

HIST 385 *Is this the center of the world?*

Modern Greece: From Revolutionary Visions to the European Crisis

Spring Semester

Dr. Kostis Karpozilos

Course Description

A walking tour through Modern Greece History spanning from 1821 to the present

In 1935 the American ambassador to Greece remarked that developments in this peripheral European country forecast global trends and transformations. Eighty years later, amidst an unprecedented financial and social turmoil, Greece seemed to foretell the crisis and reshaping of the European project. The understanding of Greece as a laboratory of the future blended with ideas of national exceptionalism, perceptions of classical times, and links between contemporary events and the country's recent troubled past. It was indeed the history of Modern Greece that reaffirmed such notions: the Greek War of Independence (1821) underscored the downfall of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) proved to be pivotal in the unfolding of the Cold War division, the Greek transition to Democracy (1974) preceded the end of authoritarian regimes across the global south. Is Greece a unique case in Modern History?

This course explores and challenges this question by providing an overview of Modern Greek history spanning from the revolutionary visions of the 19th century until the contemporary crisis of the common European project. Leaving aside theories of national exceptionalism it aims to position Modern Greek history within the broader international context and to discuss Greece as a thought-provoking paradigm of a country encompassing a number of challenges spanning from the tension between the ancient past and the quest for a modern state to the recurring theme of being on the margin between the West and the East. The overall aim of the course is to provide students with firm background knowledge that will allow them to understand contemporary Greek society and rethink on how we conceptualize social, political and cultural transformations in any given national/international setting.

Therefore the course illustrates the links and intersections between Greek, Balkan, European and Global history. This viewpoint will enhance theoretical discussion and debate on the nature and content of transnational history and historiography, the contributions and limitations of dependence and center/periphery theories, and the role of historical experience and knowledge in the shaping of our collective perception of the world and the shaping of political imagination in the 21st century. In this context, the history of Modern Greece will become an example of how we perceive history in general and the impact of this perception in framing our response to present and future challenges. We will further explore this last aim in a series of historical tours in the city of Athens and discussing the multiple ways diverse historical legacies and memories intersect with the contemporary urban social and spatial fabric.

Course Resources and Activities

The multifaceted dimensions of this course require active participation and teamwork. The following activities will allow us to develop a dynamic team wishing to explore Modern Greek history and at the same time get a first-hand experience of what history looks like in the every-day lives of the contemporary citizens of Athens and Piraeus.

- a) The class will be split up in three groups and each group will prepare and make a short presentation (20-30 mins) to the rest of the class for the following thematic units/axes of the course [see class schedule: **2) Nationalism: Refugees and Minorities 3) The Age of War 4) Democracy?**]. Presentations will count towards the final grade, but do not necessarily need to be tied to the content of the final (individual) paper.
- b) Following each thematic unit we will take a tour in different neighborhoods of Athens in order to discover the living presence of historical events in the contemporary urban structure. These walking tours offer the ideal setting for the group presentations.
- c) As far as readings are concerned we will simultaneously work on two tracks: academic works and a wide variety of primary sources, memoirs, and literary texts.
- d) This course involves a significant amount of writing of different kinds: oral presentations, poster, mid-term exam and a final paper.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course you should be able to discuss and handle topics of Modern Greek history and to position them in a broader transnational context contributing in a comparative framework of analysis that highlights the multiple interconnections between national and international developments. This will allow a critical reflection on the dominant interpretations of the Greek crisis as an expression of an intrinsically “Greek

problem”. At the same time the course will challenge preconceived perceptions of how historical consciousness operates and the necessity of revisiting the way we study social, political and cultural transformations in any given national/international setting. In this context, you will be encouraged, and assisted, to discover the shifting social and cultural landscape of Athens and draw links with historical legacies and memories. Therefore this course will provide important insights into your overall CYA experience.

Course Requirements

. Participation/Readings

As this is a course designed to enhance active participation, it is evident that it is necessary to engage with the weekly readings and in-class discussion.

. Group Presentation

A 20/30-minute presentation will take place during our walking-tours. This is a collaborative exercise, aiming to foster cooperation, in-group and in-class discussion, and to sharpen your analytical, written and oral presentation skills.

. Oral Presentation

Each week, one student will be in charge of leading the discussion by offering a critical reading of the primary/secondary sources/readings to the rest of the class. These presentations will last about 15 minutes. Students should avoid offering lengthy summaries of the readings and must focus, instead, on positioning the issues discussed within a broader context.

. Poster

Students will work in groups and prepare a poster (A0 size) to be exhibited within the CYA facilities. It should consist of 2/3 images and illustrations and 1/3 text. You can choose any topic you prefer, other than the one you choose for your research essay. On a certain day and time you will be requested to stand next to the poster and answer any questions by interested parties.

. Midterm Exam

A mid-term exam: questions will allow you to demonstrate how your own academic interests are in dialogue with the themes discussed in class and at the same time address key-issues of Modern Greek history.

. Final Paper

3-5.000 words final paper: the final paper will address one of the core issues linked to the course. You are expected to make use of the available readings and in-class experience.

Due dates:

March 20: short proposal/abstract with a clear research question and include an explanation of your tentative thoughts about the context and your objectives.

May 3: 2-3 page working outline that explains the context, the problem, your tentative recommendations, and a partial bibliography.

May 18: Submission

Grading and Evaluation

Class Participation: 15%

Poster: 15%

Oral Presentation: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final: 30%

Grades are intended to give you a sense of the quality of a particular piece of work: roughly speaking, a B means that you have done a good job with the writing, the ideas, and the organization of the work; a C conveys that the work lacks some important qualities and has some problems, while an A means that the work is exemplary in some key ways: the writing is particularly clear, the ideas thoroughly treated, the organization of the presentation well considered and effective.

Class Participation: Your attendance and in class writing and analysis – is vitally important to your success in this course.

Please see the following:

Class Participation (15%)

You will be expected to participate in the class discussion on a regular basis. We will be discussing different themes and our scheduled visits and tours are based on the idea of a vibrant debate around key themes discussed in class. I know that some people are less comfortable than others participating in class, so I will work to make the environment as comfortable for everyone as possible. This might entail debates structured on certain questions and discussion following the team presentations. I will meet each one of you *at least* twice during office hours over the course of the semester to discuss how you feel about the class and to listen to your ideas about its development.

Poster (15%)

You will work in groups and prepare a poster (A0 size) to be exhibited within the CYA facilities. It should consist of 2/3 images and illustrations and 1/3 text. You can choose any topic you prefer, other than the one you choose for your research essay. On a certain day and time you will be requested to stand next to the poster and answer any questions by interested parties.

Oral Presentation (20%)

Each week, one of you will be in charge of leading the discussion by offering a critical reading of the primary/secondary sources/readings to the rest of the class. These presentations will last about 15 minutes.

Midterm Exam (20%)

You will have a midterm exam in this course. Questions will allow you to demonstrate how your own academic interests are in dialogue with the themes discussed in class and at the same time address key-issues of Modern Greek history

Final paper (30%)

The final paper will address one of the core issues linked to the course. You are expected to make use of the available readings, primary sources (in English) and in-class debate. It will involve a research question, argumentation and above all originality of thought. We will have the opportunity to discuss the writing assignments in full detail and I am more than willing to follow and help in the development of your individual writing projects. Therefore it is necessary to follow the proposed timeline (see above).

Course Readings

Clogg, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Gallant, Thomas. *Modern Greece*. London: Arnold, 2001

**** Primary sources, narratives, literary texts and memoir relating to every thematic unit will be available for further reading*

Week/Class Day/Date Topic/Readings/Assignments

1-1 Jan 30 **Introduction to the course**

This is an introductory meeting. We will go through the readings and assignments, while discussing our perceptions on Modern Greek History.

1-2 Feb 1 **Is this the center of the World?**

This is an introductory meeting addressing the main question of the course: how does Modern Greek history relate to global developments and broader issues? Is every country -and its history- exceptional?

★□Mazower (2011): ‘Democracy’s Cradle, Rocking the World’, *NYT*, 6/29/2011

A Modern State and an Ancient Past

The first thematic unit of the course addresses the birth of the Modern Greek State in the 1820s-1830s. Two main issues arise: the connection between the Greek War of Independence with the demise of the Age of Empires and the role of the ancient past in the shaping a modern state of the 19th century.

2-3 Feb 6 **A Modern State and an Ancient Past I**

How did the idea of a Greek independent state come into existence? We will discuss the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) within the context of the rising nationalisms that challenged the multiethnic Ottoman Empire.

★□ Gallant (2001): 1-30

★□ Clogg (2013): 7-45

2-4 Feb 8 **A Modern State and an Ancient Past II**

The Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) as an international event: how did revolutionary movements in the Balkans stir passions and interest across Europe? What was the role of the ancient past in shaping the European imagination regarding the newly found Greek State?

★□ Gallant (2015): 107-184

★□ Hobsbawm (1988): 138-182

3-5 Feb 13 **A Modern State and an Ancient Past III**

This is our first field trip to the Kallimarmaro Stadium (right across the CYA facilities). In 1896 the stadium hosted the first modern Olympic games. We will discuss the historical context that made the revival of the Olympics possible in the late 19th century and the role of historical reenactment in contemporary societies.

★□ Hamilakis (2007): 57-123

★□ Bastea (2000): 181-216

Nationalism, Refugees and Minorities

The second thematic unit of the course addresses the complicated relation between Greek nationalism, ethnic, religious minorities and refugee populations. Focusing on a period spanning from the Balkan Wars to the interwar exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey we will discuss Greece as a nation in motion. In this context, this thematic unit challenges the idea of a fixed Greek national identity and relates to the importance of the minority question in the shaping of the interwar European map.

3-6 Feb 15 **Nationalism, Refugees and Minorities I**

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) signaled the rise of competing nationalisms in the region and a quest for succession of the declining Ottoman Empire. How did historical claims inform the nationalist project and how were Greek borders redrawn?

★□ Gallant (2001): 129-146

★□ Hobsbawm (1989): 142-164 and 302-327

★□ Clogg (2013): 46-97

3-7 Feb 20 **Nationalism, Refugees and Minorities II**

The Asia Minor Expedition (1919-1922) marked the terminal defeat of the Greek nationalist project and signaled a new period in Greek-Turkish relations. The outcome was an unprecedented organized exchange of population between the two countries and the arrival of one million refugees in Greece. How was this possible and how did the Greek crisis generated the rise of international humanitarian aid programs?

★□Mazower (1998): 40-76

★□Hirschon (1989): 1-55

4-8 Feb 22 **Nationalism, Refugees and Minorities III**

The arrival of the refugees altered the ethnic and religious composition of the Greek state. In this lesson we will discuss Thessaloniki as an example of a forgotten multiethnic and multi-religious Greek past. Focusing on the city's Jewish community we will explore the diversity of a Greek city in the interwar years.

★□Mazower (2006): 305-370

★□Fleming (2008): 49-88

4-9 Feb 26

This is our second field trip, this time to Kaisariani neighborhood. Kaisariani was one of the Athenian neighborhoods populated by refugees in the 1920s. We will explore the urban landscape, eyewitness the remaining structures of the 1920s-1930s and the signs of American and international humanitarian aid of the period. During the walking tour the second team will make a presentation followed by group discussion.

The Age of War

The third thematic unit of the course addresses the 1940s, a decade marked by the Second World War, the Occupation experience and the ensuing Civil War. We will discuss the transformative power of war and the role of these events in shaping Modern Greece. By the end of the 1940s nothing reminded interwar Greece. On the same time Greek events, mainly the Civil War, had significant implications for global developments- as in the case of the Cold War. What was at stake? How does total war transform longstanding notions, ideas and perceptions?

5-10 Mar 6 **The Age of War I**

The Occupation experience transformed the Greek social landscape. We will address the catastrophic consequences of the 1941-1944 years, highlighting the German policies regarding the country's finances and the handling of its Jewish communities.

★□Mazower (1993): 265-353

5-11 Mar 8 **The Age of War II**

National resistance to the Occupation forces remains one of the most contested episodes of Modern Greek history. We will discuss how the rise of the Left created aspirations for a postwar transition marked by a novel social contract and modernization policies. How were those expectations shattered and how did Greek events shape the Cold War dichotomy?

★□Iatrides (1972): 200-255

★□Sfikas-Carabott (2004): 17-39 and 189-208

5-12 Mar 13 **The Age of War III**

This is our third field trip, this time devoted to the 1940s. We walk around the Syntagma Square and discuss its topography as a ground of popular protest and the particulars of the December 1944 events that led to the Civil War. During the walking tour the third team will make a presentation followed by group discussion.

6-13 Mar 15 **Midterms**

6-14 Mar 20 **Final Paper-Abstracts**

We are going to discuss your thoughts and ideas on the final paper.

Please write an abstract (a paragraph will do), so we have a point of reference for the discussion.

7-15 Mar 22 **Democracy? I**

In this meeting we will discuss the Civil War and its legacies. Positioning the Civil War within the Cold War context we will address the complicated question of transitional justice and the quest for normality after the rupture that divided Greek society. How did the long-standing repercussions of the 1940s division give rise to politics of memory and to what extent is Modern Greece the byproduct of that era?

★□Gallant (2001): 178-202

★□Voglis (2000): 73-90

★□Panourgia (2009): 81-123

7-16 Mar 27 **Democracy? II**

The crippled Greek democracy of the 1950s and 1960s was followed by a military dictatorship in 1967. How did authoritarian legacies of the past interplay with the undemocratic 1967-1974 regime? We will discuss this question and highlight the dynamic entrance of the youth as a powerful force in politics and culture.

★□Clogg (2013): 142-165

★□Kornetis (2015): chapter 1 and 5

7-17 Mar 29 **Democracy? III**

This is our fourth field trip. We will visit the Polytechnic Schools in downtown Athens, a building with significant symbolic importance in Modern Greek politics as it is associated with the student revolt against the military regime in 1973. We will discuss the role of memory, legacies and history in the contemporary Greek social and political culture. During the walking tour the fourth team will make a presentation followed by group discussion.

7-18 Apr 10 **Poster Session**

We are going to work on the poster assignment: discuss aesthetics and content, thing about alternative ways of conveying a message and how to involve ourselves in public history projects.

Greece/Europe: Past and Present

The fifth, and last, thematic unit of the course address the Third Greek Republic (1974-) as a conscious social and political project to overcome the divisions and hardships of the past. The downfall of the military regime in 1974 marked the country's transition into a new reality. In light of the contemporary Greek and Eurozone crisis we will examine the complicated Greek/European relation and how the country's past shaped contemporary realities.

8-19 Apr 24 **Greece/Europe: Past and Present I**

One of the main questions of the 1974 transition concerned the country's modernization as a way to safeguard Democracy. We will discuss the European project (European Economic Community) in relation to the downfall of the three dictatorships across the European South (Greece, Spain and Portugal) and the politics of modernization of the 1970s and 1980s.

★□Gallant (2001): 203-218

9-20 Apr 26 **Greece/Europe: Past and Present II**

The contemporary crisis has generated conflicting interpretations of the post-1974 politics. Taking into account the main developments of the era can we escape from the demonization or celebration of the recent Greek and European past?

★□Kalyvas (2015): Chapter 6

★□Clogg (2013): 166-221

9-21 May 3 **Greece/Europe: Past and Present III**

The political and financial dimensions of the contemporary crisis have given rise to

stereotypical representations across the European South/North axis: are Greeks lazy? There is no real answer to this question, but we will discuss how it appeared and more importantly the necessity of moving beyond stereotypes in order to understand existing realities. The following essay will help us:

★□Hirschon (2014): 189-209

10-22 May 8 **Greece/Europe: Past and Present IV**

This is our last field trip. We will visit the University of Athens (Zographou) in order to engage with contemporary conditions in a Greek academic environment and meet and discuss with academics and students.

10-23 May 10 **Documentary Day**

The recent refugee crisis is one of the major transformative events of our times: it illustrates the interconnections between different areas of the planet and the significance of population movements in the shaping and reshaping of history. For Greece and the European Union the refugee question is a major challenge that has already shifted the public agenda to questions regarding the future of Europe and the changing nature of citizenship and national identity. Last but not least, the cautious response of European nations to the requests of the refugee populations brings forth an alternative viewpoint: is this a refugee crisis or a reception crisis?

Screening: 4.1 miles (Documentary, 2016: Daphne Matziaraki)

Bibliography

Bastea, Eleni. *The Creation of Modern Athens: Planning the Myth*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Clogg, Richard. *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Fleming, Katherine. *Greece: a Jewish History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Gallant, Thomas. *Modern Greece*. London: Arnold, 2001.

Gallant, Thomas. *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768 to 1913: The Long Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Hamilakis, Yannis. *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology and National Imagination in Greece*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hirschon, Renée. *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor*

- Refugees in Piraeus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Hirschon, Renée. "Cultural Mismatches: Greek Concepts of Time, Personal Identity, and Authority in the Context of Europe." In *Europe in Modern Greek History*, edited by Kevin Featherstone. London: Hurst & Company, 2014.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*. London: Abacus, 1988.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Empire: Europe 1875-1914*. London: Abacus, 1989.
- Iatrides, John. *Revolt in Athens: the Greek Communist "Second Round," 1944-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Kalyvas, Stathis. *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Kornetis, Kostis. *Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics and the 'Long 1960s' in Greece*, Berghahn Books, 2015.
- Mazower, Mark. *Inside Hitler's Greece: the Experience of Occupation, 1941-1944*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Mazower, Mark. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Mazower, Mark. *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006.
- Panourgia, Neni. *Dangerous Citizens: the Greek Left and the Terror of the State*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
- Voglis, Polymeris. "Between Negation and Self-Negation: Political Prisoners in Greece, 1945-1950". In *After the War was Over: Reconstruction the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, edited by Mark Mazower. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.