

GSGS 3530/ARCH 5500: GREEK ODYSSEY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

University of Virginia | 5/21 – 6/10/2024 | 3-week program begins + ends in Athens | 3 direct credits | 11/29/23 draft



Phoebe Crisman, Professor of Architecture and Director of Global Studies, crisman@virginia.edu, 434-924-1006
Michael Petrus, Lecturer in Urban & Environmental Planning and Architecture, mrp7m@virginia.edu, 434-924-6898

OVERVIEW

Inspired by Homeric poems and Odysseus' travels, as well as current sustainability challenges in the Aegean Sea, this experiential learning program introduces students to both past and present ways of life in Athens, the Saronic and Argolic Gulf islands of Poros, Hydra, Spetses, and Dhokos, and important sites in the Peloponnese peninsula. Greece offers unique environmental and cultural resources to support student learning about changing human-environmental relations, culture, and settlement patterns from antiquity to the Anthropocene.

In the process of passing one of the EU's most ambitious climate laws, Greece plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions 55% by 2030 and intends to be fully net zero by 2050. Ten types of single-use plastic products were banned in 2021, 12% of electricity demand is generated by wind turbines and 7% by solar, and sustainable water initiatives are underway. Greening its' 200 inhabited islands will create Europe's largest network of sustainable off-grid communities. While most current development consumes vast amounts of water and energy, traditional Greek settlements and buildings were simply, effectively, and beautifully designed for their specific climate and provide valuable sustainability lessons.

Important settlements in ancient Greece were connected by water. The ocean was a divinity and source of all seas, rivers, and streams. From it rose the sun and dawn, the constellations, and in it they set. Students will experience the Greek islands more akin to how Odysseus saw them—from the sea in sailing vessels. For two weeks we will live aboard two 45' and 50' yachts and assist in sailing with highly experienced, professional Greek skippers and Profs. Crisman and Petrus who also skipper yachts. Sailing offers a sustainable way to travel by harnessing wind energy, while teaching about how to manage limited water supplies, wind and solar energy, and waste reduction strategies. Lectures, discussions, research reports, visits to significant sites, and cultural exchanges with Greek locals will provide opportunities for students to gain valuable knowledge and experiences, while daily academic field journal entries will require students to reflect on their learning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about human-environmental transformations by studying ancient to contemporary settlements in Greece. We will focus on past and present-day sustainable strategies such as urban density, architectural typologies, rainwater collection and storage, passive solar and thermal design, natural materials, transportation, and foodways. Students will gain significant intercultural experiences through informal interactions with local Greeks and sailors from other countries. Additionally, the program will work to achieve the UVA International Studies Office's sustainability goals through our wind-powered transportation and onboard living.



Class on the island of Hydra – with no wheeled vehicles!

ENROLLMENT

This direct credit program is open to rising 2nd, 3rd and 4th year undergraduates and graduate students in any school. There are no pre-requisites, and the course fulfills an elective requirement for Global Studies & Architecture majors. This interdisciplinary program is designed for students interested in sustainability, history, culture, design, and sailing.

DAILY STUDY PLAN

A typical day will include 6 - 8 hours of contact time, including a field visit to a place crucial to our study with onsite lectures, reading discussion, and student report. During our two weeks traveling by yacht, we will sail for approx. 3-5 hours each day. Our two yachts will provide indoor and outdoor space for meeting and study. Most evenings will be free in Athens and in the many towns and villages where we'll dock overnight.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

- 30% Research Report + Presentation
- 30% Academic Field Journal
- 20% Reading Discussions
- 20% Participation in other daily activities

COURSEWORK

Readings: Students will receive pdfs of the course readings organized by day. These may be printed and brought to Greece or downloaded and read digitally while traveling. Please complete the Athens readings before arrival.

Research Report: Students will select a cultural condition or physical place that we will visit. Written reports (1000 words) must be researched and prepared in advance for 10-15 minute verbal presentation to your classmates in Greece. Note: Graduate students will complete a longer paper (5000 words) and also make a verbal presentation.

Academic Field Journal: Daily reflection on what you learned that day through site visits, experiences, and readings.

Participation: Attendance and cooperation in all daily activities and onboard responsibilities (meal prep, cleaning...)

INSTRUCTORS

Profs. Phoebe Crisman and Michael Petrus have extensive knowledge of ancient, modern, and contemporary Greek architecture, art, cities, culture, and sustainability initiatives. They have traveled and conducted research in Greece since 1985 and sail in the Mediterranean each summer. Both are able sailors with Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Coastal Skipper certifications and will be the First Mates assisting the professional Skipper on each yacht. Their sailing knowledge and experience will greatly enrich our experience while onboard.



Class at the ancient theater at Epidavros



Student presentation on Spetses



Class onboard the Iliatoras



Sailing the Iliatoras



Monastery of Panagia Elonis



Mycenaean Treasury of Atreus



Group dinner at Plaka harbor

SAILING + LIFE ONBOARD

Previous sailing experience is not expected or required. Enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the exciting process of sailing is crucial. Those with sailing experience are welcome. We'll prepare and eat breakfast and lunch onboard – anchoring in a small cove for lunch and a midday swim. Typically, we'll arrive in port for a late afternoon excursion and then students will be free for the evening and dinner in the village or town. We will sleep onboard in port each night. Like all sailing yachts, accommodations are necessarily compact, and each student must be willing to share a two-person cabin with another of the same gender. All bedding and towels are provided. Each cabin has a wall-mounted fan and there is no AC onboard. There are 3-4 head (toilets) on each yacht and students may shower inside and/or on deck. There is a small, but fully equipped kitchen. Drinking water and food for breakfast and lunch will be provided as part of the program cost.

HEALTH + ACCESSIBILITY

Greece has drinkable tap water, safe food, and excellent health care facilities throughout the country. Dietary restrictions will be accommodated, with vegan and gluten-free food readily available onboard and in restaurants. Participants must be able to swim and to walk several kilometers each day during site visits. Students with limited physical mobility will be challenged by the program, since all travel is via public transport, walking, ferries, and sailing.



Class at ancient Mycenae



Life onboard the Iliactis



Above Navplio at the Palamidi fortress



TWO-WEEK SAILING ROUTE WITH HARBORS (ANCIENT NAMES)

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Poros - ΠΟΓΟΝ | 6. Navplio - ΝΑΦΛΙΑ | 10. Ierakas - ΖΑΡΑΧ |
| 2. Ermioni - ΗΡΜΙΟΝΕ | 7. Navplio - ΜΥΚΕΝΑΕ + ΕΠΙΔΑΥΡΙΑ | 11. Monemvasia - ΑΚΡΑ ΜΙΝΟΑ |
| 3. Hydra - ΗΥΔΡΕΑ | 8. Astros - ΑΣΤΡΟΝ | 12. Kiparisi - ΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΙΑ |
| 4. Spetses - ΠΙΤΥΟΥΣΣΑ | 9. Leonidio - ΠΡΑΣΑΙΕ | 13. Dhokos - ΑΠΕΡΟΠΙΑ |
| 5. Koiladha + Franchthi Cave | | 14. Poros - ΠΟΓΟ |

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