Why the Greeks Are Great: The Cultural Legacy of the Greeks  
Dr. Patrick Hunt  
Stanford Continuing Studies Fall 2021  
Preliminary Syllabus

Our debts to the ancient Greeks are enormous, yet we too often take for granted their influence on shaping our intellectual and cultural life. As the Greek fable writer Aesop famously put it, “familiarity breeds contempt” or “The camel cannot see its own hump” and “you cannot view the whole ship when you’re on it.” Our ten Why the Greeks Are Great sessions cover the following topics on what we owe to the Greeks and Greek legacy in these major disciplines and more. It is no coincidence that 8 of the 10 subjects below are originally Greek words because the Greeks invented or pioneered many of the foundations in these areas of intellectual and creative endeavor. Slide-illustrated lectures and assigned readings from course texts are supplemented by online readings including from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) and from the instructor’s publications, unpublished or otherwise added to the readings below.

1. **Introduction and Overview:** “How Can We Measure Our Debts to the Greeks?”,  
   *Reading:* Harris Cline *The Greeks*, Intro. 6-9, ch. 1, 10-40; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

2. **Language:** “How Many Greek Words Do We Use?” - “It’s Greek to Me” - (~30% of English)?,  

3. **Mythology:** “How We Frame Our Stories and Values on Greek Myth” - Myth and Metaphor from the Gods and Heroes to Monsters,  
   *Reading:* P. Hunt, “Between a Rock and Hard Place” *Electrum Magazine*, December 2011; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

4. **Philosophy:** “How do We Think?” - Foundations in Socratic Dialogues of Plato from Ontology to Metaphysics,  
   *Reading:* SEP online excerpt plus Harris Cline *The Greeks*, ch. 1, 41-75; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

5. **Politics and Economics:** “How Can Democracy Overcome Tyranny and Oligarchy?” from Solon and Aristotle’s Politics onward  
   *Reading:* SEP online excerpt plus Harris Cline *The Greeks*, ch. 2, 76-95; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

6. **Drama and Music:** “Deeper than Entertainment - Suspension of Disbelief, Destiny, Catharsis and Resolution” from Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides onward,
Reading: Harris Cline *The Greeks*, ch. 2, 96-121; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

7. Literature: “How We Remember Who We Are and Tell Where We’ve Been” - Tales, Epics and Lyrics from Homer and Hesiod to Apollonius and Sappho, *Reading: Harris Cline The Greeks*, ch. 3, 122-175; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript and excerpts of Greek literature;

8. Mathematics: “How Do we Measure and Quantize?” - Thales and Pythagoras to Euclid and Archimedes,
   *Reading: SEP online excerpt plus Higben’s* *Mathematics for the Million* *excerpt plus excerpt from Hunt’s Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

9. Science: “How Do We Examine and Test Knowledge (Gnosis)?” from Democritus to the Mouseion of Alexandria, *Reading: SEP online excerpt plus Harris Cline The Greeks*, ch. 3, 176-211; plus excerpt from Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

10. Medicine: Are the Healing Arts Divine?” From Asklepios to Hippocrates to Galen, *Reading: “Greek Medicine” from the National Library of Medicine (NIM-NIH); plus excerpt from Hunt’s Why the Greeks Are Great* manuscript;

   Course texts: Diane Harris Cline, *The Greeks*, National Geographic Books, 2016, plus *SEP (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)* online excerpts plus unpublished manuscript working draft of Patrick Hunt’s *Why the Greeks Are Great*;

   *Note: instructor will be amending and specifying readings from this preliminary schedule including from online URLs.*

Course Requirements:
Students attend ten Zoom lectures (or follow recordings on Canvas/Warpwire) and complete assigned readings, including from course texts and supplemental readings. If taken for a grade, a brief 10 page critical paper will be completed (topic with instructor consent); or as an alternate for CLG (Credit Letter Grade), completing discussion postings with significant relevant contributions (1000+ words) will also suffice. If you want CR (Credit) you must register your attendance each session, as attendance is used to determine credit.

Students who need proof of course completion should enroll for Credit/No Credit or Letter Grade. No proof of completion can be given to students enrolled for No Grade Requested.

**The class sessions will be recorded.**

Live participation is required in order for students to receive the full benefit of the course. Class recordings are not intended to be a replacement or substitute for class attendance. Students are expected to inform the Instructor of any emergency situations that require your absence from class, and you are strongly encouraged to keep in touch with the instructor about any absences.