

Classics 242 (Summer 2010)

**KENCHREAI FIELD SCHOOL:
ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY AND CULTURE IN GREECE**

Joseph L. Rife
Department of Classical Studies, Vanderbilt University

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the archaeology, history and culture of Greece by working and living at the ancient city of Corinth in the summer. Students participate in research activities associated with the excavations at Kenchreai (Corinth's eastern port), visit sites and museums in the larger region, attend seminars, and experience life in a small village. The Kenchreai Excavations, directed by Professor Rife under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and in conjunction with the Greek Ministry of Culture, provide a unique opportunity for students at the introductory level to join in a major interdisciplinary research program overseas. Although the 2010 season of the Kenchreai Excavations will not involve digging, participants will learn about data analysis, artifactual processing, conservation, and architectural survey, all important components in archaeological fieldwork. This program also gives students a rare chance to live and to learn in one of the most archaeologically rich, historically important, and naturally beautiful regions in Greece. Students learn not only about the practice of archaeological field research, but also about Greek history and culture from ancient to modern times. This course focuses on southern Greece during the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity, a period of prosperity and diversity at Kenchreai and in its broader area. Students will also explore cultural and historical developments that influenced other regions and longer periods, from the Bronze Age to the Modern era, including religion and cult-practice, art and iconography, settlement and the environment, and the construction of identity.

Learning Objectives:

- To gain practical experience in archaeological work after the data collection phase
- To build appreciation for and understanding of interdisciplinary research
- To develop a basic knowledge of the variety of ancient Greek material culture
- To learn about long-term developments in Greek history and culture
- To gain understanding of and respect for modern society and culture in Greece

Curriculum:

The activities of the course—intensive participation in research, visits to sites and museums, and involvement in seminars—will be organized as follows:

1) Students will be junior team members on the Kenchreai Excavations. Through a regular schedule of fieldwork they will learn about data analysis, artifactual processing, conservation, and architectural survey, all important components in archaeological fieldwork after excavation, or the primary discovery phase. Students will work under the supervision of Professor Rife, who collaborates with archaeologists and specialists in a range of disciplines, including art history, anthropology, geology and materials science.

2) Interspersed with research activities, students will participate in guided visits to major sites and museums in the Corinthia and Argolid. Sites and museums have been chosen that not only elucidate our work at Kenchreai but also provide a broader context for understanding its place in Greek archaeology, history, and culture. On these trips students will examine the monuments, finds, and exhibits while discussing long-term developments and interpretive themes relevant to each site. These excursions will include both guided activities and free-time for individual exploration. The tentative roster of sites and museums includes:

- Isthmia (site and museum)
- Corinth (forum; basilicas; north cemetery; museum; citadel)
- Lechaion (site)
- *Diolkos* and canal (site)
- Perachora (site)
- Nemea (site and museum)
- Mycenae and Tiryns (sites and Mycenae museum)
- Epidauros (site and museum)
- Nafplio (old city; Palamidi; folklore museum)

3) Students will attend seminars led by experts in different fields on the senior staff of the Kenchreai Excavations. These will take the form of presentations followed by directed discussion. Professor Rife will coordinate the seminars and discussion, which will be delivered by guest lecturers who introduce students to major fields while also referring directly to their ongoing work at Kenchreai. The seminars will be held once a week in the afternoons and they will last at least one hour. The roster of seminars includes the following:

- Melissa Morison (Grand Valley State University, Michigan): *The study and analysis of ancient pottery*
- Robert Weir (University of Windsor, Ontario): *The study and analysis of ancient coins and the monetary economy*
- Richard Dunn (Norwich University, Vermont): *Geoarchaeology, with a focus on coastal change, archaeoseismology, and sedimentology*
- China Shelton (Boston University): *Paleoethnobotany, or the study and analysis of plant remains from archaeological contexts*
- Douglas Ubelaker (National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution): *Bioarchaeology, or the study and analysis of human skeletal remains from archaeological contexts*
- David Reese (Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University): *Zooarchaeology, or the study and analysis of animal remains from archaeological contexts*

Assignments and Evaluation:

Apart from regular participation in the excavations, visits, and seminars, students will complete both readings and oral and written assignments. The assigned readings will be concentrated at the beginning of the season. These readings, which are appropriate to students at the introductory level, will address archaeological method, the archaeology, history and culture of the Corinthia generally and Kenchreai specifically, and issues relating to the archaeological profession, cultural heritage, and ethics. The purpose of these readings is to

present several basic themes for the course, encourage independent critique, and prepare for activities and discussions on-site and in seminars.

The written assignments aim to help students to consolidate and to prove their knowledge. These include quizzes on Greek geography and chronology; a field diary discussing what students have learned, discovered, and experienced, to be checked weekly; one 15-20 minute oral report on a topic, a work of art, or a monument that we will visit outside Kenchreai, based on independent research (e.g., the Bath at Nemea; St. Paul at Corinth; the Imperial portraits in the Corinth Museum); one short paper (4-8 pages, double-spaced, typed or handwritten) to write up their oral report and incorporate research and feedback; and one final exam involving interpretive essays on broad themes in Greek archaeology, history and culture that we have discussed throughout the course. Excellent performance on written and oral assignments means lucid expression; appropriate style; diligent preparation; accurate content; intelligent and persuasive treatment or analysis; and (for the field diary) insight and effort.

In addition to these assignments, students will be evaluated on the basis of their participation in fieldwork, visits, and seminars. Excellent participation means regular, prompt, attentive attendance; positive and productive cooperation in a team effort; conscientious preparation; and thoughtful, appropriate response during discussions.

Grades will be calculated according to the following formula:

- 20% Participation in fieldwork
- 10% Participation in visits to sites and museums
- 5% Participation in seminars
- 15% Quizzes on readings, geography and chronology
- 25% Report on monument
- 10% Field diary
- 15% Final exam