

GREECE: ANCIENT ETHICS IN ATHENS!

DETAILED ITINERARY

SUMMER 1, 2026

Spring			Spring Meetings There are seven scheduled pre-departure meetings that will meet in the evenings and that you are required to attend. Two of these are led by the Study of Abroad Office and geared to all students studying abroad. Topics will include logistics (e.g. passports, health insurance, possible vaccinations), safety (e.g. preparing for emergency situations, preventing emergency situations, common scams), and conduct guidelines (e.g. Code of Student Conduct). The remainder are led by me and geared only to our group heading to Greece. Topics will include an itinerary and course overview, objectives, assignments, and required resources.
1.	Sa	May 9	Depart US You will be flying to Greece on your own or, if you wish, with other students, and you will likely fly overnight. You should already have reviewed national and international airport security procedures and customs procedures and have made a firm plan for retrieving local currency. Ground transportation will be provided at a time that is best for most students. If you are arriving much earlier or later than other students, you should also plan for ground transportation from Athens International Airport to our hotel. The flight is long, so you'll have some time (but not much space) to catch up on any reading and writing you may still need to do, especially our first readings for Monday. But do keep in mind that it is often difficult to work on a plane. Other than that, settle in, enjoy the flight, review your list of "Things I'm Most Looking Forward To!", and feel the excitement of the next ten days!
2.	Su	May 10	Arrive in Athens—Setting Up For Success Welcome to Athens! You'll likely be arriving in the morning or midday, and you'll likely be tired from the long flight. Especially for those new to international travel, you'll also have deal with the adrenaline that comes with a barrage of first-time, unknown, sometimes stressful experiences—going through customs, communicating with those of a different language, wondering if the transportation really is where you think it is. That's okay! Know that you're prepared, including for any emergency, and try have fun with these new experiences. The point of today (and tomorrow) is just to get ourselves settled in to Athens, including our geographical bearings, somewhat rested and set up for success. Make your way from the airport to our hotel and check-in. If your room is ready, go ahead and get settled. If your room is not yet ready, go ahead and leave your luggage at the front desk until it is ready. Your time is free until our Neighborhood Orientation

			<p>and Arrival Dinner this evening, so enjoy a Greek siesta, grab some souvlaki, and if you're up for it, explore the neighborhood. You may, of course, do these in any order you wish.</p> <p><u>Morning and Afternoon</u> Arrival - transfer to hotel Free time</p> <p><u>Evening</u> 4:30p Neighborhood Walking Orientation 7:00p Welcome Dinner and Onsite Orientation, Tzitzikas and Mermigkas (Syntagma Square)</p>
3.	M	May 11	<p>Setting the Intellectual Stage—Homer, the Sophists, and Greek Geography Our main tasks today are to continue getting our geographical bearings and to set the intellectual stage, so we can better understand in context Socrates's, Plato's, and Aristotle's seminal contributions to moral philosophy, especially, of course, their views about the truly excellent human life. One way is to understand them as responding to what they viewed as a set of problems presented by the Homeric ideal of the "noble warrior" and Sophist tendencies toward egoism, relativism, and skepticism. Another is to understand their embedded socio-cultural-political context, which developed in part as a consequence of the nature of the Greek gods and the geography of Greece itself. We'll discuss these after breakfast during our first morning seminar, which may take place on location at the Ancient Agora, the center of Ancient Athenian political, social, and commercial life and, famously, the site where Socrates did his most bothersome work as a gadfly. This will help prepare us for tomorrow's morning seminar, when we focus more exclusively on Socrates. After, lunch, we'll continue to get our bearings in Athens as part of our Athens City Walk.</p> <p><u>Morning-Midday</u> 8:00-8:45a Breakfast and conversation 9:30-10:30a Morning Seminar 10:30-12:00p Site Visit – Ancient Agora w/ Kim Hofnagle, HAU 12:00pm Lunch (on your own) 1:50-3:30p Athens City Walk, w/ Eleni Ypsilanti, HAU</p> <p>Free Time</p> <p><u>Evening</u> Free time</p>
4		May 12	<p>Acropolis and the Acropolis Museum—Socrates, Integrity, and the Life Worth Living</p>

			<p>Today, we'll visit the Acropolis, one of the most important historical sites of the Ancient world, West or East, and one that has been seducing us since we've arrived. In its Golden Age, Athens dedicated the Parthenon as a temple to Athena, guardian of Athens and Goddess of practical wisdom (among other things). And practical wisdom - how we should live in order to live the excellent human life - is the thread that ties together most Ancient Greek ethical theories. For Socrates, as we'll see in our morning seminar, practical wisdom amounts to living in accordance with the beliefs and principals we have most <i>reason</i> to hold. We'll have some free time after our morning seminar, before we gather again, first, at the Acropolis Museum, where we'll learn about the history of the Acropolis and its surrounding area. We'll finally experience the wonder of the Acropolis and its monuments, including the dominating Parthenon, exquisite Temple of Athena Nike, famous columns of The Erechtheion, and acoustic Odeon of Herodotus, in the breeze and twilight of early evening.</p> <p><u>Morning</u> 8:00-8:45a Breakfast and conversation 9:00-10:45a Morning Seminar</p> <p><u>Midday</u> Free Time</p> <p><u>Afternoon-Early Evening</u> 4:00-8:00p Acropolis and Acropolis Museum, w/ Kim Hofnagle, HAU</p>
5	W	May 13	<p>Plato's Academy and Cooking in Greece! – Plato, Harmony, and the Life Worth Living</p> <p>Today will provide additional on-location experiences! After our morning seminar, there will be an optional but included site visit to Plato's Academy. We'll meet up again in the late afternoon for a traditional Greek cooking class! And we'll also begin preparing for tomorrow's travel to Delphi and Nafplio.</p> <p>Plato's Academy is actually a small neighborhood just outside—that is, just far enough away from—the rest of historic Athens. In these more peaceful surroundings Plato built his home and, over the next fifty years, would walk and talk with students and colleagues about knowledge, reality, truth, justice, and virtue and write nearly thirty Dialogues, including <i>Theaetetus</i>, <i>Meno</i>, <i>Gorgias</i>, <i>Crito</i>, <i>Apology</i>, and the monumental <i>Republic</i>. Among other conclusions of the <i>Republic</i>, Plato (Socrates?) holds that the truly excellent human life—like a truly excellent city—is one whose appetites (desires) and spirit (emotions) are well-governed by reason. What exactly this type of "tripartite harmony" comes to is one of the things we'll discuss in our morning seminar. The site of Plato's Academy is now a small archeological park and, since 2016, home to the new Plato's Academy Digital Museum. The museum will</p>

		<p>take us in reverse chronological order from today's site back to the days of Plato's Academy and his teachings.</p> <p>In the late afternoon, we'll meet up at a local cooking school to experience Greek cuisine from "behind the counter." And of course after preparing dinner, we'll sit back and savor our handiwork!</p> <p>You'll also have exploration time at mid-day and in the evening. At some point today, you should begin packing so that you're ready for tomorrow's early morning travel.</p> <p><u>Morning</u> 7:45-8:15a Breakfast and Conversation 9:30-10:30a Morning Seminar 11:00-1:30p Tour of Plato's Academy</p> <p><u>Mid-day</u> Free Time</p> <p><u>Afternoon – Evening</u></p> <p>3:00-6:00p Cooking Class @ The Greek Kitchen, w/ Lydia Lappia, HAU</p>
6	R	<p>May 14</p> <p>Day Trip to Delphi – Travel to Nafplio</p> <p>We're off on a four-day adventure during which we'll travel even further back in Greek history and experience the wonders of Greece's geography! Later today, we'll travel to the enchanting sea-side port town of Nafplio. But we'll first experience breathtaking, mountainous Delphi!</p> <p>Delphi, situated on the slopes of Mt. Parnassos, offers breathtaking views of the valley below and the waters of the Gulf of Corinth and several important historical sites, including the Sanctuaries of Apollo and Athena. Dating back to 1100 BCE and once believed to be the center of the world (!), Delphi is perhaps the most important religious site in all of the Ancient world (not just Greece). It is most well-known as the home of the prophetess Pythia, otherwise known as the Oracle of Delphi. The Oracle was the earthly mouthpiece of Apollo, so few people in Ancient Greece, whether king or commoner, did anything important without consulting the Oracle. In philosophy, the Oracle of Delphi is best known for telling a friend of Socrates the he, Socrates, was the wisest person in Athens. As by most riddles emanating from the Oracle, Socrates was perplexed, since he claimed to know almost nothing at all. Over time, Socrates pieced together several lessons of the riddle: 'Know thyself', 'The unexamined life is not worth living', and, most importantly, the importance of living a life of intellectual integrity.</p>

			<p>We'll discuss all of this as we also pay attention to the surrounding geography, contrasting it with the very different sea-going geography that also experience over the next several days. After Delphi, we'll have lunch and travel to Nafplio.</p> <p>Nafplio is scenically and strategically situated along the Mediterranean Sea, under a cliff and at the endcap of a large bay. Because of this location, Nafplio is steeped in Greece's history. So much so, that it is guarded by <i>three</i> castles and was selected to be Greece's first capital upon (finally) earning its independence in the 1820s. Despite its history, Nafplio's main attraction for us is not its sights, but its ambiance. We want to experience Nafplio to glimpse what it might have been like to live the sea-going life. To that end, you'll have plenty of free time over the next three days to live the good life that Nafplio has to offer. So over the next several days, sail the Mediterranean, swim its beaches, feel its soft breezes, savor its variety of seafood, and relax in its evening nightlife.</p> <p>Leading us for the next three wonderful days will once again be Kim, Hofnagle, HAU.</p> <p><u>Morning-Early Afternoon</u></p> <p>7:00-7:30a Breakfast and Conversation 8:00a Day Trip to Delphi Archeological Site and Museum 2:00 Lunch (included, @ Taverna Vakhos)</p> <p><u>Early-Late Afternoon</u></p> <p>4:00p Travel to Nafplio 8:30p Check in to Hotel Brief orientation to Nafplio</p> <p><u>Evening</u></p> <p>Free time</p>
7	F	May 15	<p>Nafplio Coast and Harbor – Aristotle, Teleology, and the Life Worth Living</p> <p>At the center of Aristotle's naturalism is the view that all particular, concrete, sometimes living things have a distinct <i>telos</i>—a function, purpose, or goal. Thus, if we can identify the <i>telos</i> of human beings, we'll be able to identify the truly excellent human life and consider how best to achieve it. We'll discuss all of this in our morning seminar. We'll then tour more of the glory of Nafplio, including its coast and harbor and, if you'd like, Palamidi Castle. And you'll enjoy plenty of free time!</p> <p><u>Morning</u></p>

			<p>8:00-8:45a Breakfast and Conversation</p> <p>9:00-10:45a Morning Seminar</p> <p>11:00-12:00p Palamidi Castle (optional and included)</p> <p><u>Afternoon-Evening</u></p> <p>Nafplio Exploration - Free Time</p>
8	Sa	May 16	<p>Nafplio Exploration!</p> <p>Today is intended for you to explore more of Nafplio's seaside, beaches, and castles! I hope you soak it all in!</p> <p>8:00-8:45a Breakfast and Conversation</p> <p>Nafplio Exploration!</p>
9	Su	May 17	<p>Nafplio Exploration and Return to Athens</p> <p>After enjoying a Sunday morning along the harbor, we'll return to Athens in the afternoon.</p> <p><u>Morning-Early Afternoon</u></p> <p>8:00-9:00a Breakfast and conversation</p> <p>11:00-1:00p Transfer back to Athens/Check into hotel</p> <p><u>Afternoon - Evening</u></p> <p>Free time</p>
10	M	May 18	<p>Athens Exploration #2 – Today's Positive Psychology and Consolidation in Athens!</p> <p>I hope you have enjoyed your study abroad experience in Athens, and I hope that as the decades come you find that it has increasingly contributed to your life very well-lived.</p> <p>Our theme for today is consolidation. First, we'll consolidate our academic work in our final morning seminar, we'll see what today's Positive Psychologists tell us about living a remarkable human life. In particular, we'll focus on the contributions of Martin Seligman. Seligman is popularly known and professionally respected as the driving force behind the broadening of psychology to include, in addition to its traditional, important goal of relieving misery and working through difficult life conditions, also the goal of exploring what makes life worth living—a truly excellent human life—and the conditions by which one could create such a life. Seligman's</p>

			<p>current theory is that a life worth living is one that well balances pleasure, engagement (being in the moment, being in "flow"), positive relationships, meaningfulness (the feeling that one is part of and contributing something larger than oneself), and accomplishment. During our morning seminar, we'll compare Seligman's theory to those of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to see what, if anything, Seligman's theory adds or omits.</p> <p>Second, you should consolidate your travel by doing whatever you need to prepare for tomorrow's departure: pack as much as possible, check-in with your airline, print any boarding passes, finalize your transportation to the airport, mail anything that needs to be mailed, say 'Efcharistó' to the hotel staff, etc. Finally, and intellectually more important, I intend for you to use this day to consolidate your time in Greece itself. If, after visiting Mycenae and Delphi, you now <i>really</i> want to visit the National Archeological Museum, I hope you'll wander that, or perhaps another great museum. If during our time in Athens you've said to yourself, 'I <i>really</i> wish we could have spent more time exploring its Roman history!', or 'I <i>really</i> wish we could have explored more of the greenery in Athens!', or 'I haven't yet gotten to try Greece's best coffee shop, Mokka!', or 'I haven't spent enough time at the Plaka!', or anything else, then please do that as well if at all practical.</p> <p>"Adventure safely," take lots of pictures, and be back for our Departure Dinner this evening at 7:00p. We'll enjoy more Greek cuisine, converse about our day, share pictures, and prepare for what to expect upon our return to Charlotte.</p> <p><u>Morning-Evening</u> 8:00-8:45a Breakfast and conversation 9:00a-10:45p Morning Seminar</p> <p>10:45a Athens Exploration – Free Time</p> <p>7:00p Departure Dinner and Reentry Preparation, Voliotiko Tsipouradiko</p>
11	T	May 19	<p>Depart Athens and Arrive in US (or other planned location)</p> <p>Goodbye, for now, to Greece! Unless you're heading to another destination, your flight to the U. S. will likely leave in early morning or afternoon. Again, the flight is long and you've likely not tended much to what awaits you back in Charlotte. If you haven't already, use the time to plan your reentry, especially your next few days. It's actually quite common for international travelers to experience reverse culture shock upon returning home, and having a plan often helps, especially if you have to get right back to a schedule, such as for work or another Summer 1 course. You should also make a brief plan for completing your research paper for our course, which is due no more than three weeks from today. I will be back on campus by Tuesday, May 27th, and if you'd like, we can certainly meet before your papers are due. But don't make the planning too demanding. Instead, I would recommend</p>

			<p>creating your list of "Top Ten Highlights of Greece!", listening to some music, resting if you can, mentally reliving your last ten days, and projecting what your eighty-year-old self would now say to you about <i>your</i> life, remarkable and well-lived!</p> <p><u>Morning and Afternoon</u> Check out of hotel and with me Transfer to the airport Departing flight</p>
End of May- June			<p>Post-program activities</p> <p>If you'd like, we can meet individually or in groups as you work through your course papers. You'll also have to do study abroad things like evaluations, and I'll have to do study abroad things like propose the 2026 summer abroad program! 😊</p>