

# CREATING IMPRESSIONS OF GREECE

INSTRUCTOR: Ann Blasingham and Judy Allen

## I. COURSE TITLE

### **Creating Impressions of Greece**

This course provides the student studying abroad for the first time with the tools for understanding and entering into an unfamiliar culture. Multi-disciplinary approach, including techniques from anthropology, geography, sociology, art history and the studio arts.

## II. PREREQUISITES

No prerequisites.

## III. OBJECTIVES

The course is conducted with the city of Athens as its laboratory, so that students are introduced to both theoretical and practical aspects of studying an unfamiliar culture, including an introduction to the visual techniques of presenting data. In the process of applying all these skills, students will observe and (where practicable) enter into modern Athenian life. Where possible, relationships and continuities between ancient and later Greek cultures will be discussed.

Learner objectives for the course are:

1. Learn and apply a set of observational tools for gathering information *in situ* about an aspect of an unfamiliar culture.
2. Learn and apply a set of criteria for interpreting the information gathered, in order to gain an understanding of the functions of an aspect of an unfamiliar culture.
3. Learn how to present the data and interpretations coherently by organizing them in a visual display, a written explanation and an oral report
4. Learn and apply techniques of visual presentation, including but not limited to mapping, sketching, painting, photography, poster creation, book-binding.

## IV. TEXTS

Required reading: class packet.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The course is composed of lectures on observational tools and criteria for interpretation of observations, demonstrations and workshops on the techniques of visual presentation, map work in class and on field trips, and assignments on the four field trips outside Athens. Classes meet for an average of 4.5 hours per week over a ten-week period. Some weeks involve more hours, some less, depending on field trips. Students are required to complete an independent research project by selecting and observing a place or location in Athens which is significant in some way in modern Greek life, recording their data and then presenting it in written and visual form. Students research the layers of culture and time in this place, using the museums, libraries, asking questions of people.

Students present oral reports on their projects during the last week of the semester, when there is also a group exhibition of the visual displays. Additionally, students maintain a workbook/journal containing all the raw data and basic research for the project. Early in the term, the students complete an assignment designed to hone observational skills in preparation for keeping the workbook/journal.

## VI. OUTLINE

Week I: Course introduction and orientation to Athens as place. Lecture: What is "place" and how will we find it?

- Week II: Field trip in Crete: Chania, Armeni, Rethymnon, Heraklion Museum, Knossos, Gortyn, Vori Museum, Mallia, Gournia, Aghios Nikolaos. Reading the palimpsest: daily assignments and exercises in seeing.
- Week III: Workshop: Drawing techniques and projects; assignment of visual mini-project. Drawing on-site in Aegina
- Week IV: Lecture & Workshop: Choosing "your place" and beginning your project. Drawing on-site in Athens
- Week V: Walk in Pangrati/Mets: observing the urban environment. Studio workshop on organizing the project.
- Week VI: Acropolis on-site: what is a "numinous" place? Does it still generate a sense of the numinous? The Athenian Agora and the Kerameikos on-site: peopling an ancient place then and now
- Week VII: Spring break.
- Week VIII: Studio: collage and drawing. Field trip to the Peloponnese: Mycenae, Tiryns, Nafplion, Epidauros, Corinth, Olympia.
- Week IX: Gallery morning: seeing modern Greek art. Workshop on your project: How has your place changed since you began observing and participating in it? How has your place changed you?
- Week X: Workshop on image sorting and idea generating within your project context: bring your preliminary work and your workbook/journal. Field trip to central Greece: Marmaria, Delphi.
- Week XI: Workshops on project preparation.
- Week XII: Presentation of projects: oral presentations of projects; display of projects set up at Athens Centre, with reception

## VII. EVALUATION

### Grading criteria

1. Class attendance is required. More than two absences from class will result in a lowered grade. This includes attendance on field trips, as well.
2. Each student creates a project based on observation of an aspect of modern Greek culture. The student consults with the professors for the course, in order to select and refine the topic of the project. The student then submits a written description of the project topic and the methods of observation and interpretation to be employed. The written description is graded as part of the workbook/journal.
3. All students complete an assignment designed to hone observational skills in preparation for keeping the workbook/journal. This assignment, with students' class participation and work ethics, constitutes 24% of the final grade.
4. Each student keeps a workbook/journal containing all the raw data and basic research for the project. The workbook/journal will receive a grade, which constitutes 33% of the final grade.
5. Each student creates a visual display of their project summarizing their observations, research and conclusions, including a written description. Each student then presents their project orally in class, using their visual display to illustrate their presentation. The project itself and the oral presentation constitute 43% of the final grade.