

Syllabus CAT 124 - Summer Session II 2023

Instructor: Kevin Westerfeld

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Office Hour: Friday noon-1:30pm at the Art of Espresso Coffee Cart located next to the Mandeville Center, or by appointment.

Course Description: In this course students will participate in an immersive role playing game, making moves as though they were historical actors in order to trace the path that led Sparta and Athens to fight in the Peloponnesian War. Students will read sections of Thucydides' account of the war before meeting in class to play the game. The game will confer advantages and disadvantages to the different cities involved, and the daily readings will help provide context and motivation to the actions available to the students. Described by the historian Thucydides, who viewed the conflict as the inevitable product of the rise of a new superpower that threatened the security of an established power, the Peloponnesian War provides an interesting juxtaposition to the rise of China and its relations with the United States in the 21st Century.

Learning Objectives: A successful student will, by the end of the session, be able to demonstrate:

- A nuanced understanding of the social and political world of the Greek city-states in the fifth century BCE, including the peculiar dynamics at work in Athens, Sparta, and other places.
- An ability to evaluate historical events from the perspectives of different participants, and to learn about the cultural worldview and relationships among the ancient Greeks through historical empathy, which includes perspective taking and an affective connection with the past lives of historic figures.
- A facility in interpreting translated ancient sources for use as historical evidence and/or as inspiration for historical action.
- An aptitude for making organized arguments, oral or written, based on historical principles and events.

Textbook: Strassler, R. B., ed. *The Landmark Thucydides* (Simon and Shuster, 1998). The textbook will also be placed on Course Reserves in the Library. Other readings will be posted on Canvas.

Recommended Reading (Not Required): In addition to Thucydides' History I will also put a copy of *The Peloponnesian War* by Don Kagen (2003) on Course Reserves. This is a good summary of the course of the war written for a general audience. I will also load two additional supplemental sources you can use onto Canvas. One is the full four volume summary of Don

Kagan's *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (2013). This massive text should have more than enough information to allow you to more thoroughly understand the events described in Thucydides. The second is a smaller book by Lawrence Tritle also called *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (2010) and may be more manageable if you're only looking for a brief clarification.

Requirements: A premium will be placed on class participation and on papers keyed to the events that transpire during class rather than on quizzes or tests. Class will meet per week; attendance is mandatory. In fact, the game and class simply *will not function* if people regularly miss meetings. Therefore, **if you know you are going to have to miss multiple class meetings because of outside activities this term, please do not take this course.**

Most weeks there will be a set of readings, predominantly from translated ancient sources, to complete before each class. Then, after class on Wednesdays in weeks 1-4, students will write a very short paper (500-600 words, or 1-2 pages). Usually these will be commentaries comparing what happened in class to the events in the readings; specific instructions will be provided each week. There will also be one 3-5 page paper elaborating on a speech students give at some point during the semester.

A final report will ask students to evaluate current US / Chinese relations in the context of what Thucydides says about the inevitable nature of war between superpowers and what occurred in the game.

Grades for the course will be determined roughly as follows:

30%	Class participation
30%	Weekly short writing assignments
15%	Speech write-up
25%	Final report

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism will earn the student an automatic failing grade in the course. The case will also be forwarded to the appropriate administrators for disciplinary action. Plagiarism -- A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:

- Quotes OR paraphrases another person's actual words, either oral or written;
- Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or
- Borrows facts, statistics, or other material, unless it is common knowledge.

In general you should follow these guidelines unless you are instructed otherwise:

- Complete all academic assignments by yourself.
- Don't use any aids during an exam.
- Acknowledge and cite source material in your papers or assignments.

- Don't copy another student's assignment, in part or in total, and submit it as your own work.
- Don't purchase help or assignment completion from anyone (and no, buying it does not make it "yours")
- Don't copy your speech or final report from an internet resource (such as ChatGPT) or from anyone else.

Course Schedule: (subject to change as dictated by the action of the game) During the first few weeks, I will assign some readings that will give you background information for the war and for the social and political conditions as well as a few seminal speeches that will give you a good idea how these people attempted to persuade others to follow their ideas. Then as the game progresses, I will choose different sections of Thucydides' History to assign to you depending on how the game is progressing.

Week One: (August 7th - August 12th) Historical Background and Rules of the Game

- Monday August 7th - Come to class prepared to learn about the social and political conditions in Greece in the few years prior to the Peloponnesian War. We will read The opening paragraph of Thucydides' history, (1.1) and Herodotus' discussion of the different types of constitutions together.
- Wednesday August 9th - **READ** before class: The complete rules for Cities on the Edge of War and pages 1-19 of Lawrence Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), posted on Canvas.
- **DUE** by 5pm Saturday August 12th: first short writing assignment

Week Two: (August 13th - August 19th) Gameplay

- Monday August 14th - **READ** before class: Thucydides on the *stasis* at Epidamnus and Corcyra, 1.22-1.55; the speech of the Athenian Ambassadors at Sparta 1.66-1.88.
- Wednesday August 16th - **READ** before Class: the *Pentacontaetia* and Athenian Speeches 1.89 to the end of Book 1 ;
- **DUE** by 5pm Saturday August 19th: second short writing assignment

Week Three: (August 20th - August 27th) Gameplay

- Monday August 21st - **READ** before class: Thucydides Pericles Funeral Oration 2.35-2.46 ; Peace of Nicias 5.13-5.24 ; Thucydides Melian Dialogue 5.84-5.116.
- Wednesday August 23rd - **READ** before class: The Athenian Coup at Samos 8.45-8.109 and the Epilogue.
- **DUE** by 5pm Saturday August 26th: third short writing assignment

Week Four: (August 28th - September 2nd) Gameplay

- Monday August 28th - **READ** before class: TBD
- Wednesday August 30th - **READ** before class: TBD
- **DUE** by 5pm Saturday September 2nd: Your Speech Write-up

Week Five: (September 3rd - September 9th) Finish the Game and Consider US / Chinese Relations

- Monday September 4th - **READ** before class: Zhang, Chunman, and Xiaoyu Pu. "Introduction: Can America and China escape the thucydides trap?." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 24 (2019): 1-9 ; Er, Lam Peng. "China, the United States, alliances, and war: avoiding the Thucydides trap?." *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 36-46
- Wednesday September 6th - Game wrap up and roundtable discussion of the experience playing the RPG.

Final Report: will be due Saturday September 9th 1:00 PM