



ARCADIA  
ABROAD

# In the Steps of Hippocrates: Sacred Healing, Ethics & Early Medicine in Greece

HCISR PHIL/NUTR 240\_01012026

MEDICAL HUMANITIES • PUBLIC HEALTH • PHILOSOPHY

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## Credits

3

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## Contact Hours

40

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## Term

Summer

# Course Description

Greek healing traditions shaped the foundations of Western medicine by uniting philosophy, ritual, environment, and early clinical practice. From the sacred healing cults of Asclepius and Apollo, to the work of Hippocrates, health in antiquity was approached as both a scientific and spiritual discipline rooted in civic life, ethical responsibility, and therapeutic landscapes.

This interdisciplinary course traces the transformation of healing from sanctuary-based Asclepian practice to the ethical and clinical foundations of Hippocratic medicine. Students examine early preventive medicine, well-being, purification rituals, therapeutic pilgrimage, and sanctuary care alongside the emergence of the Hippocratic method of systematic observation.

Instruction is delivered through seminar-based study and supervised, site-based academic activities across Athens, in Delphi, and the Cyclades. Guided walking seminars and academic field excursions to Naxos, Delos, and Mykonos place students within the major healing landscapes of antiquity, situating Hippocrates as the pivotal bridge between sacred healing and scientific medicine.

# Course Requirements

## Required Text

Digital access and/or copies will be provided at no cost to students.

## Additional Readings and Resources

Course readings will be provided through curated classical medical and philosophical texts, contemporary bioethics literature, and instructor-selected digital resources related to Hippocratic medicine, healing ethics, preventive care, mental well-being, and the philosophy of health. All materials will be distributed digitally at no cost to students.

# Assignments

| Course Requirements                                                 | Percentages |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Seminar participation and site-based academic engagement            | 20%         |
| Textual analysis paper (ancient medical and philosophical sources)  | 25%         |
| Field reflection portfolio (healing sites & therapeutic landscapes) | 20%         |
| Final integrative project (healing ethics & modern wellness)        | 35%         |
| Total                                                               | 100%        |

# Assignment Descriptions

1

## Seminar Participation & Site-Based Engagement

Students are expected to actively participate in seminars, guided walking sessions, and site visits. Participation includes preparation for class readings, contributions to discussions, and engagement during applied activities and field excursions across Athens, Delphi, and the Cyclades.

2

## Textual Analysis Paper

Students analyze selected ancient medical and philosophical texts related to Hippocratic medicine and sacred healing traditions. The assignment focuses on identifying core ethical arguments, interpreting clinical reasoning, and situating the sources within their historical and cultural context.

3

## Field Reflection Portfolio

Following guided field excursions to healing sanctuaries and therapeutic landscapes, students submit a portfolio of structured reflections connecting course concepts with first-hand site-based observations and experiences.

4

## Final Integrative Project

Students complete a final integrative project examining the relationship between ancient healing ethics and modern wellness. Using course concepts, students construct synthesized arguments integrating medical, philosophical, and archaeological evidence into a written essay and oral presentation.

# Grading Scale

| Grade | Percentage |
|-------|------------|
| A+    | 98-100     |
| A     | 94-97      |
| A-    | 91-93      |
| B+    | 88-90      |
| B     | 84-87      |
| B-    | 81-83      |

| Grade | Percentage |
|-------|------------|
| C+    | 78-80      |
| C     | 74-77      |
| C-    | 71-73      |
| D     | 60-70      |
| F     | Below 60   |

# Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

| Learning Outcomes                                                                                     | Course Requirement(s) used to assess achievement      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Contextualize sacred healing traditions within the social and religious structures of ancient Greece. | Seminar participation; analytical reflections         |
| Trace the transition from Askleion sanctuary healing to Hippocratic clinical medicine.                | Primary-source analysis exercises                     |
| Critique the ethical and philosophical foundations of ancient medical practice.                       | Guided discussion leadership; written response papers |
| Interpret archaeological healing landscapes as therapeutic and preventive health environments.        | Structured site analysis; site-based field journals   |
| Construct synthesized arguments integrating medical, philosophical, and archaeological evidence.      | Final integrative essay and oral presentation         |

# Course Outline

| Session    | Topic                                          | Planned Activities & Field Components                                                                               |
|------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Session 1  | Sacred Healing & the Origins of Medicine       | Site-based academic walking seminar: Askleion on the south slope of the Acropolis hill & early sanctuary landscapes |
| Session 2  | Hippocrates and Preventive Medicine            | Seminar: therapeutic exercise, dietetics & early clinical care. Field discussion: Plato's Academy                   |
| Session 3  | Askleian Sanctuary Medicine                    | Seminar & sanctuary studies: incubation, ritual healing & early diagnostics                                         |
| Session 4  | Purification, Mental Distress & Ritual Therapy | Seminar: catharsis, dream healing & early mental health                                                             |
| Session 5  | Delphi and Oracular Medicine                   | Academic field excursion: Delphi sanctuary healing & therapeutic pilgrimage                                         |
| Session 6  | From Sacred to Clinical Medicine               | Seminar: Hippocratic texts, diagnosis & early medical ethics                                                        |
| Session 7  | Ethics, Care & Civic Health                    | Seminar: caregiving, civic medicine & public health in the polis                                                    |
| Session 8  | Apollo & Therapeutic Landscapes (Naxos)        | Walking field seminar: Portara of Apollo, Panagia Drosiani                                                          |
| Session 9  | Asklepion Sanctuary Medicine (Delos)           | Academic day cruise: Delos Asklepieia & purification sanctuaries                                                    |
| Session 10 | Civic Health & Public Purification (Mykonos)   | Cultural healthscapes, water systems & reflection seminar                                                           |
| Session 11 | Therapeutic Landscapes of Classical Athens     | Site-based academic seminar: Asklepion of Athens (South Slope of Acropolis)                                         |
| Session 12 | Hippocrates and the Birth of Clinical Medicine | Final synthesis seminar, ethics & student presentations                                                             |

# Other Policies

## Expectations

The HCISR academic community encourages civility, respect for the rights and opinions of others, and academic integrity. Students are required to comply with principles of academic integrity and bear responsibility for their academic work. All submitted academic work must represent the student's original work and appropriately cite all sources used. Any act of academic misconduct, including fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, cheating, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will result in disciplinary action.

## Attendance/Participation

The academic program is organized around classroom instruction and structured experiential learning. Attendance is therefore crucial to academic success. Prompt attendance, full preparation, and active participation in all class sessions, applied workshops, and supervised site visits are required. There are no unexcused absences. Repeated absences will negatively affect the student's grade.

In the case of illness, students must notify the course coordinator by SMS or WhatsApp at +30 697 483 1229 at least 30 minutes prior to the start of class.

## Course Policies

For official course communications, students must use their Arcadia University email account. Students are responsible for any information provided by email or through the designated learning management system. This syllabus is subject to change, and any updates will be communicated through official course channels.

# Academic Integrity & Student Policies

## Plagiarism

Representation of another's work or ideas as one's own in academic submissions is plagiarism, and is cause for disciplinary action. Cheating is actual or attempted use of resources not authorized by the instructor(s) for academic submissions. Students caught cheating in this course will receive a failing grade. Fabrication is the falsification or creation of data, research or resources to support academic submissions, and cause for disciplinary action.

## Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading unless prior arrangements have been approved by the instructor due to documented extenuating circumstances.

## Students with Disabilities

Persons with documented disabilities requiring accommodations to meet the expectations of this course should disclose this information during program enrollment and prior to the start of term so that appropriate academic arrangements may be made.

## Incident Reporting and Compliance with Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policies

The Hellenic Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and Research (HCISR) serves as the on-site academic and operational provider for this course. Students experiencing any incident impacting their safety, well-being, or academic participation—including, but not limited to, reports of possible crime, behavioral issues, discrimination or harassment, sexual misconduct, hospitalization, other health concerns, or issues prompting early program departure ("Incidents")—are encouraged to immediately contact HCISR staff for local support and guidance.

Arcadia University, as the School of Record, is committed to supporting students abroad who are affected by such incidents. This may include academic and classroom supportive measures. While Title IX does not extend to classes off U.S. soil, Arcadia University complies, where applicable, with its [University's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment](#) and relevant laws for all programs operating under its auspices. Information regarding formal reporting procedures and available student support resources is provided in the [Arcadia Student Handbook](#).

# Prerequisites

No formal prerequisites. Students from diverse academic backgrounds are welcome.

# Country and Program Connection

This course is delivered within the **Ascle+ Athens Experience**, an interdisciplinary academic program based in Athens, Greece, offered by the **Hellenic Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and Research (HCISR)**. The program integrates public health, nutrition, and cultural health studies through structured academic coursework and applied field learning.

Using Greece as a living academic setting, this course examines ancient medicine, ethics, and therapeutic landscapes. Athens, Delphi, and the Cycladic islands provide direct access to major sanctuaries, pilgrimage routes, and archaeological contexts associated with early healing traditions and the development of Hippocratic medicine. Students engage with site-based academic learning that situates ancient medical philosophy within the physical, civic, and cultural environments in which it emerged.

The course complements the program's interdisciplinary focus on health, ethics, and applied humanities through structured academic excursions and guided field seminars integrated into the overall Athens-based curriculum.

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HCISR | ASCLE+ ATHENS EXPERIENCE — SUMMER 2027

# Ready to Study Ancient Medicine & Healing Ethics in Greece?

Join a cohort of American undergraduate students tracing the origins of Western medicine — from sacred healing sanctuaries to Hippocratic clinical ethics — in one of the world's most compelling academic settings.

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