

**DRINKING (AND) CULTURE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD**

CLAS 20021  
 Tu/Th 9:30 – 10:45 am  
 DeBartolo Hall 131

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Office Hours: Tu/Th 11 am – 12 pm, Wed 11:30  
 am – 12:30 pm (or by appointment)

In this course, we will examine the role that drinking (both proper and improper drinking) plays in the ancient Greek world and will use this to reflect on the modern world. You will be encouraged to make connections to the modern world throughout, and the course will conclude with a unit that explicitly invites this. The course will lay the groundwork with an examination of the myths and worship of Dionysus, as the god of wine, and will then move into the literary and material evidence of what took place at symposia, including the games and poetry that were involved. Then we will look at the reception of these ideas into Roman and later European cultures. Finally, we will conclude with a more explicit comparison of ancient and modern attitudes toward drinking (and the proper way to drink and be drunk).

All reading for this course will be done in English translations. Classics majors may come into the class with more knowledge about some of these texts, but I am not assuming that you have any prior knowledge of the ancient world.

## Required texts:

- Euripides' *Bacchae* (trans. Esposito, ISBN 978-0941051422)
- Plato's *Symposium* (trans. Waterfield, ISBN 978-0199540198)
- Xenophon's *Conversations of Socrates* (trans. Waterfield, ISBN 978-0140445176)

I will place a copy of these texts on reserve in the library but there will be days when it will be useful to have a copy of your text with you in class. If you anticipate that you will have difficulty affording any of the texts for this course, please get in touch with me immediately.

All other course readings will be available in electronic format through Sakai.

## Grading breakdown

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| • Attendance and Participation                                 | 10% |
| • Additional Assignments and Reflections (may include quizzes) | 20% |
| • Short, informal writing assignments                          | 15% |
| • Essay #1: Who and What is Dionysus? (1,000 words)            | 15% |
| • Essay #2: Code of the Symposium (1,500 words)                | 15% |
| • Essay #3: Final Paper/Project (1,500-2,000 words)            | 25% |

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Build a broader argument about cultural and societal values based on literature produced by those societies
- Compare ancient attitudes about drinking, society, gender, and other themes with those found in our modern world
- Engage in close readings of ancient and modern texts
- Critique others' arguments and integrate others' criticism into your own arguments
- Recognize the norms and stylistic tendencies of different genres of literature, ranging from lyric poetry to philosophical dialogues to personal essays

**Writing Assignments:** each unit will feature one substantial writing assignment as well as several smaller weekly written reflections. Writing will function as a way to engage with the literary sources we read in class—assignments will ask you to write in different genres, beyond the standard academic, argumentative essay. Often, we will use writing assignments to gain a greater understanding of the texts we read from the inside-out. This will mean trying to adapt or create your own version of a genre we have read in the class.

For the ancient Greeks, intoxication is a concept that touches the genres of philosophical writing, poetry, and drama. You will be asked to read, think about, and produce several different genres in this course—I understand that you might not have been asked to write anything but argumentative academic essays before in the past, so this may require you to get out of your comfort zone as a reader and a writer, but we will practice and develop these skills over the course of the term.

### Unit 1: Who is Dionysus?

#### Week 1 (1/16 and 1/18): Dionysus in literature, part 1

Reading: start the *Bacchae*

#### Week 2 (1/23 and 1/25): Dionysus in literature, part 2

Reading: Finish the *Bacchae*, and selections from Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*

#### Week 3 (1/30 and 2/1): Dionysus in practice

Reading: Selections from the *Frogs* and *Cyclops*

Rosenmeyer, T. G. (1968). "Tragedy and Religion: the *Bacchae*." In E. Segal, ed. *Euripides: A Collection of Critical Essays*.

#### **Due 2/9: Essay #1**

***Short reflective essay on what myths about Dionysus can tell us about actual attitudes toward intoxication. Students are encouraged to think about modern parallels (what do modern fairy tales or folk tales or mythohistorical stories reflect about our actual societal values?). (1000 words)***

***More information about this assignment, and a rubric, will be provided in advance of the due date.***

**Unit 2: What is a symposium?****Week 4 (2/6 and 2/8): What happened at a symposium?**

Reading: Xenophon's *Symposium*

**Week 5 (2/13 and 2/15): Lyric luses and the literature of the symposium**

Reading: *Protagoras* 347c-e and lyric poetry (available on Sakai)

**Week 6 (2/20 and 2/22): So what *is* a symposium?**

Reading: Selections of other miscellaneous readings about symposia (including readings involving gender and class)

**Due 3/2: Essay #2**

*Working from our primary readings, create a persona and construct a “code” for “gentlemanly” behavior at a symposium. Your code should account for the disparate sources and opinions and filter them through the lens of your chosen persona. You may use any of the optional secondary readings available on Sakai, but do not accept their findings uncritically. Your arguments must be anchored in the primary texts. (1500 words)*

*More information about this assignment, and a rubric, will be provided in advance of the due date.*

**Unit 3: The Literary Symposium****Week 7 (2/27 and 3/1): Lofty luses and the philosophy of love**

Reading: Plato's *Symposium*

**Week 8 (3/6 and 3/8): More *Symposium*—Plato had a lot to say!**

Reading: Plato's *Symposium*

*Short writing assignment due before Spring Break: write a pitch for a movie or novel that reimagines Plato's *Symposium* in a modern context. This should be no more than 500 words.*

**Week 9: Spring Break! Have fun and be safe!****Unit 4: Between the Greeks and Us****Week 10 (3/20 and 3/22): “Nunc est bibendum” and Rambunctious Romans**

Readings: selections from Roman authors, taken from the following list (this full list will be split up over the class, with each student reading only a portion of them—you will receive your personalized assignment before spring break)

- Horace *Odes* 1.11, 1.18, 1.37, 2.19, 3.8, 3.19, 3.21, 3.25, 3.28, 3.29

- Propertius 1.3, 2.15, 2.33, 3.8, 4.6
- Tibullus 1.2, 2.1
- *Cena Trimalchionis*
- Cicero's *Second Philippic* (2.104-106)
- Seneca *Ep.* 51, 59, 83
- Juvenal 6

**Week 11 (3/27 and 3/29): Neoclassicism and the Romantics**

Reading: selection of poems from Cavalier Poets (Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick) and poems by Keats and Thomas Moore

**Week 12 (4/3 and 4/5): “Rouze Anacreon from the dead; / And return him drunk to bed“**

Reading: selection of convivial songs and toasts (including the delightful “Social Effusions of the Celebrated Captain Charles Morris”)

**Week 13 (4/10 – class canceled on 4/12): Teetotaling and Prohibition**

*Please make arrangements to meet with your group when our class would meet on 4/12*

Reading: Writings from Salvation Army Founder William Booth and others

**Week 14 (4/17 and 4/19): Tailgates, Frat Parties, and Microbrews: How we moderns drink**

Reading: selections from *Drinking with Men* (Schaap 2013) contrasted with “Giving up alcohol opened my eyes to the infuriating truth about why women drink” (Coulter 2016)

**Week 15 (4/24 and 4/26): Group presentations**

**Week 16 (5/1): Sad Farewells**

*Writing assignment: students will take their chosen presentation topic and develop it into a final reflection paper which situates a modern example of drinking culture within the historical framework we have established in class. (1500-2000 words)*

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance:** Reading the texts on your own is not sufficient for this course. Class time will be spent discussing the readings and engaging with your classmates. Thus, you will be expected not only to do the assigned reading and reflection beforehand but also to attend class and to be prepared to answer questions and participate in class. **You are allowed two (2) unexcused absences.** Any unexcused absences beyond that limit will reduce your attendance grade by one point per absence. If you miss class due to an *excused* absence (medical emergencies, religious observances, and service to the university), I will be happy to meet with you during office hours to review the material for that day.

**Weekly Section Assignments:** Throughout the semester, I will ask you to complete some low-stakes writing assignments as preparation for our class. Completing these assignments will ultimately count towards your grade. They will be due by midnight, the night before class (unless otherwise indicated). If you can't make it to class on the day an assignment is due, you will still receive full credit if you turn it in by the deadline. I will grant extensions for extenuating circumstances if you notify me in advance. Otherwise, you will not receive credit for a low-stakes assignment submitted after its due date (an occasional assignment turned in at 12:30am will not be penalized, but there should not be a pattern of this).

**Religious Observances and Service to the University:** If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays or a commitment that you have to a university group (athletics or other contexts in which you are representing Notre Dame), please notify me so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but in accordance with university policy on religious/academic conflicts, your absence will not affect your grade in the course.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** I am fully committed to ensuring the full participation of all students, and to making learning as accessible as possible for all of my students. If you have a disability and need an accommodation to participate in this class or to complete course requirements, please contact Sara Bea Disability Services to obtain documentation of the accommodations that you need. Then, please share this documentation with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first few weeks of class. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share.

Students who have questions about Sara Bea Disability Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Sara Bea Disability Services for a confidential discussion in the Sara Bea Center for Students with Disabilities or by phone at 574-631-7157. Because the University's Academic Accommodations Processes generally require students to request accommodations well in advance of the dates when they are needed, students who believe they may need an accommodation for this course are encouraged to contact Sara Bea Disability Services at their earliest opportunity. Additional information about Sara Bea Disability Services and the process for requesting accommodations can be found at [sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu](http://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu).

**Mental Health Accommodations:** As a student, you may experience challenges that negatively affect your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty with eating or sleeping, grief/loss, and alcohol or drug problems. I am deeply committed to working with you to address these issues in a way that will allow you to perform as well as possible in this class. If you are experiencing mental health issues, please discuss this with me as you feel comfortable, so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations and support.

**Email:** I encourage conducting most correspondence over email, using professional and respectful language. In the case of illness (mental or physical) or family emergency, please only feel obligated to provide the most relevant details. If it is easier to discuss your reasons in person, please come to office hours or make an appointment. I will do my best to respond to all student emails within 24 hours (48 on weekends).

**Technology:** Laptops can be a powerful tool, but they can also be a serious distraction. There will also be many ways that we will be using technology as a part of this course, to help promote discussion among a large class. Laptops are not banned, nor are they generally discouraged, but I reserve the right to remove laptop privileges if you are not using your laptop for course-appropriate purposes.

**Online engagement:** You will not be required to engage in any social media related to this course, but I would like to encourage you to, if you feel so inclined! On all social media (or the ones I use, which is mostly Twitter and Instagram), I'll be monitoring the hashtag #drinkancient. Please abide by the same basic discussion guidelines you would in the rest of class discussions. Be polite, civil, and respectful. I'm @apistone on Twitter and @amypistone on Instagram.

**Preparation and Honor Code:** Building on others' words and ideas is an essential element of effective scholarship. However, we must give credit to those whose words and ideas we incorporate into our writing. Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper attribution is plagiarism, and such an act is considered a serious ethical violation within the university community. If you complete an assignment for one course and then submit that same assignment as original work for a different course, you are also committing plagiarism. If you have additional questions about how to reference material that you find in books or online, please let me know.

You, as students, and I, as your professor, are required and expected to abide by the University Academic Code of Honor, under which each of us pledges, "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty." You will find more information at <http://honorcode.nd.edu>. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions you may have.

**CLASSROOM CONTRACT**

I think of our classroom as a reciprocal relationship. Below are the ground rules that I expect from myself and my TAs and from you. I have left additional bullet points here because you are welcome to add to this contract.

My responsibilities:

- Return your writing assignments promptly and—especially for drafts—provide detailed feedback of how to improve your writing.
- Provide grade updates intermittently (and when requested).
- Solicit feedback and adjust my teaching accordingly, to address your needs.
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Your responsibilities:

- Arrive on time and be prepared for class. Adequate preparation means you have done the reading and thought carefully about any discussion questions or additional assignments for that day's class.
- Bring the relevant books (and any other relevant texts) to every class meeting.
- Use technology as allowed in any given class
- Participate in class discussions. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you need to talk to me as soon as possible. I will gladly work with you to find ways to make participation easier, but participation is a critical element in this class.
- Check your email at least once a day. I will send out notifications and specific instructions for section via email.
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