



KIIS Greece, Winter 2020-2021

RELS 222 Christians, Jews, and Pagans in the Greco-Roman World

Instructor: Dr. Steven Watkins

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will examine the historical contexts and religious debates among ancient Pagans, Jews, and Christians in their settings around the Mediterranean Sea—especially Greece and on the Island of Crete. We will read primary sources from each of these groups with an eye toward hybridization in such holy sites as Athens, Delos, and Knossos. Minoan and Mycenaean traditions will be a special focus given class visits to ancient archaeological sites and museums in Athens and Crete.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS creates and offers high-quality education abroad programs for students from diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help transform students into global citizens who have personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizing headlines and outdated cultural clichés to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating in KIIS Study Abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Articulate the relationship between ideas, experiences, and place;
- 2) Develop tools to engage with diverse people in the local cultures; and,
- 3) Explore other peoples' values and clarify their own.

In the equivalent of one, single-spaced typed page, reflect on:

How has this experience made you think – or act – differently about the world around you? Please consider the 3 SLOs discussed. Please don't consider course content in your response; instead, think beyond it, and be as specific as possible.

III. PURPOSE:

Students examine religious connections through the comparison of ancient texts and secondary source interpretations of those texts to better understand the values of numerous belief systems and how those beliefs coemerge and coevolve even into modern times.

IV. MAJOR TOPICS COVERED:

Monotheisms and Polytheisms; Doctrinal Distinctives and Councils; Sacred Ancient Texts; Minoan Palatial Culture and Social Hierarchy; Jewish and Christian Hybridity; The Labyrinth in Minoan, Greek and Gothic Christian Architecture; and the Artistic Remnants of these Diverse Groups.

V. COURSE OUTLINE:

Ancient Near Eastern Creation Tales; The Tanakh; The New Testament; Sea Voyages as Civilization Destinies; Second Temple Period Judaism; the Heroic Motifs of Theseus, Dionysus, Samson, and Christ; Early Female Fertility Deities; and Minoan Palace Culture.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES/FIELD EXPERIENCES:

Lecture and discussions; visits to cultural sites and museums. Because we are interested to compare how the ancients lived with how modern Westerners live, we'll be using the places we visit as texts, as well as the course textbook.

Note: Please be aware that some of the material in this class may trigger disturbing thoughts or memories. Many of the works of art are explicit or nudes. We will also engage the critical comparison of religious traditions while not privileging any faith tradition over another. Please feel free to step out of class if you feel threatened or uncomfortable.

VII. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES:

This course is part of the KIS winter study abroad in Athens and Crete (the Greece Winter trip).

VIII. RESOURCES: None.

IX. GRADING PROCEDURES:

Scale:

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

60-69 D
Below 60 F

This course grade will not include plus or minus, a system which may apply at your college or university, but not on KIIS programs.

Students will write short response papers—descriptions and analyses of religious traditions in the places, texts, and art-objects students observe. These short papers will contribute to 30% of the overall grade. Short quizzes on readings will constitute 30% of the grade as well. A mid-term (20%) and Final (20%) will constitute the rest of the course grade of 100%.

X. Attendance:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

XI. TEXT AND REFERENCES:

Required Text:

Sarah Iles Johnston (Editor), *Ancient Religions* (Harvard, 2007).

Note: The instructor will supply additional electronic primary sources for the course.

XII. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KISS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KISS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KISS may prevent you from participating on your KISS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KISS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KISS Office Manager, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KISS Program Director or other KISS Faculty; the KISS Office will notify your KISS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KISS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KISS make such a recommendation or require it.

XII. TITLE IX/ DISCRIMINATION & HARRASSMENT:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KISS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KISS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KISS Assistant Director Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KISS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson (270-745-5398 / andrea.anderson@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / joshua.hayes@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KISS program director and/or faculty member, KISS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center,

<https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/brochure2019update.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.