The Agora: History at the Heart of Athens (ARCH 0425)

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Fall 2012 Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays 1:00-1:50 pm/ Rhode Island Hall, room 108
Office Hours: Tuesdays 14:00-16:00
Course wiki address: http://proteus.brown.edu/agora2012/home

COURSE SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Class description:
The Agora of ancient Athens: the heart of Classical Greece, the birthplace of democracy, the place to see and been seen in antiquity. This “marketplace” featured shops, temples, and public spaces where people met, debated, watched games and spectacles, and voted on the most important political issues of the city. The Agora was the playground of famous figures such as Perikles, Socrates, and Demosthenes. Although the apogee of the Agora is considered the Classical period, this course will consider the long life and the impact of this civic space, from Neolithic to modern times. Special attention will be given to its ongoing and often challenging archaeological heritage.

Highlights include:

- Everyday life in the Athenian Agora
- The archaeology of democracy
- Monumentality and political propaganda in the Athenian Agora
- Religious geographies: from pagan to Christian
- Urban archaeology
- The archaeology of destruction
- The Agora as a world heritage site

Course aim: The aim of the course is two-fold. On one hand, students will become familiarized with the history and archaeology of the Athenian Agora and will be introduced to the political and cultural processes that shaped the site. As such, the course will touch on topics of art and architecture, public life, economy and trade, religion and burial customs, household activities, identity and memory.
However, the course is also designed to introduce students to the methods and techniques of archaeology in the Classical world. Students have the opportunity to explore and debate interpretations of the Athenian past using the excavation results of the Agora.

**Evaluation Scheme:**
Mid-term test 15%
Monument presentations 15%
Group discussion 10%
Research project 30%
Final examination 30%

- **Exams:** There will be two exams, a midterm and a final.

- **Monument Presentation & Podcast:** All students will be asked to prepare a ten minute presentation on one of the standing monuments of the Agora. In the second week students will be asked to select the monument of their choice. The list of monuments and dates of presentation are posted on the course’s wiki. The aim of the assignment is not to just reproduce some basic information for each building but to discuss its overall role in the history of the site, its function and architectural form, and its fate from when it was first constructed to its later uses. **At the end of the semester we will create a podcast for the Athenian Agora based on these presentations for people to download and use it as an audio guide while visiting the site!**

- **Group Discussion:** There are six group discussions organized throughout the semester. The students are expected to have done the assigned reading in order to participate actively in the discussion. The group discussions will require students to work collectively in groups and debate the main issues raised in the literature. At the beginning of each discussion there will be a poll in class to survey the students’ opinions on the main arguments presented in their reading. Group discussions will provide an opportunity to discuss in more depth the archaeological methods employed and the interpretations of the excavation results in the Athenian Agora. Further, the group discussions provide an opportunity to move beyond individual monuments and explore the political, socio-economic, and cultural factors that influenced the architecture, function and symbolism of the Agora in different periods.

- **Research Project:** All students will be asked to write a research paper on the archaeology of the Athenian Agora (ca. 2500 words). The research paper may be a more fully developed version of their Monument Presentation or could be an expansion of one of the topics discussed in group discussion. Students can also write on other topics of their choice after they have discussed them with me.

**Deadlines:**
Midterm Exam: Monday 15 Oct
Final research paper: Friday 7 Dec
Final Exam: Friday 14 Dec
Monument presentations: throughout the semester (posted on the wiki)
Group discussions: 14 Sept, 28 Sept, 29 Oct, 9 Nov, 23 Nov, 5 Dec
Readings: Most of the lecture readings are from the required text book:
Other assigned readings will be available as pdf files in the password-protected course wiki.

WEEK 1:

Wednesday 5 Sept: Course introduction.

Friday 7 Sept: History of the excavations.

WEEK 2:

Monday 10 Sept: Brief overview of the topography of Athens and the location of the Agora.

Wednesday 12 Sept: Reconstructing the geography of the Agora based on textual sources and excavation results.

Friday 14 Sept: 3D representation of the Agora/ Group discussion.

WEEK 3:

Monday 17 Sept: Below the classical Agora I.

Wednesday 19 Sept: Below the classical Agora II. Death and burial rites in the Athenian Agora during the Mycenaean and the Geometric period.
Friday 21 Sept: A public space in the making: The Agora in the Archaic period.

WEEK 4:

Monday 24 Sept: Housing in the Athenian Agora.

Wednesday 26 Sept: The archaeology of household activities.

Friday 28 Sept: Gender spaces within the Athenian house/Group discussion.

WEEK 5:

Monday 1 Oct: Going shopping in the Athenian Agora.

Wednesday 3 Oct: Commerce and crafts.

Friday 5 Oct: Industrial activities.
WEEK 6:

Wednesday 10 Oct: Public spaces and waterworks.

Friday 12 Oct: Spectacles and performances.

WEEK 7:

Monday 15 Oct: MIDTERM EXAM

Wednesday 17 Oct: Religious life, rituals and magic.

Friday 19 Oct: One temple-many lives: The Hephaisteion.

WEEK 8:


Wednesday 24 Oct: The archaeology of Democracy II: The Tholos -Eating and drinking at public expense.
Friday 26 Oct: The archaeology of Democracy III: voting, public speaking and ostracizing.

WEEK 9:

Monday 29 Oct: Commemoration and political propaganda in the Agora/Group discussion.

Wednesday 31 Oct: The Agora in the Hellenistic period.

Friday 2 Nov: The Stoa of Attalos: From Hellenistic shopping center to archaeological museum and research center.

WEEK 10:

Monday 5 Nov: The Agora in the Roman period: political change and spatial reorganization.

Wednesday 7 Nov: From the Odeion of Agrippa to the Palace of Giants: Music, politics and illustrious benefactors.

Friday 9 Nov: Monumentality, nostalgia and new political alliances in the Athenian Agora in the Roman period/Group discussion.
WEEK 11:

Monday 12 Nov: The archaeology of destruction and the aftermath of barbaric invasions in the Agora in the Late Roman period.

Wednesday 14 Nov: From pagan temples to Christian churches.

Friday 16 Nov: Economic and religious life in the Agora in the Late Roman period.

WEEK 12:

Monday 19 Nov: The Athenian Agora in the Byzantine period.

Wednesday 21 Nov: Byzantine Houses in the Athenian Agora.

Friday 23 Nov: The afterlife of ancient monuments in the Byzantine Agora/Group discussion.

WEEK 13:

Monday 26 Nov: From Byzantine to Frankish and Ottoman.

Wednesday 28 Nov: The rediscovery of the Athenian Agora I: Romanticism and the early modern travelers.
Friday 30 Nov: The rediscovery of the Athenian Agora II: Antiquarianism and the rise of archaeology.

WEEK 14:

Monday 3 Dec: New technologies and new directions in the Agora excavations.

Wednesday 5 Dec: Who owns the Agora? The Agora as an archaeological site, working area, part of a modern town and a sacred space/Group discussion.

Friday 7 Dec: Course Review