

Learning Greek History in Greece, Assessing Field Trips at Victoria University of Wellington

By undertaking a 5-week field trip to the Greek mainland and Crete, the course Greek Field Trip (CLAS 320/ 420) at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in New Zealand is a study of Greek archaeological sites and is designed to broaden students' knowledge of classical antiquity. It is capped at 20 students and is offered biennially to both final-year undergraduate students (CLAS 320) and graduate students (CLAS 420) in classical studies. Students of different study status carry

slightly different assessment approaches (e.g. different contents in term test) and marking criteria.

Distinctive Features:

- ✔ Interacting classical studies with modern world;
- ✔ Conducting site specific research and on-site reporting;
- ✔ Accommodating the personal traveling needs of students in addition to the field trip with free days and trip extension.

Designed Learning Outcomes (LO):

- I. Assess an ancient site [CLAS320] / Access complex ancient sites [CLAS420] from archaeological plans and publications
- II. Place an ancient site into [CLAS320] / Analyse the significance of an ancient site in [CLAS420] its historical and cultural context.
- III. Orally present an ancient site [CLAS320] / ancient sites [CLAS420] to a group on-site.
- IV. Demonstrate understanding [CLAS320] / a sophisticated understanding [CLAS420] of aspects of the history and topography of ancient Greece
- V. Write a research paper that reflects both academic research into and real-life experience of a site. [CLAS320] / Write a research paper that reflects both academic research into and real-life experience of two sites and places them in context with one another. [CLAS420]

Coursework Teaching & Learning Activities:

- ✍ Pre-departure class meetings with the course coordinator and travel agent (twice, in Apr & Oct)
- ✍ Pre-departure readings and site research
- ✍ Field trip (5 weeks)
 - 1) Site preparation & research in local library
 - 2) Site visits and in situ presentation
 - 3) Days off (3 days)
 - 4) Test (1 hour, last day in Greece)
- ✍ Post-trip summary: essay writing

Source: VUW (2018) Course Outlines

Assessment Approaches

Name	Learning Activities	Weight	Aligned LO	Type	Generic Skills
A1 Oral Site Reports	Each students has to conduct site analyses and presentations of two sites during the field trip. For graduate students, they need to choose two sites of contrasting scales.	30%	I. II. III.	Formative/ Summative	Communication; Critical Thinking; Creativity; IT; Problem Solving
A2 Field Test	Students need to demonstrate their overall knowledge of the sites and museums that they have visited in this course by passing a structured test at the end of the field trip. The test lasts for one hour with short-answer questions. The difficulties of the test content vary by the students' levels of studies.	20%	III. IV.	Summative	Critical Thinking; Study Skills

A3	Research Essay	The research essay is written up based on site analyses and presentation. It is due after return from the field trip.	50%	I. III. IV. V.	Summative	Communication; Critical Thinking; IT
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Assessment Type

Assessments adopted in this course are mostly summative. The field visit is built upon pre-departure and post-arrival site research. Students are expected to have formative knowledge and skills, and to be ready for the summative assessment.

Assessment Focal Areas

Holistic competencies: The assessment approaches focus on the communication of students on site (A1) and in writing (A3). Students are advised to retrieve and conduct critical reading of available information and literatures regarding the particular archeological sites that they are assigned to do research on. Their critical thinking skills and information literacy skills are thus enhanced.

Knowledge application: The terms test (A2) “ensures that students acquire a broad knowledge of the language of archaeological analysis and learn the

specific features and importance of all the sites studied in this course” (VUW 2007). This knowledge is then applied in conducting analysis on selected sites during the oral site reports (A1) and the writing of research essay (A3).

Reflection: The research essay (A3) is reflective on the academic research, real-life experience and sociocultural context of an archaeological site. As this is due after students return from the field trip, there is certain space in time between the learning experience and the writing, which allows room for reflection.

Assessment Standards/ Sample Rubrics

VUW (2013) has recommended certain assessment criteria based on different purposes and forms of assignments, for individual course coordinators to construct marking guidelines and rubrics. The ones for presentation and essays are pertinent to this course.

	Criterion	Description
A1. Oral Site Report	Course-specific contents	A site analysis should include: 1) description of the essential features of the site and details of its discovery and excavation; 2) a synopsis of the site’s history and functions; 3) an analysis of its architectural and/or religious, social, political importance both within its locale and in its links with other centers; 4) If the site assigned has an associated museum, the student should discuss some of its most important holdings.
	Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clarity of the presentation’s intention or purpose. – Coherence of explanations and arguments. – Structure, organisation and sequencing of individual elements. – Originality or insight apparent in the ideas communicated. Achievement of the presentation’s intentions.
	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Time on task; important elements of the message are given predominance in the presentation. – Content clearly contributes to the communication of the intended message. – Content is easily comprehended by the audience. – Choices of fonts, images and other media contribute to the communication of the intended message. – Content and ideas are appropriately referenced. – Content is free of errors of fact and presentation. – Production values are consistent with the significance of the presentation and the audience. – Content is interesting and engages the audience. – Handouts and supporting materials enhance the experience and/or support follow-up actions.

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| Delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Timekeeping; presentation uses the available time well and does not go over the specified limit. – Pace of presentation; sufficient to maintain the interest of the audience while not being rushed. – The level and pitch of audio-visual content is suitable for the audience and the medium. – The presenter is engaged and enthusiastic in their delivery. The presenter uses supporting materials to support communication rather than instead of engaging with the audience. – The audience responds to the delivery and is engaged with the message. – Questions are solicited and responded to effectively. |
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Sources: VUW (2007); VUW (2013) Guidelines on Assessment for Learning, p.13

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| A3. Research Essay | Qualities being assessed |
| | – Relevance to the question |
| | – Organization of answer |
| | – Coherence of arguments |
| | – Use of primary sources |
| | – Originality of thought |
| | – Fluency in writing (expression, grammar, spelling, etc.) |
| – Citation and referencing practices | |

Source: VUW (2013) Guidelines on Assessment for Learning, p.6

Teacher's Stories

This field trip course was initially developed in 2000 and organized by Dr. David Rosenbloom and Dr. Mathew Trundle, who were then Senior Lecturers in Classics at VUM but have both moved onto other universities.

The Classics Program at VUW is the host and provides administrative supports of this course. The teaching team members have been evolving in recent years. The course is presently led by Dr. Dianna Burton, Senior Lecture, and Professor Jeffrey Tatum.

Professional Engagements

The current course coordinator, Dianna Burton, is a Senior Lecturer in ancient Greek art, mythology and religion. She is also involved in a project to scan and make 3D printed items of holdings in the Classics Museum of New Zealand.

The Classics Program as a whole has received recognition of its Greek field trip together with its other contributions to building connections with the Greek community. In 2010, the faculty members of the Classics Program received a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Public Contribution Excellence.

Students' Side of Stories

Not available

Featured Video/ Photos

- ▶ A student vlog of the field trip in 2016 <https://youtu.be/jEsYChxNi54>

References

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