

History 551: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece
Spring Semester 2015

- Time and location: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30–10:45, Ruter 203.
- Instructor and office hours: Judson Herrman, <jherrman@allegHENY.edu>, Monday–Friday 11:00–12:15 in Ruter Hall 304.
- Webpage: <jherrman.net/hist-551-2015.html>. All online course materials, including webpage readings, are on this page, not on Sakai. Full bibliographic details of webpage readings are also available there, to be consulted for your essay citations.
- Description: An examination of topics relating to speech and writing as media of communication in ancient Greece, from the time of Homer to the fourth century BC. The course focuses on the development of writing in the Greek world and the effect of this development on Greek culture and society. Among the topics studied are the oral performance of poetry, the function of writing in the Athenian democracy, and the importance of rhetoric for the intellectual life of the classical period.
- Requirements:
 - Reports, attendance, participation (20%). All students are expected to complete the assigned readings, listed below, before class and to be prepared to discuss them and ask questions in class. Note the questions to consider in the daily assignments below and as you read before class prepare written notes with references to particular pages and passages for discussion. These reading discussions will be facilitated by individual students (a list will be kept on the webpage). Lack of preparation and involvement will be noted and will affect your course grade.
 - Five short (750 words each) essays (45%). This assignment is designed to help you consolidate details from readings, and to help you organize and present your analysis of sources for specific assigned themes. Essay questions will be posted online at least two weeks in advance of the due dates.
 - A synthetic essay (35%). Each student will write an essay (2500 words) that draws together various primary and secondary readings from the semester. This assignment challenges students to integrate multiple primary and secondary sources in a discussion of an original research thesis. Students should choose their own topic and seek out relevant secondary material in addition to class readings, in consultation with the instructor. Each student will present a report on their prospective essay topic at the end of the semester, and a one-page abstract is due at our antepenultimate meeting.
 - Honor code: students are advised to read Article III, section 3 of the honor code and to be careful to avoid plagiarism on all written assignments. Ask if you're unsure of how or whether to cite others' work.
- Course books:

Iliad	R. Lattimore, <i>The Iliad of Homer</i> (Chicago, 2011).
GLP	M.L. West, <i>Greek Lyric Poetry</i> (Oxford, 1999).
Aeschylus	C. Collard, <i>Aeschylus Oresteia</i> (Oxford, 2009).
Herodotus	A. De Selincourt, <i>Herodotus: The Histories</i> (Viking Penguin, 1996). webpage
Thucydides	R. Warner, <i>Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War</i> (Viking Penguin, 1954). webpage.

Frogs	J. Henderson, <i>Aristophanes' Frogs</i> (Focus, 2008).
Gorgias	R. Waterfield, <i>Plato. Gorgias</i> (Oxford, 1998).
Phaedrus	R. Waterfield, <i>Plato. Phaedrus</i> (Oxford, 2003).
Thomas	R. Thomas, <i>Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece</i> (Cambridge, 1992).

- Schedule:
 - Tue. 13 Jan. Course introduction; chronology of primary material.
 - Thu. 15 Jan. Homer and the *Iliad*. Read **Iliad**, book 1; **Thomas**, chap. 1–2 (pp. 1–28). Consider: what do we mean by “orality” and “literacy”? How wide a meaning do these terms embrace?
 - Tue. 20 Jan. Orality and Homeric studies. Read **Iliad**, book 2. Read **Thomas**, chap. 3 (pp. 29–51) and consider: how did Parry and Lord approach Homer? How did they demonstrate that the poetry is oral?
 - Thu. 22 Jan. Homeric studies cont. Read **Iliad**, books 9–10. Read O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings*, 1–22 (webpage) and consider: what are the major divisions of the *Iliad*?
 - Tue. 27 Jan. First short essay due. Homer and the alphabet. Read **Iliad**, book 24. Read **Thomas**, chap. 4 (pp. 52–73) and consider: when did the alphabet begin to be used in Greece? What factors contributed to its spread?
 - Thu. 29 Jan. Performing hymns. Read the *Hymn to Apollo* (webpage). Read O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings*, 22–45 (webpage) and consider: how was the *Iliad* performed? What details about performance does the *Hymn to Apollo* provide, and how does it compare to the epic?
 - Tue. 3 Feb. Lyric poetry and performance. Read Archilochus (**GLP**, pp. 1–15), Tyrtaeus (**GLP**, pp. 23–27), Alcaeus (**GLP**, pp. 50–63). Read C. Carey, “Genre, Occasion and Performance” (webpage) and consider: what are the different genres of lyric? How and where were they performed?
 - Thu. 5 Feb. Choral lyric; performance and politics. Read Alcman (**GLP**, pp. 31–35), Solon (**GLP**, pp. 74–83). Read J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition*, 3–20 (webpage) and consider: what sort of a song culture existed? What were some of the venues for poetic performance in archaic Greece? Read Herington, 20–40 and consider: is Herington’s approach consistent with Carey’s; how do they differ? How does Herington distinguish choral from other types of archaic lyric poetry?
 - Tue. 10 Feb. Second short essay due. Choral lyric and drama. Read Stesichorus (**GLP**, pp. 87–95). Read Herington, 41–57 and consider: what role would a written text play in re-performances? What are some dramatic aspects of choral lyric? Read **Thomas**, chap. 6 (pp. 101–127) and consider: how does Thomas connect orality, performance and memorial? What role could a written text serve in a performance context?
 - Thu. 12 Feb. Athenian tragedy and performance. Read **Aeschylus**, *Agamemnon*. Read O. Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action*, 1–21 (webpage) and consider: how does Taplin suggest we consider Greek tragedy? What was the physical layout of the Theater of Dionysus in Athens? How were tragedies produced? How can we use the text to understand what actually happened on stage? What are the problems with this approach?

- Tue. 17 Feb. Conventions of tragedy. Read Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (webpage) and consider: how do literacy and memory appear in the play? Read P. Easterling, "Form and Performance," 151–173 (webpage) and consider: what are some of the rules and conventions of tragedy? Was there any potential for innovation? What do we learn by studying the texts as scripts for performance? How did tragedy use traditional language and poetic techniques to reflect contemporary concerns?
- Thu. 19 Feb. Read Aristophanes *Frogs* and consider: how are Euripides and Aeschylus characterized? How do they differ in regard to performance? How do Aristophanes and his audience know of these earlier plays?
- Tue. 24 Feb. Third short essay due. Assessing literacy. Read W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 65–93 (webpage) and consider: what were the functions of literacy in Athens? Was writing connected to specific types of political systems? When and how were written texts used in Athens? Read Harris, 93–115 (webpage) and consider: how widespread was literacy? How did people write? How did they learn? Who learned? What do we know about literacy outside Athens?
- Thu. 26 Feb. The invention of prose. Skim fragments of the Presocratics (R.E. Allen, *Greek Philosophy*, 25–54; webpage). Read S. Goldhill, *The Invention of Prose*, 1–9 (webpage) and consider: in what way was poetry authoritative? When and how did prose gain similar authority? How did prose contrast with poetry in tone and usage? Read A. Nightingale, "Sages, Sophists and Philosophers: Greek Wisdom Literature," 156–172 (webpage) and consider: how did archaic sages perform their wisdom? Who were the earliest Greek philosophers? What did they teach? Who was their audience? Who were the sophists? Was Socrates one?
- Tue. 3 March Aristophanes and the sophists. Read Aristophanes, *Clouds* (webpage) and consider: in what ways is comedy distinct from tragedy, in terms of content and performance? How are sophists and intellectuals depicted in the play? Who goes to study at their school? How is the new style of education contrasted with the old? Is Strepsiades literate?
- Thu. 5 March Oral and literate history. Read Herodotus 1.1–5 (pp. 3–5). Read J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 3–32 and consider: how are messages generated? What is oral history and oral tradition? How does oral tradition develop and change and become a source of history?
- Tue. 10 March Ancient historical method. Read Herodotus 2.1–98 (pp. 95–132). Read J. Gould, *Herodotus*, 19–41 and consider: how does Herodotus work with informants? How did he conduct his inquiries? Who were his informants? What sorts of traditions did he draw on? How do folk tales appear?
- Thu. 12 March Herodotus and performance. Read Herodotus 8.40–96 (pp. 513–533). Read R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 249–269 (webpage) and consider: how does she describe Herodotus' persuasive activity and performance? What are apodeixis and epideixis? Does Herodotus' text show signs of performance? How does she compare Herodotus with sophists and doctors?
- Tue. 24 March Fourth short essay due. Thucydides' method. Read Thucydides 1.1–23 (pp. 34–49), 2.34–65 (pp. 143–164). Read P.J. Rhodes, "In Defence of the Greek Historians," 156–171 and consider: is Thucydides a more accurate historian

than Herodotus? In what way is Thucydides more like a 20th-century historian? What sorts of evidence does Thucydides use to support his arguments? To what extent did Thucydides use oral testimony? Did Thucydides make up speeches?

- Thu. 26 March Speeches in Thucydides. Read Thucydides 5.13–24 (pp. 356–363), 5.84–116 (pp. 400–408), 7.10–18 (pp. 483–488). Read L. Edmunds, “Thucydides in the Act of Writing” (webpage) and consider: does Thucydides use writing differently than Herodotus? Is his book intended for readers, as opposed to an audience at a performance?
- Thu. 2 April Plato on sophists. Read **Gorgias**, 447a–481b (pp. 3–62).
- Tue. 7 April Read **Gorgias**, 481b–505b (pp. 62–102). Read H. Yunis, *Taming Democracy*, chapter 5 (pp. 117–135; webpage) and consider: how does the *Gorgias* connect with Thucydides? How does Gorgias describe rhetoric; how does Socrates? Is it a techne? What’s the difference between instruction and rhetoric? How does Gorgias regard logos?
- Thu. 9 April Plato’s written conversations. Read **Gorgias**, 505b–527e (pp. 102–135). Read T. Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*, chapter 7 (pp. 115–138; webpage) and consider: how do hearers become speakers in the fourth century? How does Plato’s work combine oral conversations and written literature? How do writing and rhetoric function as technai?
- Tue. 14 April Fifth short essay due. Workshop on secondary source research for final essay.
- Thu. 16 April Plato on writing and memory. Read **Phaedrus**, 227a–257b (pp. 3–42).
- Tue. 21 April Essay abstracts due. Aristotle’s literate approach. Read **Phaedrus**, 257b–279c (pp. 42–75) and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.3 (pp. 80–82; webpage). Read A. Nightingale, “Sages, Sophists and Philosophers: Greek Wisdom Literature,” 172–188 (webpage) and consider: who instituted the first philosophical schools in Athens? How would you contrast Plato and Isocrates? In what way does Aristotle present a shift “from performer to spectator”?
- Thu. 23 April Student reports.
- Tue. 28 April Student reports.
- Fri. 1 May Synthetic essays due in Ruter 304 at 9:00am.