th C. Athens.
6. The Parthenon and the archaioi naos in 5th C. Athens
7. Athens during the Peloponnesian War: collapse of an empire and the artistic response.