

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
COURSE SYLLABUS, Summer Distance 2026

Classical Studies 2300.650: *SPORT & RECREATION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD*

Time and Place of the Class: Asynchronous online. All lectures uploaded by Monday morning of that week into the “Content” Tab on our course site. **Note that all tests are synchronous online and proctored.**

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

PREREQUISITES: There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There is no place in modern society where the ancient world has had a greater and more apparent impact than the Olympic Games and modern sports competition. The purpose of this class is to explore the topic of athletics and spectacle in Ancient Greece and Rome with a view to its cultural and historical specifics, while also considering how the logic of competition in the ancient world relates to modern day practices. The course will rely on archaeology, art, poetry, primary literary sources, and secondary scholarship in order to reconstruct the historical practices and ideologies involved with ancient sports. We will focus on the history of the ancient Olympics, the violence of Roman sport and spectacle including gladiator combat and chariot races, ancient conceptions of gender and sport, the relationship between ancient and modern sports medicine, and the role of ancient athletics in the history of the modern Olympic games.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

- have acquired a knowledge of various kinds of ancient Greek and Roman sport and leisure activities
- identify and analyze ancient art which depicts sport and leisure activities
- understand the role of archaeology
- interpret ancient literary sources
- understand the ideals of Greek athletics and Roman spectacles

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students completing this course can expect to:

- 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 for exams; prices shown as at the Campus Bookstore)

- Kyle, D.G. *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, (2nd ed. 2014), \$69.35 or \$44.00 for the Ebook
- Miller, S. *Ancient Greek Athletics* (2004), \$43.15
- Miller, S. *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (3rd ed., 2004), \$55.25 or \$30.00 for the Ebook

EVALUATION (all tests are multiple-choice, proctored online, and non-cumulative)

Midterm 1, Thursday, May 21st at 5:00 pm 20%

Midterm 2, Thursday, June 18th at 5:00 pm 35%

Final Exam (as scheduled by the registrar between July 27-30) 45%

- Makeup tests for the midterms will be held one week after the regular test, on the following Thursday at 5:00. The format of the makeup test will be essays and short answers.
- The makeup for the final exam will be held on Thursday August 6th, 2026 at 5:00 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

Tentative Lecture Schedule

AGA = *Ancient Greek Athletics*

Sport = *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*

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

May 4	Lecture 0. Introduction & The World of Greek Athletics Read: AGA 1-19; <i>Arete</i> §3-19
May 4	Lecture 1. Origins and Essences, Late Bronze Age Read: <i>Sport</i> 22-50
May 11	Lecture 2. Homer Read: AGA 20-30; <i>Arete</i> §1-2
May 11	Lecture 3. Events I & II: Running & Contact Sports Read: AGA 31-60; <i>Arete</i> §20-46
May 11	Lecture 4. Events III & IV: Pentathlon & Equestrian Read: AGA 60-86; <i>Arete</i> §47-72
May 18	Lecture 5. Panhellenic Games Read: AGA 87-112; <i>Arete</i> §73-80
May 21	Midterm 1; 5:00 pm, proctored online
May 25	Lecture 6. The Olympic Games Read: AGA 113-128; <i>Arete</i> §81-118
May 25	Lecture 7. The Money Games, Sparta Read: AGA 129-149; <i>Arete</i> §119-127
June 1	Lecture 8. Athletics in Archaic Greece Read: <i>Sport</i> 70-90; <i>Arete</i> §128-148
June 1	Lecture 9. The Modern Olympics, Women and Athletics Read: <i>Sport</i> 91-103, AGA 150-159; <i>Arete</i> §149-162
June 8	Lecture 10. Athletes and Heroes, Sport and Recreation Read: AGA 160-175; <i>Arete</i> §163-178
June 8	Lecture 11. Athletic Architecture & Education Read: AGA 176-195; <i>Arete</i> §179-189
June 15	Lecture 12. Hellenistic Sport, Professionals and Amateurs Read: AGA 196-215; <i>Arete</i> §190-223
June 15	Lecture 13. Politics and the Games, Athletics and Society Read: AGA 216-240; <i>Arete</i> §224-256
June 18	Midterm 2; 5:00 pm, proctored online
June 22	Lecture 14. The Roman Republic and Augustus Read: <i>Sport</i> 243-288
June 22	Lecture 15. Chariot-racing, Part I Read: <i>Sport</i> 289-298
June 29	Lecture 16. Chariot-racing, Part II
June 29	Lecture 17. Greek Athletics in the Roman Empire Read: <i>Sport</i> 314-323
July 6	Lecture 18. Gladiators, Part I Read: <i>Sport</i> 298-314
July 6	Lecture 19. Gladiators, Part II
July 13	Lecture 20. Gladiators, Part III
July 13	Lecture 21. Later Sports and Spectacles: Romans and Christians Read: <i>Sport</i> 329-339
July 20	REVIEW CLASS

COURSE NOTES:

1. My office hours for Zoom meetings are listed on the BRIGHTSPACE course site, and you're always welcome. Just send me an email request and I'll provide you with a Zoom link. 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"—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. If you are absent for a test, **you must contact me and take the scheduled makeup test**, even if you have not been granted official approval for missing the original test. You must also provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at: https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf
The Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf
3. 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/>.
4. 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.
5. Any concerns about a test question must be made within three weeks of the test being made available to students.
6. 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.
7. 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.

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.

Statement on remote proctoring software

Tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>

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.