

## **CURRENTS IN MODERN GREEK LITERATURE (CL 280-01 / EN 084-02)**

Fall Term 2001  
(Tu. and Th. 10:30-11:45)

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**N.B.:**

Please observe office hours or otherwise leave a note with Mrs. Reisman in Carney 122 requesting an appointment.

The following is taken from the description of the course as given in the catalogue:

"A survey of highlights from Modern Greek literature that examines — for all authors and works presented — the following: their 'Greekness', their debt to the Ancient (pagan) and Byzantine (Christian) tradition, the crosscurrents arriving from East and West, and the influence of contemporary political, artistic, and societal conditions. Some related films will be viewed and comparative material will be included."

Throughout the term the course will present a spectrum of Greek literary works from the last two centuries representing many genres (mainly the novel, short stories and poetry) and showing the development of Modern Greek literature throughout time. It will allow men and women writers to be heard, present a wide span of characters, and offer discussion of themes and issues such as: foreign influence (from both East and West) on recent Greek literature (and vice versa); traces of the more remote Greek past (classical antiquity, the Hellenistic and Byzantine periods up through the centuries under the Ottomans) and exposition of the other elements considered particularly "Greek"; the evidence of contemporary or recent history (esp. war) and politics; reflections upon the Orthodox and other religions; the life and customs of the Greeks in their countryside and cities, as well as their interactions with foreigners and their reactions to living abroad amidst other nationalities. Though its scope will, of necessity, be somewhat limited by what works are available in English translation, the course will address the issue of the literary 'canon' and discuss the liminality of Modern Greek literature -- a small field poised on the rim between East and West -- and its reception in the world outside Greece.

The course satisfies the Core requirement in Literature. It is offered entirely in English. No knowledge of the Modern Greek language is necessary, but provision may be made for those wishing to read certain texts in Greek.

Grade based on: ca. two oral and written reports, along with other class participation 70%; final paper/project 30%. Class attendance and participation are important, as well as integrity in preparing the work for the course.

**BOOKS**

The following required books have been ordered through the University Bookstore. Other works, both specific and general, will be made available -- as needed -- in xeroxed form, or at the Reserves Desk in O'Neill Library.

**Required** (all paperbacks):

1. Kazantzákis, Níkos (1883-1957). *Zorba the Greek*; translated by Carl Wildman. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953 -c1952-. 313 p. ISBN 0-671-21132-3.

CALL NUMBER: PA5610.K39 B513 1953 (3 copies)

2. Taktsís, Cóstas (1927-†). *The Third Wedding*. Tr. Leslie Finer. New York: Red Dust, 1971. Paperback, 1986. 303 p. ISBN 0-87376-048-4.

CALL NUMBER: PA5610.T26T713 1971

3. De Bernières, Louis (1954-). *Corelli's Mandolin*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, c1994. 437 p.

O'Neill Course Reserve PR6054.E132 C6 1994 2 Hour Loan

4. Myrivílis, Stratís (1892-1969). *Vasilis Arvanitis*. Translated from the Greek by Pavlos Andronikos. Armidale, N.S.W., Australia: The University of New England Publishing Unit, 1983. 112 p. Forthcoming in O'Neill Library.

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No. 4 above is a substitution for the following that was delayed in shipment:

-- Doúkas, Stratis (1895-†). *A Prisoner of War's Story*. Translated by Petro Alexiou; with an introduction by Dimitris Tziovas. [Birmingham]: Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham, 1999. 58 p.

O'Neill Course Reserve PA5615.O8 H513 1999 2 Hour Loan

Subject: Greco-Turkish War, 1921-1922 -- Prisoners and prisons, Greek -- Fiction.

Subject: Prisoners of war -- Greece -- Fiction.

Subject: Prisoners of war -- Turkey -- Fiction.

And the following entry seems unlikely to arrive during the term. It may be used as the topic for an individual final project/paper.

-- *Pope Joan* / Lawrence Durrell; translated and adapted from the Greek of Emmanuel Royídis (1835-1904). New York: Overlook Press, 1984, c1966. 157 p. An 1866 novel.

O'Neill Stacks PA5610.R52 P313 1984

Also: [Rev. ed.] Woodstock, N.Y., Overlook Press [1972, c1960]. 157 p.

O'Neill Stacks BX958.F2 R56 1972

Subject: Joan (Legendary Pope)

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**Recommended** (a few copies were ordered through the Bookstore) -- these are either useful works of reference or interesting collections of short stories:

1. Beaton, Roderick. *An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature*. 2nd ed. revised and expanded.

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. 420 p. O'Neill Stacks PA5225 .B43 1999

(Previous ed. published in 1994: CALL NUMBER: PA5225 .B43 1994).

English text with Greek quotations and index. Includes bibliographical references (p. [376]-407) and index.

Subjects: S= Greek literature, Modern--20th century--History and criticism.  
Greek literature, Modern--19th century--History and criticism.

2. Philippides, Dia M.L. *CENSUS of Modern Greek Literature: Check list of English-Language Sources Useful in the Study of Modern Greek Literature (1824-1987)*. New Haven, CT: Modern Greek Studies Association, 1990. 248 p.

Subjects: S= Greek literature, Modern--19th century--History and criticism--Bibliography.  
CALL NUMBER: PA5210 .P46x 1990 (2 copies in stacks and one on reserve).

3. Kostís, Nicholas (tr.). *Modern Greek Short Stories*. Athens: Odysseas Publications, 1993. Athens, Greece: Odysseas, 1993. 285 p.

O'Neill Course Reserve PA5296.E5 M62x 1993 2 Hour Loan  
O'Neill Stacks PA5296.E5 M62x 1993

Contains stories by: Emmanuel Roidis, George Vizyinos, Alexandros Papadiamantis, Ioannis Kondylakis, C.P. Cavafy, Andreas Karkavitsas, Gregorios Xenopoulos, Stratis Myrivilis, Elias Venezis, M. Karagatsis, Stratis Tsirkas, Demetres Hatzis, George Kitsopoulos, Galatia Saranti, George Ioannou, Costas Taktis, Marios Hakkas, Dinos Christianopoulos, Menis Koumantareas, Nikos Houliaras, George Maniotis.

4. Leontís, Artemis (ed.). *Greece: A Traveler's Literary Companion*. [Traveler's Literary companion]. San Francisco, Calif.: Whereabouts Press, 1997. 271 p.

O'Neill Stacks PA5296.E5 G74 1997

Contents: The white bear / Vassilis Vassilikos -- The fresco / Marios Hakkas -- Funerary epigrams / Odysseus Elytis -- Pilgrimage through Greece / Nikos Kazantzakis -- Mycenae / Ilias Venezis -- Panayotis / Thanassis Valtinos -- The hole in the rock / Leonidas Zenakos -- Delphi / George Seferis -- Galaxidi: the fate of a maritime town / Eva Vlami -- Lefkas / Ilias Venezis -- Sioulas the tanner / Dimitris Hatzis -- Carnival / Christoforos Milionis -- Angel John the thief / Georgios Drosinis -- The dogs of Seikh-Sou / Yorgos Ioannou -- America is no longer here / Yiorgos Chouliaras -- The fountain of Brahim-Baba / Elli Alexiou -- Autobiography of a book / Michel Fais -- The regards / Alexandra Papadopoulou -- In the old catholic Syros / Kostos Ouranis -- My home / Melpo Axioti -- The smile from the abyss / Manolis Xexakis -- Black and white / Rhea Galanaki -- Kalymnos / Margarita Karapanou -- Astradeni / Eugenia Fakinou.

Other works likely to be added to the syllabus, in part or in total, because their authors may visit BC during the term:

Rhea Galanáki, *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina nel Cuore*. Translated by Kay Cicellis. London; Chester Springs, PA: P. Owen; Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996. O'Neill Reserve Desk PA5618.A4 B513 1996. (*O bio" tou Ismah Ferik pasaxSpina nel cuore*. Athens: **Agra**, 1989). Re. Crete in 1866.

Thanasis Valtinós, "The Descent of the Nine". A Story. N.C. Germanacos, tr. *Boundary 2*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter 1973): 321-47. (*H kaqodo" twv Ennia*, 1963). Re. the Greek Civil War --late 1940s.

OR

Thanassis Valtinós, *Deep Blue Almost Black: Selected Fiction*. Translated from the Greek by Jane Assimakopoulos and Stavros Deligiorgis. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, c1997. 116 p.

Contents: *You Will Find My Bones Under Rain*: Short Stories. August '48; The River Kaystros; The Plaster Cast; Peppers in a Flowerpot; Panayotis; The Stepfather; Autumn Storm; Peter and Pat; You Will Find My Bones Under Rain; Nekuia: Journey to the Dead; Roses for Maria A.; There Still is a God -- *Deep Blue Almost Black*: A Novella.  
O'Neill Stacks PA5633.A4 P4813 1997

Some related films:

*Zorba the Greek* [videorecording] / Twentieth Century-Fox. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Magnetic Video, 1980. 1 videocassette (142 min.). O'Neill Media Center Stacks PA5610.K39 B513 1980

A videocassette release of the 1964 motion picture by Twentieth Century-Fox. Based on the novel: *Bios kai politeia tou Alexe Zormpa* / Nikos Kazantzakis. Cast: Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, Irene Papas. Producer, Michael Cacoyannis; director, Michael Cacoyannis.

*Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. Currently playing in local movie theaters. We shall attend this film as a group.

*Caváfy* [videorecording]. Greek Film Centre], 1996. 1 videocassette (ca. 85 min.). O'Neill Media Center Stacks PN1993.5.G75 C38 1996

Originally released as a motion picture. Cast: Vassilis Diamandopoulos, Dimitris Katalifos, Mayaia Lyberopoulou. Director/screenwriter, Iannis Smaragdis; producer, Helene Smaragdis; music and lyrics, Vangelis. Part biography, part fantasy, but very much in the spirit of the poet's work, this film describes the life of the Greek poet C.P. Cavafy.

*E Kathodos ton ennia (The Descent of the Nine)*. Dir.: Christos Siopachás. 1983. Ca. 90 min. O'Neill Media Center Stacks PA5633.A4 K36x 1984

Based on the novel by Thanases Valtinós. During the summer of 1949, the end of the civil war in Greece, the last band of guerrillas of the Democratic Army makes a desperate march to the sea, only to face annihilation.

The above list of films constitutes only an initial sample. Many more films are based on, or related to, modern Greek literature. They will be identified during the course; some may be partially viewed by the class group as a whole, others may be studied individually for final projects/papers. Also films based on other literatures and cultures may be drawn into the course.

## PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

N.B. The present syllabus has already been modified due to last-minute notification of delayed arrival or non-availability of books. Substitutions will be made accordingly. Special events, such as the projection schedule of films in the area, or the possible arrival of Greek authors for a visit to the class, may also cause adjustments in the schedule.

Printed items not forming part of required books will be distributed in class in xeroxed form.

### WEEK 1

1. Tues. Sept. 4                    General introduction: The development of Modern Greek literature, set against the geographical background.  
Slide-show of select 19th and 20th century authors.  
Specific topic: **The transition from the 19th to the 20th century.**  
First author and text for presentation: <Greek Alexandrian poet> C.P. Caváfy (1863-1933), "Ithaca" (1894-1911).
2. Thurs. Sept. 6                    General introduction (cont.). Initial presentation of *Zorba the Greek* (1946 book by Níkos Kazantzákis and 1964 film by Michael Cacoyánis -- projection of sample scenes from the latter).  
Second author and text for presentation: <Fiction writer from Skíathos island> Aléxandros Papadiamántis (1851-1911): <short story> "The American" (1891).  
Contrast the two world views (Cavafy's and Papadiamantis').
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### WEEK 2

3. Tues. Sept. 11                    **The 19th century -- 1st half.** Dionysios Solomós, "The Hymn to Liberty" (national anthem). Comparison with other national anthems. The 1821 War of Independence (historical background). Byron -- Romanticism.  
From the same period: Elisávet Moutsán-Martinéngou, *My Story* (autobiography of an early Greek woman writer).
4. Thurs. Sept. 13                    The Greek landscape: slides depicting various regions of Greece.  
Nationalism: the Folk Song ("St. Sophia"; "The Bridge of Arta").  
Ioánnis Makrygiánnis, *The Memoirs of General Makrygiannis, 1797-1864*. Oxford University Press, 1966 (selections).  
Could be compared with: Theodore Kolokotrónis, *Memoirs from the Greek War of Independence, 1821-1833*. Chicago: Argonaut Publishers, 1969.
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### WEEK 3

5. Tues. Sept. 18                    **The 19th century -- 2nd half.** Prose in the latter part of the century. Novels of the period. Emmanuel Royídis, *Pope Joan*. Tr. and adapted by Lawrence Durrell. Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1960 and 1972.  
In reading this 1866 novel, study the author's satire of religion, both Eastern and Western, his views of the sexes, esp. women, and his addresses to the reader outside the text. (Perhaps an individual report will be presented on this novel.)

6. Thurs. Sept. 20 Short stories: Geórgios Vizyenós and Aléxandros Papadiamántis. Regional literature, depiction of village life. Georgios Vizyenós, "My Mother's Sin", in Nicholas Kostis (tr.), *Modern Greek Short Stories*. Athens. Odysseas Publications, 1993: 23-47. Also ref. to Vizyenós' short story "Moscov Selim".  
Aléxandros Papadiamántis is well-known for his novella *The Murderess*. New York: Writers and Readers, 1983. (Individual report?)  
Topics for discussion: mother figures, religion, and the depiction of outsiders in Greek literature; emigration (cf. Elia Kazán's film *America America*).
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WEEK 4

7. Tues. Sept. 25 **Transition into the 20th century.** Constantine Caváfý (poet in Alexandria, Egypt). Greece seen from the diaspora perspective. The city.  
Selections from his poetry, including "Walls" and "Waiting for the Barbarians"; and prose, "Give Back the Elgin Marbles" and "Notes on Poetics and Ethics". Cavafy's relationship to the Greek past and present.  
Related film: *Cavafy*.

8. Thurs. Sept. 27 **The early 20th century.** The 1922 Asia Minor Disaster. History (esp. 1922) and wars. Observe the development of relations between Turks and Greeks in Asia Minor.  
Stratis Myrivilis, *Vasilis Arvanitis* (the novel appeared in various forms 1934-1943).  
Cf. Didó Sotiríou, *Farewell Anatolia* (novel, orig. pub. 1962). (Individual report?)  
Also cf. Stratis Doukas, *A Prisoner of War's Story*. (Individual report?)  
Related film: 1922.

**SPECIAL EVENT THIS WEEKEND:** Greek Film Festival ("New Greek Cinema") at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Thurs. Sept. 27 - Sat. Sept. 29. Five new films, with English subtitles. Tickets \$7 per film showing for students. Special page appended to Syllabus, with specifics.

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WEEK 5

9. Tues. Oct. 2 Class-time may have to be rescheduled.  
10. Thurs. Oct. 4 Class-time may have to be rescheduled.

**SPECIAL EVENT THIS WEEK OR THE FOLLOWING:** retrospective of films by Jules Dassin (m. Melina Mercouri) at the Harvard University Film Archive (Carpenter Center). Schedule to be provided when available.

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WEEK 6

11. Tues. Oct. 9 **The 20th century (cont.).** Cretan author Nikos Kazantzákis, *Zorba the Greek* (novel, orig. pub. 1946). Also, selections from his autobiography, *Report to Greco*.

In the novel (which has been translated into ca. 40 languages), consider the references to 'Greekness', the author's depiction of women, the narrator's flights into philosophical thought. Compare with scenes/impressions from the 1964 film by Michael Cacoyánnis. In the autobiography, consider the motivation for the claims made by the author (individual report?).

12. Thurs. Oct. 11      **20th century poets.** George Seféris (1900-1971) (Nobel Prize for Literature 1963; Greek Ambassador). Selections from his *Collected Poems* and his essays and diaries. For Seferis and the poets to be discussed hereafter, a central issue is their relationship to the Greek past, antiquity and myth, as well as to the contemporary West and East.

DURING THESE DAYS (OCT. 10-15) THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR WILL BE TAKING PLACE. GREECE IS THE COUNTRY HONORED IN 2001!

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WEEK 7

13. Tues. Oct. 16      20th century poetry (cont.). Odysseás El'ytis (Nobel Prize 1979). A selection from his poetry, including his major work, *Axion Esti* (set to music by Mikis Theodorakis). Poet's interview with Ivar Ivask: "Odysseus Elytis on his Poetry", *Books Abroad* 49.4 (1975): 631-645. (Individual report?) Yánnis Rítsos (Lenin Prize), poet and Leninist. A selection of his short and long poems. For Ritsos, an interesting aspect is the relationship of his poetic art to his leftist political commitment.

14. Thurs. Oct. 18      Class-time may have to be rescheduled.
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WEEK 8

15. Tues. Oct. 23      **The 20th century -- 2nd half (in prose).** Thanásis Valtinós, "Descent of the Nine" (Greek publication 1963), "The Plaster Cast" (1970), "Peter and Pat". Greek society and politics from the Civil War (1946-49) onwards, with an extension into immigration.
16. Thurs. Oct. 25      Rhea Galanáki, *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina nel Cuore*. An important historical novel, published in Greek in 1989, re. the Cretan uprisings of the mid-nineteenth century, with much reference to dual nationality. Galanáki's second major novel, a more romantic tale, has also been translated into English: *I shall sign as Loui*. Translated from the Greek by Helen Dendrinou Koliás. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2000. Individual report?
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WEEK 9

SPECIAL EVENT: During this week it is likely that Greek authors Rhea Galanáki and Thanasis Valtinós will visit BC, either to our class or for a special reading in the evening!

17. Tues. Oct. 30                   Cóstas Taktsís, *The Third Wedding* (originally published in 1962). A most spirited satire, told from the viewpoint of an angered wife and mother, that ranges from the beginning of the 20th century into World War II.

18. Thurs. Nov. 1                *The Third Wedding* (cont.)

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WEEK 10

19. Tues. Nov. 6                Louis De Bernières (1954-), *Corelli's Mandolin*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, c1994. 437 p. A book by a non-Greek author, included on the syllabus because of its topicality and current popularity. A major topic for discussion: the best-seller, how it is made and what is its relationship to historicity.

20. Thurs. Nov. 8                *Corelli's Mandolin* (cont.)

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WEEK 11

21. Tues. Nov. 13               Short stories: Demétris Hatzís, "Sioulas the Tanner"; George Ioánnou, "The Dogs of Seikh-Sou"; Mários Hákkas, "Skopeftírion: Heroes' Shrine for Sale".  
Most of these stories stand out for their conveyance of societal and political ills.

22. Thurs. Nov. 15              **FINAL PAPER / PROJECT DUE.** The only possible extension is until classtime on Tues. Nov. 20.  
Recapitulation. Other works. Discussion of the development and spread of Modern Greek literature. Its entry to the world abroad. The timing of translations into English. Is modern Greek literature "marginal"?

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WEEK 12

THANKSGIVING VACATION. No classes.

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WEEK 13

23. Tues. Nov. 27               Presentations in class of final papers/projects.

24. Thurs. Nov. 29              Presentations in class of final papers/projects (cont.).

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WEEK 14

25. Tues. Dec. 4                 Presentations in class of final papers/projects (cont.).

26. Thurs. Dec. 6              Presentations in class of final papers/projects (cont.).

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WEEK 15

27. Tues. Dec. 11               NO CLASS. STUDY DAY.

