



Arcadia Center for Hellenic, Mediterranean and Balkan Studies

Arcadia University

GREC ARMO 310/HIMO 310 Athens on Site II: History and Architecture in Modern Athens
Credits: 3

Course description

This course examines architecture and the social and cultural developments in the city of Athens since the beginning of the 19th century. Its aim is to familiarize students with the urban environment of Athens and explore it through an interdisciplinary approach that combines history, art, architecture and social sciences.

Rationale and Impact of Course:

How has the city of Athens acquired its present character? What impact has urban design and civic architecture had on Athenian lifestyles and the national aspirations of the modern Greek state? Athens is a city overwhelmed by numerous archaeological and historical sites, set in a rather chaotic and, to say the least, confusing urban environment, which the visitor is called upon to “forget” or in the best case, “ignore” in order to appreciate and enjoy the important cultural settings.

The class instead of “hiding” that “confusing” part of the city makes an effort to explore it in a guided way, underlining the significance of cultural and historic studies into decoding social confusion and helping students to make sense of what they see.

The course is structured around lectures, specific readings, and visits to different parts of the city, discussing and exploring challenges associated with timely and controversial issues of urban culture. Its aim is to familiarize students with the urban environment and the history of Athens, and to help them develop a better understanding of the modern city through their readings, observation and practical experience.

Learning Outcomes and Expected Student Competences:

As the course proceeds, it is hoped to help students:

- Acquire broad knowledge of the architecture and the urban planning of Athens in the 19th and 20th century;
- Become aware of the political and cultural forces that have shaped modern architecture in Athens;
- Recognize the origins and implications of various images of modern Greece and the role that architectural movements from Western Europe have played in their formation;
- Examine the complex relationship between the different “pasts” of Greece as these are reflected in its architecture, as well as the various ways this relationship is conceived;
- Move beyond static, compartmentalized understandings of culture toward ones that recognize variation, change and interconnectedness;
- Sharpen their skills of social observations and analysis;

- Build confidence during oral presentations, improve their writing skills through writing assignments and learn to construct their arguments and train of thought using both analytical and synthetic methods;
- Enhance their ability to deconstruct various presentations of Athens and view life in it from a critical perspective;
- Reflect upon the elusive nature of cross-cultural understanding and what it takes to move beyond our assumptions and preconceptions;
- Experience modern Athens in a more direct and personal manner by exploring its architecture and interacting with its residents.

Course Requirements:

Participation, Reading response papers = 25%

On-Site Report = 30%

Mid-term = 15%

Final project (presentation, research paper) = 30%

Reading Assignments:

All required can be found on reserve in the AC Library. Reference – Guide books are also to be found in the Library and will be used for the on-site reports which comprise half of the class meetings and refer to the presentation of specific monuments and neighborhoods in the city. Handouts with the outline of each class meeting are also provided to the students.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Bastea, E. 2000 The creation of modern Athens: planning the myth. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. ISBN: 0521641209; Cost: To Be Determined.
- Fessas – Emmanouil, H. 2001 Essays on Neohellenic architecture. J.F. Costopoulos Foundation. Athens. ISBN: 9609159702; Cost: To Be Determined.
- Phillipides, D. (ed.) 2001 Urban Housing of the 1930s: modern Architecture in pre-war Athens. Nereus Editions. Athens. ISBN: Unavailable. Cost: To Be Determined.

Reference [Guide] books

Llewellyn Smith, M. 2004 Athens: a cultural and literary history. Signal Books. Oxford.

Municipality of Athens, Elliniki Etairia 2004 Heritage walks in Athens

Rupp, D. 2002 Peripatoi: Athenian Walks. ROAD editions. Athens.

Shugart, D. 2001 Athens by neighbourhood. Ellinika Grammata. Athens.

Tomkinson, J. 2002 Athens: the city. Anagnosis. Athens.

Additional Bibliography

Boyer, Ch. M. 1996 The city of collective memory. The M.I.T. Press

Droste, M. 2002 Bauhaus. 1919-1933. Taschen. Berlin.

Giebelhausen, M. (ed.) 2003 The architecture of the museum. Manchester University Press.
Manchester and New York.

Papageorgiou-Vanetas, A. 1994 The Ancient Heritage and the historic Cityscape in a modern
Metropolis. The Archaeological Society at Athens. Athens.

Skopelitis, S.B. 2001. Νεοκλασικά της Αθήνας και του Πειραιά. [English introduction] Olkos. Athens

Skousbøll, K. 2006 Greek Architecture now. Studio Art Bookshop. Athens.

Steffens, M. 2003 Schinkel. Taschen. Köln

Links:

www.culture2000tee.gr

www.docomomo.com

Suggested Research Projects:

- **Urban Housing of the 1930s (architectural style, use, presentation of main characteristic, conservation)**
Philippides, D. Urban Housing of the 1930s: modern architecture in pre-war Athens
- **The Buildings in one of the main street at the centre of Athens**
Stadiou, Aioulou, Panepistimiou, Vas. Sofias, Patisiwn
- **Greek Museums (architectural style, policy, urban planning/network)**
Benaki Museum, National Gallery, National Archaeological Museum, Museum of Cycladic Art
- **Public Space and Modern sculptures in Athens**
National Gallery, Four centuries of Greek painting (section on sculpture)

Other policies:

- Participation is not just about talking, giving opinions or exercising critical capacities. It should also involve giving evidence of reading either the material assigned or other sources relevant to the subject matter.
- One unexcused absence is permitted. After that, 2.5 grade points will be deducted for every unexcused absence. If you are ill, you must inform Jan or Joanna before class meeting time for your absence to count as excused.
- Each student is responsible for performing academic tasks in such a way that honesty is not in question. All tests, term papers, oral and written assignments, and other academic efforts are to be the work of the student presenting the material. Any use of wording, ideas, or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers requires the explicit citation of the source; use of the exact wording requires a 'quotation' format.

Course outline (tentative):

Week Topic - Readings

1 **Introduction: course description; Athens under the Ottoman empire**

Required Reading

Bastea, The creation of Modern Athens, ch. 1: 1-14

On site visit – assignments (old town -Plaka)

2 **Urban life in 19th century Europe; The foundation of the Greek State: Planning New Athens (1830s-1850s)**

Required Reading

Bastea, The creation of Athens, ch. 4: 69-104

Optional Reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic Architecture, pp.18-31

Steffens, Shinkel

Skopelitis, Νεοκλασικά της Αθήνας και του Πειραιά

On site visit - assignments (historical center: Athens City Museum, Ermou St, Aiolou St, Patision St)

3 **The peak of Athenian Neo-classicism (1870-1880)**

Required Reading

Bastea, The creation of Athens, ch. 6: 146-180

Optional Reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic Architecture, pp.18-47

Skopelitis, Νεοκλασικά της Αθήνας και του Πειραιά

On site Visit – assignments (markets and public buildings: Psyri, Athinas St., National Theater, Panepistimiou St.)

4 **Athens in the turn of the century [choice of projects]**

Required Reading

Bastea, The creation of modern Athens, ch.7: 181-216

Optional Reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic architecture, pp. 58-95

On site visit – assignments (administrative center - palace: 1st cemetery, Stadium, Zappeio, Irodou Attikou, Rigillis Square,)

5 **European architecture in the 20th century (Bauhaus); The neo-vernacular movement (Zachos, Pikionis); The modern**

movement of the 1930s

Required reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic architecture, pp.32-47, 96-117

Phillipides, Urban housing of the 1930s, pp.19-27

Optional Reading

Phillipides, Urban housing of the 1930s

Droste, M. 2002 Bauhaus. 1919-1933. Taschen. Berlin.

On site visit - assignments (“intellectual” neighbourhoods in Athens: Kolonaki – Exarchia)

6 **Interwar trends and the difficult years of reconstruction**

Required reading

Fessas – Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic architecture, pp. 154-166, 254-269

On site visit – assignments (historical neighbourhoods in Athens - Kaisariani)

7 **On site visit – assignments** (“cultural” neighbourhoods in Athens: Acropolis –Phillopapou Hill;)

Midterm exam

8 **The short lived spring (1958-1966)** Discussion of projects

Required Reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic architecture, pp. 166-211, 270-281

Optional Reading

Papageorgiou –Vanetas, Athens: a vision of classicism

On site visit assignments (residential neighbourhoods in Athens: Kypseli)

9 **Construction Gigantism and architectural crisis (1966-1975)**

Required Reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays on Neohellenic architecture, pp. 212-233, 282-289

Urban architecture and Athenian lifestyles through Greek cinematography
(DVD Benaki Museum)

10 **Preliminary presentation of projects**

The preservation and abuse of the 20th heritage buildings

Required reading

Fessas-Emmanouil, Essays in Neohellenic architecture, pp. 322-342
Cultural capitals of Europe; Museums in Athens

Required reading

Giebelhausen, M. (ed.) 2003 The architecture of the museum, pp.1-14, 160-182

11 **On site visit – assignments** (industrial –“cultural” neighborhoods in Athens: Gazi)

Athens in 2004

Required reading

Skousboll, K. 2006 Greek Architecture Now, chapter 4: Attica and the sites of the Olympic Games 2004, pp.169.

12 **On site visit** – [Olympic Stadium]