

Classics 42-Fall 2009 DEMOCRATIC ATHENS

Munson

Classes: Kohlberg 230, M W F 10.30-11.20

Office hours: Trotter 113, T 10-11, W F 11.30-12-30, and by
appointment

The origins of democracy in the Western world, the forms first democracies took, and the features of what we may perhaps call a 'democratic mentality' are fundamental issues for us as modern Americans. In this course we will examine the circumstances that led to the rise of a unique democratic society in the fifth century BCE. We will make a special effort to understand the perception of the ancient authors who described the democratic culture of the Athenians, including their political ideology, religion, sexual mores, gender politics, social stratification and intellectual trends. Remember: primary sources are our indispensable tools. No assumption, reconstruction, speculation or argument has much value if we cannot show how it is based on the critical study of something composed, written, manufactured or built at the time. One of the major goals of this course is to provide an introduction to the problems the modern historian confronts in interpreting the ancient evidence.

The requirements of the course are

1) One single term paper, of about 10 pages, in two drafts and three stages, according to the following schedule:

- a. Choose a topic and clear it with me (October 19-23)
- b. Short proposal and preliminary bibliography (due November 2)
- c. First draft of paper is due on November 13.
- d. Discussion of first drafts with WA and myself (Nov. 16-23)
- e. Definitive paper (due December 5).

2) Two Midterm Examinations (September 25 and October 31).

3) A Final exam scheduled by the registrar during final exam period.

4) Presence and participation in class. You will be called upon at random to answer or ask questions on the assigned reading.

Texts to buy in the bookstore

Textbook:

Pomery et al. *Ancient Greece: a Political, Social and Cultural History*. Oxford.

Either first or second edition.

Ancient Authors:

The Landmark Thucydides, ed. R. B. Strassler. Thucydides wrote a contemporary account of the conflict between Athens and Sparta that shook the whole Greek World from 431 to 404 BCE. Published probably not long after the end of the war. In 8 books and interrupted at 411 BCE. Normally called *History* or *Histories* or (by modern

historians only) *History of the Peloponnesian War*. One refers to parts of this text by author, book, chapter(s) and paragraph(s). E.g., Thucydides (or Thuc.) 1.1-23 indicates the passage that goes from chapter 1 to chapter 23 of the first book of the History. Thuc. 2.3.1 means book two, chapter three and paragraph 1 of the work. The numeration is standard in all editions.

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Robert Fagles. Penguin.

A tragic trilogy (i.e., a set of three connected tragedies to be performed in sequence at one sitting) produced in Athens 458 BCE. A major document of contemporary political and religious thought. Aeschylus is the oldest of the three extant Attic playwrights (the other two being Sophocles and Euripides).

Sophocles *Oedipus the king*, trans. and intr. Bernard Knox. Washington square press for pocket books. We will be reading this famous tragedy from the point of view of the historical circumstances under which it was produced.

Aristophanes, *Acharnians, Lysistrata, Clouds*. Penguin.

In one book, three plays by the fifth century BCE Athenian comic poet. Attic comedy at this time (so-called 'Old Comedy') is political.

J. M. Moore. *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy*. U. of California Press. A collection of several texts, the most important of which is Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*. This work will be referred to in the syllabus as Aristotle, *AP* (meaning *Athenaiôn Politeia*, which is its title in Greek). We will also be reading the earlier *Constitution of the Athenians*, falsely attributed to the historian Xenophon. We are going to call the mysterious author of this pamphlet [Xenophon], Pseudo-Xenophon or, on account of his crankiness, 'Old Oligarch'.

Plato, *Symposium*, tr. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff. Hackett. Written in the first quarter of the IV century, dramatically set in 416 BCE. One of the many dialogues by the famous IV century philosopher. But we will be reading this work as cultural historians, not as philosophers.

Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens*. Penguin. This is an editorial title. Plutarch, a I century CE biographer, antiquarian and moralist, wrote a book of parallel *Lives* of notable Greeks and Romans, most of whom lived centuries before his time. This Penguin edition only contains biographies of a few individuals important for Athenian history down to 395 BCE. References to this text should be made by author, individual biographies and chapter numbers. Although Plutarch (in addition to his other limitations as an 'historian') is not really a primary source, he is nevertheless closer to the events he describes than we are and draws from earlier writings to many of which we no longer have direct access. He also reports very entertaining gossip.

Recommended:

Herodotus, *Histories*. I have ordered Strassler's **Landmark Herodotus**, but any English edition will do. This is the first historiographic work that has come down to us,

probably published as a whole around 430-424 BCE. In nine books, it explores the antecedents and causes of the conflict between East and West, which culminated in Persia's invasions of Greece in 490 and 480 BCE. One refers to parts of this text by author, book, chapter(s) and paragraph. E.g., Herodotus (or Hdt.) 3.39-62 indicates the passage that goes from chapter 39 to chapter 62 of the first book of the History. Hdt. 1.5.3 means book one, chapter five and paragraph 3 of the work. The numeration is standard in all editions.

The Greek Sophists, tr. with introduction and notes by J. Dillon and T. Gergel. Penguin. A collection of fragments from a variety of fifth-century thinkers.

Aristophanes, *Knights and other plays*. Penguin.

In one book, three plays by the fifth century BCE Athenian comic poet. Attic comedy at this time (so-called 'Old Comedy') is political.

Xenophon, *A History of My Time*. Penguin. The canonical title of this work is *Hellenica*, a year by year account that continues the interrupted history by Thucydides from 411 BC.

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*. Penguin. This is an editorial title. The collection includes three Platonic dialogues (*Apology of Socrates, Crito, Phaedo*).

Please notice: Additional readings will be assigned on hand-outs or blackboard. Hand-outs containing special assignments, chronological schemes, study questions, class outlines etc. will integrate the syllabus and be part of your assignments.

Suggestion for completing your assignment. Read and absorb the assigned portion of the textbook first: this will provide you with a general context. Your most vital task, however, is to read carefully the assigned primary sources which will 'blow up' some aspects of the textbook's survey (they represent in fact some of the evidence on which the survey is based). In some cases the connection between the textbook and primary sources will be obvious. At other times you will have to work a little harder to establish it. You will notice that the first few assignments will consist of the survey provided by the textbook, while primary sources will increase in number and importance starting from the second week of the course.

N.B. PLEASE, DO YOUR ASSIGNED READING BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. BRING YOUR ANCIENT TEXT TO CLASS (you do not need to bring your textbook to class).

CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

(it may be subject to modifications)

PRELIMINARIES: Pre-history (Bronze Age), Dark Age, Archaic Age

Week 1

Monday, August 31

Topics: Introduction to the course. Democracy ancient and modern. Our sources and the craft of the ancient historian. A glance at Greek beginnings: the Mycenaeans. Why did Greece turn out so differently from most of its neighbors? The Dark Age and the VIII century renaissance.

Wednesday, September 2

Topics: The rise of the city-state and the hoplite revolution.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 2 'The Dark Age of Greece and the Eighth Century Renaissance'** (41-80, esp. 71-80 in first edition). Optional: for the Mycenaean Age, Chapter I 'Early Greece and the Bronze Age'.

Friday, September 4

Topics: Greek Tyranny. The first hoplite state: Sparta

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 3 'Archaic Greece'** (pp. 82-130 in first edition, especially 82-109, 124-29).

Week 2

Monday, September 7

Topics: Early Athens, Solon and the origin of democratic thinking

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 4 'Sparta'** (pp. 131-157 in first edition); **Chapter 5 'The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars' up to and including 'The reforms of Solon'** (159-69 in first edition). **Aristotle, AP, ch. I-XII** (in Moore, pp. 147-156).

Wednesday, September 9

Topics: Rise and fall of tyranny in Athens.

Assignments: **Pomeroy Chapter 5 'The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars' up to and including 'The Collapse of Tyranny'** (pp. 170-74 in first edition); **Plutarch, *Life of Solon*; Herodotus 1.59-64; Aristotle, AP XIII-XIX.**

Friday, September 11

Topics: Cleisthenic democracy: *isegoria*, 'a remarkable asset'. The Persians and the Ionian Revolt.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Pomeroy Chapter 5 'The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars' up to and including 'The Ionian Rebellion'** (pp. 174-185 in first edition); **Herodotus, 5.49-56, 62-66, 69-78, 97** (Aristagoras comes to Sparta where the king Cleomenes rejects his request for help in the Ionian revolt. Athens, having recently become free of tyranny, agrees to send help.. N.B.: Herodotus narrates through digressions and flashbacks: make sure you understand the chronology of events); **Herodotus 3.80-83** ('Constitutional Debate', a theoretical

debate, representative of V century Greek political thought). **Aristotle AP XX-XXII.**

Week 3 Monday, September 14

Topics: The Marathon campaign.

Assignments: **Pomeroy Chapter 5 ‘The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars’ up to and including Athens after Marathon’** (pp. 185-192 in first edition). **Herodotus 6.94-136** (Marathon, Miltiades, Alcmaeonids).

Wednesday, September 16

Topics: The role of Athens in the defensive war of the Greeks against the Persians.

The notion of freedom, internal and external. Xerxes’ expedition.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 5 ‘The Growth of Athens and the Persian Wars’ to the end** (pp.192-199 in first edition). **Herodotus 7.138-144** (the Athenians’ choice), **8. 41-103** (Salamis)

Friday, September 18

Topics: The Plataean campaign. After the Persian Wars: ‘The Athenians and their allies’.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 6 ‘The Rivalries etc’ up to and including ‘Greek Leaders in trouble Again: Themistocles and Pausanias’** (pp. 201-209 in first edition); **Herodotus 8.108-9.11** (aftermath of Salamis); **Thucydides 1.89-99.**

Week 4 Monday, September 21

Topics: Theater and the *polis*.

Assignments: **Aeschylus, Agamemnon** (first tragedy of *Oresteia* trilogy)

Wednesday, September 23

Topics: DEMOKRATIA!

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 6, ‘The Rivalries etc’ up to and including ‘The Judicial System and State Pay for State Service’** (pp. 210-219 in first edition); **Thucydides 1.99-102.** **Aristotle AP XXIII-XXVII.** **Aeschylus, Libation Bearers** (second tragedy of *Oresteia* trilogy).

Friday, September 25

FIRST MIDTERM

Week 5 Monday, September 28

Topics: The ideology of the city-state and the issue of gender.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 6, ‘The Rivalries etc’ up to and including ‘The Birth of Tragedy: Aeschylus’** (pp. 219-225 in first edition). **Aeschylus,**

Eumenides (third tragedy of *Oresteia* trilogy). (Re-read *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*).

Wednesday, September 30

Topics: Athenians and women of Athens

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 6, 'The Rivalries etc' to the end** (pp. 225-244 in first edition). Hand-out with excerpts.

Friday, October 2

Topics: Love, homosexuality, and pederasty

Assignments: **Plato, *Symposium*; Thucydides 6.54** (digression on the VI century tyrannicides).

Week 6

Monday, October 5

Topics: Charter myths of Athenian democracy. Autochthony, ethnic superiority, humanitarianism and imperialism.

Assignments: **Plutarch, *Life of Pericles 3-11*; *Life of Theseus***; hand out with excerpts from **Lysias, *Epitaphios*** (a IV century work, but it probably follows a traditional model begun after the Persian Wars); **Thucydides 1.2-19** (*his* version of the remote past, though see also **2.15**)

Wednesday, October 7

Topics: Charter myths continue. The Parthenon etc.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 7 'Greece on the Eve of the Peloponnesian War', second half from 'The Physical Space of the Polis' to end** (pp. 274-285 in first edition); **Plutarch, *Life of Pericles, 12-22***.

Friday, October 9

Topics: Periclean leadership. The tyrant city. .

Assignments: **Aristotle, *AP, XXVII*** (in Moore, pp. 170-1). [**Xenophon**] ***Constitution of the Athenians*** (in Moore, pp. 37-47). **Thucydides 1.103-115**.

Week 7, October 12-16: FALL BREAK

N. B. Over break, beside the assignments for Monday October 24, read and outline the whole of Thuc. Book 1. Reflect on a paper topic and be ready for an appointment next week.

Week 8

Monday, October 19

Topics: Thucydides and the causes of the Great Peloponnesian War.
 Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 7 ‘Greece on the Eve of the Peloponnesian War’, from beginning to ‘Herodotus’ included** (pp. 246-262 in first edition).
Thucydides: Book 1-88 (also re-view the Pentecontaetia, 1.89-118).

N.B. SIGN UP FOR APPOINTMENTS TO DISCUSS PAPER TOPIC

Wednesday, October 21

Topics: Policies and goals of Sparta and Athens. The outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

Assignments: **Thucydides: Book 1.118-146; 2.1-10.**

Friday, October 23

Topics: The first year of the war. Pericles' Funeral Oration,
 Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’ up to and including ‘The Periclean Strategy and the Plague’** (pp. 287-293 in first edition); **Thuc. 2.10-53.**

Week 9

Monday, October 26

Topics: Impurity and error; knowledge and *techné*.
 Assignments: **Thuc. 2.54-102** (i.e., finish book 2).
Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*.

Wednesday, October 28

Topics: Greeks besieged and on trial
 Assignments: **Thucydides, book 3.1-50** (focus especially on Mitylenian debate, 36-50). **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’: ‘Cleon and Diodotus’** (pp. 293-296 in first edition).

Friday, October 31

SECOND MIDTERM

Week 10

Monday, November 2

TURN IN PAPER PROPOSAL AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Topics: ‘War, a rough master’.

Assignment: **Thucydides, finish Book 3; Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’: ‘The War Continues’ to the quotation** (pp. 296-297 in first edition).

Wednesday, November 4

Presentation and discussion of proposals

Friday, November 6

Topics: Athenian politicians and the comic stage. Cleon.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’: finish ‘The War Continues’** (pp. 297-99 in first edition). **Thucydides 4.1- 41. Aristophanes, *Knights*.**

Week 11

Monday, November 9

Topics: The Sophists and political ideology.

Assignments: **Plato, *Gorgias*** (excerpts, hand out). ***The Greek Sophists*, pp. 1-94. Thucydides, finish book 4; Pomeroy, Chapter 7 ‘Greece on the Eve of the Peloponnesian War’: Currents in Greek Thought and Education’** (pp. 267-274 in first edition); **Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’: ‘Brasidas and Chalcidice’** (pp. 299-300 in first edition).

Wednesday, November 11

Topics: The generation gap.

Assignments: **Aristophanes, *Clouds*.**

Friday, November 13

Topics: The Alcibiades syndrome. Slavery in Greece.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’ up to and including ‘The Destruction of Melos’** (pp. 300-305 in first edition); **Thuc. 5.84-116** (Melian dialogue); **Book 6.1-26; Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 1-17.**
FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER DUE. SIGN UP FOR APPOINTMENTS TO DISCUSS IT (first with Writing Center—if you wish to do that--then with me)

Week 12

Monday, November 16

Topics: Greek slavery and other forms of bondage

Wednesday, November 18

Topics: The Sicilian Expedition: phase 1.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 ‘The Peloponnesian War’: ‘The Invasion of Sicily’** (pp. 305-311 in first edition). **Thucydides, Book 6. 27-105. Plutarch *Alcibiades* 18-23.**

Friday, November 20

Topics: The failure in Sicily and its aftermath.

Assignments: **Thucydides Book 7 and the first 2 chapters of 8.**

Week 13 Monday November 23

Topics: The democracy in danger.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 'The Peloponnesian War' up to and including 'Experiments in Oligarchy'** (pp. 311-15 in first edition); **Plutarch *Alcibiades* 25-26. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*.**

Wednesday, November 25

Topics: The defeat of Athens.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 'The Peloponnesian War' up to and excluding 'The Thirty Tyrants'** (pp. 315-321 in first edition). ***Hellenica* 1.4.1-2.2.24** (pp. 69-108); **Plutarch *Alcibiades* 27-39.**

Friday, November 27

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14 Monday, November 30

Topics: The tyranny of the Thirty and the restoration of democracy.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Chapter 8 'The Peloponnesian War': 'The Thirty Tyrants'** (pp. 321-23 in first edition). **Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.3.1-2.4.43** (pp. 109-135).

Wednesday, December 2

Topics: Athens and Greece after the war.

Assignments: **Pomeroy, Pomeroy, Chapter 8 'The Peloponnesian War' to the end** (pp. 323-28 in first edition); **Plato *Apology of Socrates*.**

Friday, December 5

Topics: IV century trends.

Assignments: TERM PAPER DUE.

Week 15 Monday, December 8

Paper presentations and review of major themes of the course

