

ANCH/CLST 1207: Greek Parties, Speech, and Identity

Spring 2023

Class time: Tues. and Thurs. 1:45-3:15

Class location: Museum 330

Instructor: Irene Elias, ielias@sas.upenn.edu, she/her

Office hours and location: TBD, Cohen 251

The ancient Greek symposium was an elite drinking party practiced for hundreds of years, inspiring many works of literature and art. In this course we will learn about the ancient Greek world through the institution of the symposium and will consider how behavior and speech reveal certain identities of both ancient and modern people. We will read from a selection of authors in translation including Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, and Athenaeus, gaining skills to approach ancient texts critically, and will watch a variety of modern speakers to expand our view of public speaking into different contexts. By studying the ways in which conversation is conducted at the symposium and in our own experiences, students will gain a greater understanding of purposeful speech and how best to be understood by any given audience, developing personalized techniques for public speaking and practicing several varieties of public speaking inspired by the symposium.

Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with the ancient Greek world and the institution of the symposium
- Form an understanding of the literary genre of the symposium, especially Plato's famous text
- Build skills reading and analyzing primary and secondary literature
- Confront unexpected cultural expectations within the Greek sources and use them to learn about our own cultural assumptions
- Gain a deeper understanding of public speaking techniques, especially relating to self-presentation/identity and speaking to different audiences
- Create a personalized approach to public speaking that can be used in multiple scenarios beyond this course
- Improve skills and become confident with oral presentation

Course Requirements

- Attendance
 - You are required to attend class. If you have to miss a class or will be late, please email me at least one hour before class begins and fill out a Course Absence Report. You are responsible for making up missed work and

knowing the material from the missed class. Please reach out to me if you need help!

- Student athletes whose schedules conflict with certain classes are excused provided they have a letter from the athletics department with the necessary dates, and provided they make up any missed work.
- Students with a diagnosed learning disability on record with the office of Students' Disabilities Services should discuss their needs with me and must provide documentation from the office by Fall Break.
- Participation
 - Participation for this class means contributing usefully and thoughtfully to our conversations and writing questions about the readings on Canvas whenever required.
 - This is a seminar class, based on discussion. To facilitate our discussions (and make them as fun as possible!), please have the assigned texts read and homework done by the time you get to class. Think about what you've read, bring the texts with you, and be ready to read aloud, discuss, and ask and answer questions. Your preparation will determine the quality and extent of your participation in class, affecting our communal experience and your success and grade.
 - Please feel free to speak up when you have something to say—you don't have to raise your hand or wait to be called on—as long as you are not interrupting anyone.
- Respect for all peers and instructors, including those with differing viewpoints
 - I'm not right about everything! Nor are the Greeks! Nor even the scholars we'll read! Don't be afraid to disagree, but always maintain respect.
 - Food and drinks are allowed in the class, but please refrain from eating while one of your peers is giving a presentation.
- This is a CWiC Critical Speaking Seminar, so you will have to speak!
 - This means that we will focus on developing public speaking techniques while also learning ancient content. Most of your grade will therefore be based on oral assignments, though there will be (very brief) written components. There is no midterm or final exam, but we will have a spoken final project. Don't be scared if you've never practiced speaking before! Your grade for these assignments will take into account improvement over time.
 - Two of the oral assignments during the semester will be recorded, and you will watch the recording before meeting with me to discuss how it went and how it could be improved.
 - Each student will be required to meet with a CWiC advisor to prepare for two of the oral assignments. These advisors are undergraduates trained by the CWiC program and assigned to our course to help you with your oral

assignment preparation. They will not grade your work or help you with course content. The meetings will be confidential, but the advisors will report to me if you fail to meet with them. Failure to attend these meetings will impact your grade for the relevant oral assignment.

- For information about the CWiC program, visit <https://cwic.sas.upenn.edu/>
- I welcome comments and feedback. If you feel you are struggling, have questions about the course or your performance, or need more help/context/practice/etc, please don't hesitate to email me, come to my office hours, or speak to me after class. If the question is about a grade you have been given, please email me one written page explaining your issue before meeting with me.

Required Materials

- There will be readings assigned for each class, including ancient primary sources and modern secondary sources. All assigned readings will be made available for free over the course's Canvas page or through the Penn Library website. However, since we will focus especially on Plato's *Symposium*, you may want to purchase a hard copy for yourself. If so, please purchase the translation by Nehamas and Woodruff, 1989.
- Please bring all assigned texts to class.
- You may conditionally use laptops or tablets in class to consult our texts and take notes. I strongly recommend turning on "Do Not Disturb" if your laptop has that capability. Any other use of these devices, such as emailing, checking social media, reading the news, or shopping, is harmful to the progress of this class and is disrespectful toward the course, the instructors, and your peers. If you use your computer in class for anything else than the purpose of this seminar, I will ask you to turn it off and it will detrimentally affect your participation grade. If the problem persists, all devices will be banned.
- No phone use or vaping is permitted in class.

Academic Integrity

The University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity defines plagiarism as using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. If you present someone's words, thoughts, or data as your own, no matter whether you heard them or read them online or in a book, you are committing plagiarism.

To avoid plagiarism, you must cite the original author every time you:

- Use an author's exact written or spoken words. In this case, you must also identify the words by using quotation marks or indenting the quote on both sides of the margin.
- Paraphrase someone's written or spoken words.
- Use facts provided by someone else that are not common knowledge.

- Make significant use of someone’s ideas or theories.
- It is also plagiarism to pay a person or service for a paper, hand in someone else’s paper as your own, or cut and paste text from the Internet to your paper without citing the source. **This includes using AI to write for you.** AI is notoriously bad at composing accurate academic work, and it will not be difficult to tell if it is used.

If I determine that a student has submitted plagiarized material, I can choose to fail the assignment and/or report the student to the Office of Student Conduct. If the student is found responsible following formal procedures, the student may face serious consequences, including suspension. Whatever action is taken by the Office of Student Conduct, the failure of academic integrity becomes a part of the student’s permanent record and may have a negative impact on future academic and career goals.

Assignments and Grading

Participation 30%

- Attendance
- Thoughtful additions to class discussions
- Thoughtful questions about the readings posted on Canvas when assigned

Public Speaking Responses 10%

- Two times per semester, please attend a live public speaking event of your choice (see me if you need help) and write up 1-2 pages answering the following questions:
 - What sort of event was it? Who was speaking, and on what topic?
 - How did they style their speech? What feeling did they give off as a speaker, and why? Were they an effective or ineffective speaker, and why?
 - What aspects of their speech would you like to emulate or to avoid?
 - Did they do anything that surprised you?

Oral Presentation 1: Character Study 15%

- Meeting with CWiC Advisor to prepare
- 15-minute recorded solo presentation about a character in any text we have read so far, providing backstory, additional information, and an analysis of how this character speaks, interacts with others, and uses or shows their identities
- Brief emulation of the analysis you have given, wherein you speak about anything you like while exhibiting purposeful style/identity markers/etc
- After the presentation, watch the recording and meet with me to discuss

Oral Presentation 2: Group Presentation 20%

- Meeting with CWiC Advisor to prepare

- Recorded group presentation (5-10 minutes per speaker) on a topic of your choice (from a list provided or chosen through discussion with me) about an aspect of the symposium that clashes with or complicates something that we expect in our modern culture/dining habits
- Grades are individual for each member of the group and are dependent both on how well you explain and nuance the topic, and how well you engage your audience
- After the presentation, watch the recording and meet with me to discuss

Final Project

25%

- Submit a topic and a list of public speaking elements you wish to follow/avoid
- Explain your final project in a lightning round class session and take questions and comments; provide questions and comments for fellow students
- Create a short recording of your choice (TikTok/Instagram video, podcast, formal presentation, etc) about something you found especially interesting in class this semester (explaining a scholarly or philosophical idea/argument, an aspect of the ancient world, a debated topic, an extension of one of your previous presentations, etc). Be sure it is clear, informative, interesting, and follows the criteria you set for yourself and handed in to me in what you believe makes a good public speech—this is your final chance to flex your skills! The recording should demonstrate your understanding of an aspect of this course and go beyond a surface level dissemination of information, eg. by using analogies, references to scholarship, or explanations of complex ideas.

Course Plan

Generally on Tuesdays we will ensure that we understand and can analyze a section from Plato; on Thursdays we will complicate the picture using other texts and discuss relevant modern public speaking techniques and examples.

The following plan lays out the topics for each week, Plato readings, important due dates, and the specific assignments for the first three weeks. Specific assignments for each subsequent week will be posted to Canvas.

Week 1: Introduction to Ideas, Identity, and the Symposium

Jan. 18: Introductions

- Bring in a short passage (about one paragraph) of anything you like that you will be willing to read aloud in class.

Week 2: History, Literature, and the Symposium

Jan. 23: The symposium and ancient Greece

Jan. 25: No class meeting. Instead:

- Read Plato's *Symposium* in full (the Nehamas translation).
- Post on Canvas three detailed questions that you would like to answer over the course of the semester about the text, a certain section of the text, an issue that it raises, etc.

Week 3: Starting a Story

Jan. 30: Getting to know Plato and the structure of his *Symposium*

- Re-read the "Introductory Dialogue" of Plato's *Symposium* (172A-178A).
- Read David Halperin, "Plato on the Erotics of Narrativity."
- Consider: Why does Plato start the text in this way? How does the framing of the text affect how we read it? How does it affect how we can use it as a historical source?

Feb. 1: Considering the beginnings of stories

- Read selected primary sources: Luc. *Symp.* 1-6; Ath. 1.1a-3f; Plut. *TT* 1.612C-E
- Bring in one or two news articles (from anywhere you like) with particularly effective or ineffective beginnings.
- Consider: Why did these authors choose to start their texts the way they did, and how does it affect how we read those texts? What makes an opening effective? What should the opening of a speech do? How can we structure the opening of a speech to do what we want it to do?

Week 4: Creating a Sense of Community

Feb. 6: Phaedrus' Speech

Feb. 8: On reading the room

Week 5: Us vs. Them: The Power and Problems of Exclusion

Feb. 13: Pausanias' Speech

Feb. 15: Exclusionary Greeks

Week 6: Jargon and Pomposity: Explaining a Complex Topic

Feb. 20: Erixymachus' Speech

- Information about Presentation 1 will be handed out and discussed.

Feb. 22: On jargon

Week 7: Joking Around

Feb. 27: Aristophanes' Speech 1: Ancient Contexts

- **Choice of Character for Presentation 1 Due**

Feb. 29: Aristophanes' Speech 2: Modern Interpretations

Mar. 2-10: Spring Break, No Class!

Week 8: Loose Ends and Presentation 1

Mar. 12: Aristophanes Loose Ends and Last Discussion before Presentation

Mar. 14: **Presentation 1**

Week 9: Quoting the Poets, or Showing Off

Mar. 19: Agathon's Speech

Mar. 21: Joking Around and Citing Sources

Week 10: Q&A

Mar. 26: Socrates Questions Agathon, Diotima Questions Socrates

Mar. 28: Q&A

- **First Speaker Evaluation Due**

Week 11: Getting Philosophical

Apr. 2 and 4: Diotima's Speech

- Groups will be assigned for the group presentation. Information and a topics list will be handed out.

Week 12: When the Unexpected Occurs

Apr. 9: Alcibiades' Speech

- **Group Presentation Topic Due**

Apr. 11: TBD

Week 13: Ending a Story

Apr. 16: The end of the *Symposium*

Apr. 18: Finishing a Story

Week 14: Group Presentations

Apr. 23: No Class

Apr. 25: **Group Presentations**

Week 15: Final Symposium

Apr. 30: Final Symposium

- **Topic and Style of Final Project Due**

May 3: **List of Public Speaking Techniques to Emulate/Avoid in Final Due**

May 14: **Final Project Due**