

# Reacting to Democracy

## Ancient Athens and the Constitutional Convention

---

**Bowdoin College, Fall 2017**

*Sills 109, Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30am – 12:55pm*

Prof. Michael Nerdahl  
Department of Classics  
Office: Sills 109  
Phone: x3403  
Email: mnerdahl  
Hours: T 1:30 to 3:30; R 10 to 11:30, by appt.  
at <http://michaelnerdahl.youcanbook.me>

Prof. Patrick Rael  
Department of History  
Office: 211C Hubbard  
Phone: x3775  
Email: prael  
Hours: MW2-4, by appt.

This course explores the nature of democracy in two distinct historical eras: ancient Greece and the founding of the United States. Employs well-developed classroom simulations. The first half of the semester runs "The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 BCE"; the second, "America's Founding: The Constitutional Convention of 1787." Students take on roles of historical personae in both of these simulations, which permit them to explore critical events and ideas in novel ways. Pairing games that explore the foundations of democracy in both ancient and modern times permits exploration of this important topic across time and space.

### BOOKS AND READINGS:

You will need a copy of each of these:

- Josiah Ober, Naomi J. Norman, and Mark C. Carnes, *The Threshold Of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 2015). Available via Chegg.
- John Patrick Coby, *America's Founding: The Constitutional Convention of 1787* (Reacting to the Past Game Development, 2016). Photocopies available via campus bookstore, Blackboard.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

- Papers (apx. 2,500 words, or 10pp, for each game) @ 15% each = 60%
  - Athens game: two papers of 4-6pp each (15% each = 30%)
  - Constitution game: writing assignments vary by position but will total 30%
  - Due dates for the papers are determined by your assigned role; see the syllabus below for the sessions for each game
- Participation and other written work (quizzes, role-requirements, evaluations, etc.): 25%
  - Even more than in other humanities courses, frequent and substantive in-class contributions will constitute an important part of your final grade.
- Final presentation: 15%

SOME IMPORTANT NOTES:

- In this course you'll spend a lot of time in class orating, persuading, rebutting, and negotiating. Class attendance and participation are critical to the experience. Plan on attending every class session and notify the instructor and your faction-mates if you are unable to attend.
- Unless the game requires it, please do not leave the room during the class session.
- Please do not bring your lunch to class.
- Please avoid using digital devices in class.
- If you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the instructors as soon as possible.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY: Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper citations — when using the work of another scholar. Be familiar with Bowdoin's [honor code](#), Bowdoin's [general guidelines](#) for proper citation and attribution of sources, and any guidelines provided specifically for this course. Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

<b>Week</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
Week 1 8/28		Introductions
Week 2 9/5, 9/7	1. Athens game setup session I	2. Athens game setup session II: Athens Besieged
Week 3 9/12, 9/14	3. Setup session III: Pericles & Plato; assignment of duties	4. Game session I: Assembly (Reconciliation Agreement)
Week 4 9/19, 9/21	5. Game session II: Assembly (Civil Rights)	6. Game session III: Assembly (Social Welfare)
Week 5 9/26, 9/28	7. Game session IV: Trials	8. Game session V: Assembly (Democratic Legislation)
Week 6 10/3, 10/5	9. Game session VI: Assembly (Remilitarization?)	10. Extra session (with visitors)
Week 7 10/12	Fall break	11. Post-mortem session
Week 8 10/17, 10/19	1. Constitution game setup	2. Constitution game setup
Week 9 10/24, 10/26	3. Virginia plan	4. Virginia plan
Week 10 10/31, 11/2	5. New Jersey plan	6. New Jersey plan
Week 11 11/7, 11/9	7. New issues	8. New issues
Week 12 11/14, 11/16	9. Committee of Style and Arrangement	10. Committee of Style and Arrangement
Week 13 11/21	11. Optional post-mortem session	Thanksgiving break
Week 14 11/28, 11/30	In-class projects: Time machine	In-class projects: Time machine
Week 15 12/5, 12/7	Class presentations	Class presentations