University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	The Greek Sanctuary, PG_00168089		
Field of study	Archaeology		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2025	Academic year of realisation of subject	2026/2027
Education level	Master's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	2	Language of instruction	English
Semester of study	3	ECTS credits	2.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	credit
Conducting unit	Institute of Archaeology -> Faculty of History -> Rector		
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Dawid Borowka	
	Teachers	dr Dawid Borowka	

Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						

Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30	2.0	20.0	52

Subject objectives	The course aims to introduce students to the origins, development and diversity of Greek sanctuaries, their architecture, ritual practices and religious, social and political roles. It examines ritual practices in Aegean prehistory as a background for the study of later cult places. It develops students' ability to critically interpret archaeological, iconographic and written sources and to compare the organisation of sacred space.

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[ARCHMU2_U01] Is able to use the knowledge he possesses – formulate and solve complex and unusual theoretical and practical problems through: - proper selection of sources and information derived from them, evaluation, critical analysis, synthesis and presentation of this information, - selection and application of appropriate methods and tools, including advanced information and communication techniques, - adaptation of existing methods and tools or development of new ones	Can formulate and solve complex interpretative problems concerning Greek sanctuaries by selecting appropriate sources and analytical methods and critically interpreting archaeological evidence, plans, maps, images and written sources.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
[ARCHMU2_K01] Is ready to critically evaluate his/her knowledge and received content	Is prepared to critically evaluate their own knowledge and interpretations of Greek sanctuaries, taking account of the limitations of the available evidence and possible alternative explanations.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
[ARCHMU2_W04] Has an in-depth knowledge of the main directions of development and the most important new achievements in the field of archaeology	Has in-depth knowledge of the main research approaches and methods used in the study of Greek sanctuaries, as well as selected recent findings and debates concerning the identification of cult places, the interpretation of ritual and changes in sacred space.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
[ARCHMU2_W01] Has an in-depth, extended and structured knowledge of archaeology	Has in-depth, systematic knowledge of the origins, development and diversity of Greek sanctuaries, their architecture and spatial organisation, ritual practices and religious, social and political functions.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion

Subject contents

Lectures:
01 What Is a Greek Sanctuary? Definitions, terminology, types of cult places, and sources and methods used in their study.
02 Before the Greek Sanctuary: Ritual in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Mainland Greece, the Cyclades and Crete; identifying ritual practices in the archaeological record.
03 Minoan Sacred Landscapes. Peak sanctuaries, caves, cult spaces in settlements and palaces, and ritual iconography.
04 Mycenaean Cult and the Question of Continuity. Cult places, written and material evidence, and the question of their relationship with later religious practices.
05 The Emergence of Greek Sanctuaries. The Early Iron Age and Archaic period; the organisation of cult places and their relationships with the polis.
06 Sacred Landscape, Boundaries and Access. Sanctuary locations, the temenos, entrances, approach routes, and relationships between sacred space and settlement.
07 The Altar, Sacrifice and Ritual Dining. Types of altars, sacrificial practices, and archaeological evidence for communal dining.
08 Building the Sanctuary. Temples, treasuries, stoas and infrastructure; monumentalisation and changes in spatial organisation.
09 Votive Offerings and Dedication. Types of offerings, practices of dedication and deposition, and dedicatory inscriptions.
10 Festivals, Processions and Communities. The organisation of festivals, participants in cult, and the social roles of sanctuaries.
11 The Athenian Acropolis: Sanctuary of the Polis. Spatial organisation, the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, and relationships between cult and civic identity.
12 Delphi: Oracle, Landscape and Power. The cult of Apollo, sanctuary space, and its political and supraregional significance.
13 Olympia: Sacrifice, Games and Panhellenism. The cult of Zeus, sacred and athletic infrastructure, and interactions between communities.
14 Eleusis: Initiation and the Limits of Archaeological Evidence. Sanctuary space, the mysteries, and the possibilities and limitations of reconstructing ritual.
15 Greek Sanctuaries in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds. Continuity and change in cult, architecture, and the social and political roles of sanctuaries.

Prerequisites and co-requisites	English proficiency at B1/B2 level, sufficient to follow lectures, use course materials and discuss topics covered in the course.	
Assessment methods and criteria	Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold / Percentage of the final grade
	Oral assessment	51.0% / 100.0%
Recommended reading	Basic literature	1. Pedley, J. 2005. *Sanctuaries and the Sacred in the Ancient Greek World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2. Burkert, W. 1985. *Greek Religion*. Translated by J. Raffan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 3. Marinatos, N., Hägg, R. (eds). 1993. *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*. London–New York: Routledge.
	Supplementary literature	1. Renfrew, C. 1985. *The Archaeology of Cult: The Sanctuary at Phylakopi*. British School at Athens Supplementary Volume 18. London: British School at Athens. 2. Marinatos, N. 1993. *Minoan Religion: Ritual, Image, and Symbol*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. 3. Burkert, W. 1983. *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Translated by P. Bing. Berkeley: University of California Press. 4. de Polignac, F. 1995. *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 5. Parker, R. 2011. *On Greek Religion*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 6. Tomlinson, R. A. 1976. *Greek Sanctuaries*. London: Paul Elek.
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	The oral assessment consists of answering a problem-based question and interpreting archaeological evidence, a plan or an illustration. Students are assessed on factual accuracy, appropriate use of terminology, understanding of chronology, coherence of argument, and the ability to analyse sources critically and recognise the limitations of interpretation. Sample questions and tasks: 1. What evidence allows archaeologists to identify a sanctuary? Must a sanctuary contain a temple? 2. What are the possibilities and limitations of using archaeological evidence to identify ritual practices in the Neolithic and Bronze Age? 3. What roles did the altar, sacrifice and communal dining play in the functioning of a sanctuary? 4. Compare the social and political functions of a polis sanctuary and a Panhellenic sanctuary, using examples discussed in the course. 5. Using the plan provided, discuss the spatial organisation of the sanctuary, the arrangement of its features and possible routes followed by participants in rituals. 6. Interpret the artefact, deposit or iconographic scene provided. Identify evidence supporting a ritual interpretation, possible alternative explanations and the limitations of the available evidence.	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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