CLAS 191: Environment and Nature in the Classical World

Instructor information
Instructor: Matthew Semanoff
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Office hours: MWF 2:00-3:00

Course information:
Time: 10:10-11:00 MWF
Place: LA 307

Course description:
The very name Classical Civilization betrays the fact that students of classical antiquity emphasize the study of urban culture. By studying Greek and Roman attitudes towards nature and the natural world we will reconstruct the environment in which Greek and Roman urban centers thrived. Our study will use different methods from different disciplines including anthropology, archaeology, art history, and literary studies. Following a study of the geography of the region relying heavily on landscape archaeology and demography, students will investigate the attitudes towards the environment that the Greeks and Romans expressed through their myths, poetry, philosophy, and material culture. Through readings by authors such as Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, and Ovid we will discuss cosmogony, agriculture and pre-industrial peasant economy, evolution, disease and famine, deforestation, as well as human interaction with the landscape through engineering. In this class students will explore how Greeks and Romans interacted with the world around them, how they described that world in prose, poetry, and other arts, how they explained the world around them, and how they used that world to explain themselves.

Outcomes:
Upon completing this course, successful students will
- become familiar with the major periods and events of Classical history and be able to contextualize attitudes towards nature and the environment within those periods.
- become familiar with the styles of literature and material arts during major periods of Classical history.
- develop skills necessary for reading primary texts (literary, philosophical, and historical) as documents representing the intellectual history of the Classical period.
- be introduced to the inherently interdisciplinary aspect of Classical Studies through the use of literary and non-literary sources.
- will learn how to synthesize literary and archaeological sources in order to formulate an accurate view of antiquity.

Required textbooks:

Course Calendar: Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: Setting the Stage
1/26 M First Day Business
Defining Nature, Environment, Science, Myth. Introduction to Sources
1/28 W Introduction to Mediterranean Basin
1/30 F History of the Region: 1500 years in 50 minutes

Week 2: Demographics and Peasant Economy
2/4 W The Peasant Economy in Literature
Hesiod's *Works and Days*

**Reaction #1 Due**


**Week 3: Cosmogony I: Mythical Explanations**


2/11 W Order and Chaos: Cosmogony and "Natural" Disaster

Hesiod's *Theogony*

2/13 F Nature in Myth: Nature before Natural Philosophy

Selections from the *Iliad* (Book 18.465-617; Book 21)

Selections from the *Odyssey* (1.1-10; 7.1-200; 9.105-308; 10.1-335)

**Week 4: Humanity in the Natural World**

2/16 M Presidents' Day -- No Class

2/18 W Gods, Technology, Humans

*Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound*

2/20 F First Midterm

**Reaction #2 Due**

**Week 5: Cosmogony II: Natural Philosophy**

2/23 M Conflict between Nature and Civilization

Euripides' *Bacchae*


2/25 W Introduction to "Primary Sources"

Dealing with Fragments

Evidence: Source Criticism

2/27 F Selections from the Ionian Presocratics: Thales, Anaximander, Xenophanes, and Heraclitus

**Reaction #3 Due**

**Week 6**

3/2 M The Scythians: Herodotean Anthropology

Selections from Herodotus' *History of the Persian War*

3/4 W Argumentation: Does the Evidence Support the Conclusion?


3/6 F Research Strategies and Methods

Argumentation and Evidence

**Week 7: Nature and Culture in Literature**

3/9 M Library Session

3/11 W Selections from the Italian Presocratics: Pythagoras, Parmenides, Empedocles, Leucippus and Democritus

3/13 F Peer Review of Short Paper

**First Draft of Short Paper Due**

**Week 8**

3/16 M Natural Philosophy in Plato:

Selection from Phaedrus

Plato's *Timaeus*
Research Paper Topic Due
3/18 W Readings from Hippocrates' On Airs, Waters, Places
3/20 F Sophisticated Simplicity: Hellenistic Innovation And “Nostalgia”
   Homeric Hymns: To Demeter, To Delian Apollo, To Pythian Apollo, To Earth Mother of All
   Callimachus' Hymns (To Artemis [3], To Delos [4], On the Bath of Pallas [5])
Reaction #4 Due

Week 9
3/23 M Idealized Pastoralism
   Selections from Theocritus' Idylls
   The Case of Polyphemus: Monster or Shepherd
3/25 W Scientific Literature
   Scientific Poetry: Astronomy and Toxicology
   Selections from Aratus' Phaenomena
   Selections from Nicanders' Alexipharmaca and Theriaca
Final Draft of Short Paper Due
Reaction #5 Due
3/27 F Selections from Theophrastus' Enquiry into Plants and Concerning Weather Signs

Week 10
3/30 M Spring Break
4/1 W Spring Break
4/3 F Spring Break

Week 11
4/6 M Epicureanism: Hellenistic return to Atomism
   Selections from Epicurus' Letters (to Herodotus and to Pythocles)
Reaction #6 Due
4/8 W Roman Epicureanism
   Selections from Lucretius' De Rerum Natura (1.1-920; 3.830-1094; 5.1-563)
4/10 F Pastoral Reprise: Politics in the Countryside
   Selections from Virgil's Eclogues
   Eclogues in the 3rd Century C.E. (Calpurnius or Nemesianus)

Week 12
4/13 M The Natural Metaphor
   Selections from Virgil's Georgics (Book 1; 2.1-75; 2.136-76; 2.458-540; Book 4)
Precis due
4/15 W Ovid's Metamorphoses (Books 2 and 3)
4/17 F Plagues in Literature: Epic, History, Tragedy
   Selections from Homer, Thucydides, and Sophocles

Week 13
4/20 M Plagues in Literature (Continued)
   Selections from Lucretius and Virgil
Research Paper Outline Due
4/22 W Second Midterm
4/24 F Hunting and Fishing: Survival, Education, Recreation
   Selections from the Cynegetica (Hunting with Dogs) of Nemesianus, Oppian, and Grattius
   Selections from the Halieutica (Fishing) of Oppian and "Ovid"

Week 14
4/27 M Hunting and Roman Games
   Readings TBA

5/1 F Research Paper Draft Due
Peer edit workshop

Week 15: Environmentalists' Use and Abuse of the Greeks and Romans

Research Paper Final Draft Due


Required assignments and tests:

Reaction Papers:
In order to facilitate discussion, you will be required to write six 2-page (double-spaced) papers on assigned topics. Your papers should include a clear thesis statement and argue a specific point relying on close reading of the text for evidence. Refer to the Reaction Paper handout for a full schedule of topics and the dates due, basic information on proper source citation, and a rubric for grading. If discussion seems particularly sluggish, I may ask for several volunteers to read their responses to the reading as a starting point for our discussion. Students may drop their lowest score.

Short Paper Assignment: Rationalizing Mythical Monsters:
Students will write a 3-4 page paper analyzing the use of Mayor’s evidence in The First Fossil Hunters. Your paper must argue whether or not the evidence supports Mayor’s claim that the representations of griffins in Greek art and myth can be attributed to the first hand experience with fossils of megafauna of the Cretaceous period. Whether or not you agree with Mayor’s conclusion, you must also incorporate (1) alternative conclusions based on the same evidence and (2) a counter-argument.

Research Paper:
Students will be required to write a 7-8 page research paper using both primary and secondary sources on a topic of their choice. Students are encouraged to discuss with me ideas about (or problems with) their papers and even submit preliminary drafts (of individual paragraphs or the entire paper). This paper will be written in a number of stages. Students are required to submit a paragraph describing their paper topics to me on Monday, March 16. The next stage will be a precis (2-page summary) of an article contributing to the paper, due Monday, April 13. An outline of the paper is due Monday, April 20. The outline should reflect a significant step towards writing the paper, including a clear thesis statement, the ideas supporting the argument AND evidence establishing those ideas. A full draft of the paper is due Monday, May 1. This draft will be workshopped in peer revision groups, and submitted to the instructor for feedback. All preliminary steps are mandatory. The preliminary paper topic, outline, and all drafts, peer review worksheets, proof-reading checklists must be submitted along with the final draft. Papers which fail to complete the preliminary stages will not be accepted. The final paper is Monday, May 4. More details about the requirements for these assignments and including suggested topics will be distributed later in the semester.

Examinations:
Students will take three essay examinations (2 midterms and a final exam). Additionally, there will be occasional unannounced reading quizzes that will factor into the Examination grade.

Course guidelines and policies:

Student Conduct Code
All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at Student Conduct Code (http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php).
Disability modifications
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Course expectations
In addition to these written assignments, students are expected not only to attend but also to participate actively in class discussion. Repeated absences or tardiness will affect your grade. I expect you to make every effort to attend class. If you are unable to do so, please contact me; you are responsible for making any necessary arrangements for what you missed in class. Late papers will be penalized by one grade per day, unless prior arrangements have been made.

Please note that repeated tardiness and absence will have a detrimental effect on your participation grade. Text-messaging, phone calls, or any other indications that you are distracted, distracting, or otherwise not participating will also affect your grade.

There will be a Moodle Course Supplement for this class. I will use this to make periodic announcements, to post copies of handouts and assignments, and to make various electronic resources available. Through this course supplement, students will also access a majority of the readings for the class. Please note that I will also use Moodle to send email. The Moodle system requires the use of your university student email account; if you prefer to use a different account, you must set the university account to forward. Even if you do not login to the Moodle Supplement, you are expected to check you email regularly.

Although classical authors had different attitudes regarding what constitutes plagiarism, you are expected to use contemporary standards for citing sources. Whenever you make reference to any idea that is not considered common knowledge – whether in a direct quotation or paraphrase – you must cite your source according to the MLA style sheet. If you have any questions or concerns regarding plagiarism, please ask.

Attendance
I expect you to make every effort to attend class. If you are unable to do so, please contact me; you are responsible for making any necessary arrangements for whatever you missed in class. Late homework will not be accepted. Late papers will be penalized by one grade per day, unless prior arrangements have been made. I will not reschedule quizzes or exams unless arrangements have been made prior to the absence. Poor attendance will affect your participation grade.

PLEASE NOTE: Repeated tardiness or getting up in the middle of class is considered part of your attendance record. Similarly, dealing with a phone, whether silencing an incoming call, answering a call, sending or receiving text messages is part of your attendance record; you are not “attending” class, if you are frequently responding to messages emanating from outside the classroom. Additionally, these are distracting to your instructor and fellow classmates. Please show respect by limiting these types of disruptions.

Grading policy
Your grade will be determined by the following breakdown: Participation (10%), Examinations (35%), Short Paper Assignment (15%), Research Paper (20%), and Reaction Papers (20%).