Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. . . . The power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who [share] this sense makes a family and a state.

Aristotle, Politics, Book I, Chapter II

Nature itself cannot err: and as men abound in copiousness of language; so they become more wise, or more mad, than ordinary. Nor is it possible without letters for any man to become either excellently wise or (unless his memory be hurt by disease, or ill constitution of organs) excellently foolish. . . . A man must take heed of words; which, besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; such as are the names of virtues and vices: for one man calleth wisdom what another calleth fear; and one cruelty what another justice; one prodigality what another magnanimity; and one gravity what another stupidity, etc. And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. . . . I have said before . . . that a man did excel all other animals in this faculty [of reasoning from abstract words] . . . But this privilege is allayed by another; and that is by the privilege of absurdity, to which no living creature is subject, but men only.

Hobbes, Leviathan, Part I, Chapters IV and V

I. Course Description

The humanities are those disciplines – such as history, literature, philosophy, and rhetoric – that teach us what it means to be human. Certain texts from within the field of humanities can also reveal to us the qualities of good leadership. This class will take its bearings from two classics of Western Civilization: Aristotle’s treatise On Rhetoric and Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War. The readings, discussions, and compositions for this course will be an extensive exploration of the two predominant options for leadership – persuasion or coercion, rhetoric or force – especially as these options were manifested during the Peloponnesian War.

The questions that will inform our collective exploration will include: What qualities are necessary to be an effective leader? Which ones are necessary to be a good leader? Is it possible to be one without the other? What qualities make for a persuasive speaker? What qualities make for a good speaker? Why must these questions be separate? What is the role of rhetoric in leadership? What are its limitations? What are its dangers? How does the form of government affect the answers to all of the above questions? By the end of the course, the student should be able to discuss intelligently these considerations: does the faculty of speech, as Aristotle claimed, enable human beings to come to an agreement about the advantageous and the just? Or does it enable them, as Hobbes said, to disguise our real motives behind moral abstractions, and therefore become more excellently foolish and absurd than any other animal? Or does the faculty contain, as Thucydides tried to illustrate, ample potential for both?
II. Texts

Required Texts

*On Rhetoric* by Aristotle (translation by George A. Kennedy, Oxford University Press)

*The Landmark Thucydides*, (ed. by Robert B. Strassler)

There will also be one or two essays, either held in reserve or given as handouts

III. Assignments and Grading

Mid-term (Wednesday, February 22) 15%

Final Exam (Thursday, April 26, 2:00-5:00) 20%

Paper Outline (1-2 pages, due February 29 at noon) 2%

Paper, First Draft (6-7 pages, due March 26 at noon) 3%

Paper, Final Draft (8-10 pages, due April 18 at noon) 30%

Speech (3-4 pages written, preferably delivered orally, 3-5 minutes, due dates vary) 15%

Participation 15%

**Term Paper:** Each student is required to write one exceptionally well-written paper over the course of the semester. It will be submitted in three stages and it will culminate in the most rhetorically sophisticated piece of writing the student has yet composed. It will be appraised according to the logical, ethical, and emotional proofs that the student can marshal in support of an important issue regarding leadership, rhetoric, or the relationship between the two. The paper will total 35% of the student’s grade. The paper outline and first draft will constitute 5% of the grade, and the student will receive full credit just for turning them in on time. Each stage of the paper will be docked 2% of its grade for each 24-hour period it is late, beginning at noon on the day it is due.

**Speech:** All students are required to write one speech, three to four pages in length, selecting a topic and occasion from among several that will be provided. Each speech will reflect a speaking occasion that did or might have occurred in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, but for which no speech was provided by Thucydides. The written speech will be the one graded, and it will be worth 15% of the overall grade. Every student who delivers the speech orally will also receive 10 points extra credit (1% of the overall class grade). In addition, every speech that is delivered orally will be appraised by the assembly of fellow-students (rankings will be by secret ballot only, please). The speaker who receives the highest score by the classroom *ecclesia* will be awarded with the coveted laurel wreath on the last day of class.

**Participation:** This class is primarily a seminar. There will be some lecturing, for the purpose of elucidating some of the more abstruse points, but most of the class time will be spent in discussion. Students are expected to read the assigned pages for each day and come to every class prepared to discuss them. The questions provided for each day are meant to guide the students’ readings and the class discussion, but we will not be constrained by them. Repeated absences or lack of preparation will impair a student’s final grade.

**COURSE READING SCHEDULE**

**Monday, January 9**

*Introduction to Aristotle’s Rhetoric and Thucydides’ History*

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. I, chapt 1

Thucydides’ *History*, Introduction by Victor Davis Hanson

1) Both Aristotle and Hobbes claim that it is speech that makes man distinct from other animals. For each one: What is it about speech, in particular, that is so important?
2) Rhetoric had a shady reputation, even in Aristotle’s time. How does he defend it?

**Wednesday, January 11**

**Introduction to the Peloponnesian War: Some Background**

Thucydides’ *History*, I.1-I.31

1) Thucydides says that the Peloponnesian War was greater than any previous war. What reasons does he give for that judgment? What makes a war “great”?

2) Why is Thucydides account of this war superior to all previous narratives of war? What difficulties are encountered by those who want to know the truth about historical events?

3) What two principles guided Thucydides’ reconstruction of the speeches in the History? Can we expect that these principles will always be in harmony?

4) Thucydides says that if he succeeds in giving an exact account of past things, it will be an aid for understanding future things. What must we suppose to be true in order for that statement to be true?

5) How can we discover the causes of war? Are these sometimes different from men’s professed reasons for going to war? What would Hobbes say?

**Monday, January 16**

**Logos (logical proofs)**

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. I, Chapt. 2 and Bk. II, chaps. 18-20

Thucydides’ *History*, I.32-43

1) What is a paradigm? Why is it a logical “proof” (i.e., what makes it logical)? Why is it a weaker proof than an enthymeme? Why is it often more persuasive than an enthymeme?

2) What is a syllogism? What is a “rhetorical syllogism,” or enthymeme? Why is the enthymeme proper for rhetorical discourse?

3) The Greek word for speech, *logos*, is the same word for logic or a “rational account” (e.g., psychology is a rational account of the psyche, biology is a rational account of life, etc.). Given the centrality of the enthymeme and the paradigm to rhetorical discourse, explain why the two notions — logic and speech — might be so closely related for the Greeks.

4) The Corcyraeans acknowledge at the beginning of their speech that the fact they’ve never rendered any important service to Athens makes their present supplication more challenging. If they *had* rendered service, what would their enthymeme look like? What would the complete syllogism look like?

5) What reasons do the Corcyraeans give why Athens should help her in the present crisis? Put their argument in concise enthymematic form. Supply the missing premise. Are these reasons compelling?

6) In the Corinthians’ speech, which of the Corcyrian claims do they dispute? Which claims remain undisputed?

7) Compare the promises of future loyalty by the Corcyraeans with the claims of past favors by the Corinthians: How valuable are the claims of gratitude?

8) Should the Athenians join the Corcyraeans or remain neutral?

**Wednesday, January 18**

**Casus Belli (Reasons for War)**
Thucydides’ *History*, I.44-88

1) Determining who is at fault for starting this war will primarily turn on the question: Did Athens violate the 30-year treaty or not? Did they? Who should decide the question?

2) What do the Corinthians appeal to when they address the Spartans? Why might this appeal be effective with the Spartans?

3) In the course of the Athenians’ speech, do they deny the validity of appealing to justice altogether? What is their notion of justice, if they have one?

4) What do the Athenians hope to prove to the Spartans? What is one paradigm they use to prove it? Is it a good proof?

5) What reasons do the Athenians give for building an empire? Why were the Athenians “compelled” to acquire more power (I.75)? What conditions constitute “compulsion”? Is interest a “compulsion”? Do the reasons they give make them a safe neighbor or not?

6) What motives do the Athenians accuse the Spartans of harboring which would now compel them to seek war?

7) What course of action does Archidamus recommend? Is it sound? Where is the consideration of justice in his speech?

8) What does Sthenelaidas appeal to? Are his arguments compelling?

9) On what grounds do the Spartans decide to go to war? What arguments were given to support these grounds? What does Thucydides think of those grounds?

**Monday, January 23**

More *Casus Belli*, Real and Specious

Thucydides’ *History*, I.89-138

1) Why does Thucydides blame the allies for the ascendancy of Athens? Is he right?

2) Why did the Spartans seek counsel from the god at Delphi? What was the response? Why does the god at Delphi seem to prefer the Spartans? What did the Corinthians later say was the response?

3) What do the Corinthians expect from war? Why do they expect it? How do they structure the reasons they give? (I.e., does the introduction give a fair representation of what to expect from the body of the speech? Do they provide proofs for their claims?) State one of the arguments of the Corinthians in the form of an enthymeme. Supply the missing premise. Are the expectations of the Corinthians reasonable?

4) Why were the Spartans seeking to strengthen their “pretext” for war? What reasons does Thucydides give why the Spartans wanted to insist on the purification of Athens?

5) What are the differences between the accusations, trials, and condemnations of Pausanias and Themistocles, respectively? What do these differences suggest about the differences in the character of Athens and Sparta? Were both men guilty of treason?

**Wednesday, January 25**

Deliberative Rhetoric: Prelude to a Decision

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. I, chaps. 3, 4, 5.1-4, and 6.8-17

Thucydides’ *History*, I.139-146
1) Prudence presupposes both moral virtue as well as extensive and accurate knowledge of particular circumstances. Is it necessary to be prudent in order to be good at deliberative rhetoric? What are the consequences of being imprudent yet persuasive?

2) In what ways does public opinion limit the “available means of persuasion”? Why must it be a limitation?

3) From Pericles’ description, what are the differences between the respective characters of Athens and Sparta? Why does Pericles believe that these differences are more of a liability for Sparta?

4) In what ways does Pericles’ speech meet the criteria for deliberative speech? Is it persuasive? Should Athens accept war? Why or why not?

5) Should the Athenians have agreed to revoke the Megarian decree? Why or why not?

**Monday, January 30**

**Epideictic (Celebratory) Rhetoric**

| Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. I, chapt. 9 | Thucydides’ *History*, I.1-46 |

1) How does epideictic speech differ from deliberative speech? What are the principal features of each one?

2) Which side of the conflict had more popular support? Why?

3) What are Archidamus’ expectations regarding the reception that the invading army will receive? How does it compare with the advice Pericles gives to the Athenians? Which leader seems to understand his enemy better?

4) Archidamus and Pericles both incur the opprobrium of their own people. Is it equally deserved? Is it equally damaging to their reputations?

5) What makes the Funeral Oration epideictic? What are the qualities Pericles names to prove the superiority of Athens? Could this speech work if it were applied to Sparta? Why or why not?

6) Why is Pericles’ praise of Athens relevant to a funeral oration, which is meant to praise the dead?

7) Pericles claims that Athens needs no Homer to secure the admiration of the ages. What does she need to achieve everlasting glory?

8) Does Athens’ superiority to other cities justify her rule over them?

**Wednesday, February 1**

**Ethos (Proofs of Personal Character)**

| Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. II, chapt. 1 | Thucydides’ *History*, II.47-92 |

1) What are the three reasons Aristotle says that an audience will trust a speaker? Is it more important that a speaker really have these qualities, or more important that he appear to have these qualities? (And . . . more important for what?) Is the persuasive proof of ethos a kind of rational judgment or an abdication of rationality? Under what conditions might it be rational to defer to the rationality of another?
2) Some have suggested that the plague was a punishment from the gods who were incensed by the hubris of Athens, especially since it follows immediately after Pericles’ speech. What particular features of this tragedy might appear like divine retribution – a rebuke to Pericles’ boasts?

3) Is the speech that Pericles makes after the Funeral Oration deliberative or epideictic? How does it differ from the Funeral Oration?

4) According to Pericles, what qualities make for a good leader? How do they compare to the qualities Aristotle describes as comprising *ethos*? What are Pericles’ weaknesses?

5) Pericles speaks frankly that the nature of the Athenian empire is a tyranny, and it has incurred the animosities of its subjects. What now are we to make of his earlier speech, with its encomium to Athenian liberality? What might be their defense for their treatment to their neighbors? What does Pericles suggest should be the Athenians’ attitude toward the hatred they have incurred? Is he right? Are they compelled to retain their empire now that they have acquired one?

6) What did the plague reveal about the character of the Athenians?

7) If Athens was, as Thucydides seems to say, *in fact* not a democracy, but ruled by the “first man,” how did that first man rule? What can be said in favor about this kind of rule? What is disadvantageous or precarious about this kind of rule?

8) The Athenians justify their savagery against Aristeus and his comrades as retaliation for the butchery committed by the Spartans. Is this a valid defense?

9) Why did the Plataeans’ appeal to the Spartans fail to persuade them? Why did the Athenians’ appeal to the Plataeans succeed?

10) The Spartans claim that they embarked on this war in order to free the “allies” of Athens. Is that a credible reason? Is it a legitimate one?

11) What reasons do the Peloponnesians give why they expect to prevail over the superior experience of the Athenians? Give the argument in the form of a syllogism.

12) What species of rhetoric is Phormio’s speech? How does he respond to the arguments of the Peloponnesians? Are these arguments convincing?

13) What proves to be more decisive in this battle: numbers, courage, or experience?

**Monday, February 6**

**Forensic (Judicial) Rhetoric**

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. I, chaps. 10-11, 13, and 15.1-12

Thucydides’ *History*, II.93-III.35

1) How does forensic rhetoric differ from deliberative and epideictic rhetoric?

2) Why does Aristotle discuss the topic of motivation in his section on Judicial Rhetoric?

3) What is the distinction Aristotle is trying to draw between “specific” and “common” justice? How might this distinction be relevant to judicial rhetoric?

4) Why do the Mytileneans find it necessary to defend their actions? Are their actions justifiable? How do they compare to the reasons why the Spartans went to war?
5) What aspects of the Mytileneans’ speech make it forensic? What other species of rhetoric is exhibited here? What might account for the paucity of purely judicial speeches in Thucydides’ History?

6) What species of rhetoric is Teutiaplus’ speech? The Spartans had sworn to ally themselves with the Mytileneans, so why do they remain unmoved by this speech?

7) Why did Alcidas begin butchering his prisoners? What sort of arguments did the Samian envoys use to convince him to desist? What does Thucydides seem to make of Sparta’s choices?

Wednesday, February 8

Pathos (Proofs of Emotional Appeals)
Aristotle’s Rhetoric, Bk. II, chaps. 1, 2.1-8, 3.1-12, 5.1-12, 8.1-7, and 9
Thucydides’ History, III.36-51

1) Why are emotional proofs inseparable from rhetorical discourse?

2) What species of rhetoric do Cleon and Diodotus use? What features of their speeches give clues as to their type?

3) Why is Cleon suspicious of oratory? Is his contempt of “cleverness” in reality a contempt of all rhetorical speech? What does he praise as the alternative? What emotions does Cleon appeal to, and which ones does he reject? Are they the most fitting for the circumstance? Are they the most honorable?

4) Cleon argues that the actions of the Mytilenians were all the more blamable because they were not oppressed by Athens. What does this argument seem to imply by its opposite?

5) What qualities make Cleon an effective leader? What are his weaknesses?

6) What does Diodotus accuse Cleon of doing? Is it a fair accusation?

7) How does Diodotus defend the orators (which may be said to be a defense of leadership generally)?

8) Why does Diodotus suggest that all speakers must use subterfuge with their audience in certain cities? Does Diodotus use any subterfuge with his audience? Would such a device ever be an acceptable rhetorical strategy?

9) What does Diodotus appeal to? According to him, how should Athenians make their decisions? Does he follow his own injunction?

10) Which speaker relies more on proofs of pathos? Which one relies more on proofs of logos?

Monday, February 13

The Ravages of War
Thucydides’ History, III.52-116

1) The Spartans demand that the Plataeans answer only one question. Why do they object to answering that question? What is the conditional (either/or) answer that they give? Put the pair of answers in the form of twin enthymemes, then supply the missing premises.

2) Who were the “judges” trying the case against the Mytileneans? Who were the “judges” trying the case against the Plataeans? How do these judges differ from what one would expect to find in a court of law? What did Diodotus primarily appeal to when defending the Mytileneans? What did the Pataeans appeal to
when defending themselves? How might these similarities and differences account for their respective outcomes?

3) What is the species of speech delivered by the Plataeans? Name the features that give clues as to the species of speech it is.

4) With what do the Thebans first accuse the Plataeans? How do they defend themselves against the charge of Medizing? If the Plataeans were allowed a rebuttal, how might they defend themselves from these charges?

5) With what proofs of pathos do the Thebans conclude? Are they compelling?

6) Why don’t the Thebans like “fine speeches”? What would they prefer as the alternative?

7) Which side had the greater justice on its side? How does Thucydides account for the Spartans deciding as they did?

8) What does Thucydides name as signs of the depravity of the city during its civil wars? In what ways do these signs resemble the conditions of Athens when it suffered from the plague (II.51-53)? What happened to speech while Greece wallowed in the depths of her depravity? What emotions does Thucydides seem to appeal to when he describes the horrors brought on by the Greek revolutions? What do these reflections tell us about Thucydides’ conception of law and human nature? Based on what he condemns, what can we infer that he admires (or at least condones)?

9) What were the real reasons Thucydides says Athens sent a fleet to Sicily? What was the pretext? With their actions against Sicily, Melos, and Aetolia, are they remaining true to the advice given by Pericles at the outset of the war? Are the Athenians stretching themselves too thin?

10) Why does Demosthenes fear returning to Athens? What does that fear suggest about the character of Demosthenes? About the character of the Athenians?

**Wednesday, February 15**  
**Style and Arrangement in Spoken and Written Communication**  
Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk. III, chaps. 1, 2.1-10, 7.1-7, 13, 14.6-9, 17.5-8, and 19  
Thucydides’ *History*, IV.1-23

1) Why does Aristotle argue that delivery is important?

2) What, according to Aristotle, is the virtue of style? What are the parts of a speech? How do propositions and proofs relate to what he describes as enthymemes and paradigms?

3) What reasons does Demosthenes give to argue that his troops can prevail over the superior numbers of the enemy? Is he convincing? Why or why not?

4) What qualities distinguish the leadership of Brasidas? Is he a typical Spartan?

5) In the speech of the Spartan envoys, identify the prooimio (introduction), epilogue (conclusion), and at least two instances each of prosthesis (proposition) and pistis (proof).

6) To what do the Spartans attribute the Athenians’ present victory? Is this rhetorical strategy likely to persuade this audience? Why or why not?
7) Why might the Spartan envoys prefer to confer with a few commissioners rather than speak before the multitude? Why did Cleon refuse this request?

Monday, February 20  Heroes and Demagogues
Thucydides’ History, IV.24-57

1) What does the altercation between Cleon and Nicias reveal about each one?

2) What admirable quality does Demosthenes possess that Cleon lacks? What useful quality does Cleon possess that Demosthenes seems to lack?

3) Thucydides in large measure blames the Athenian generals for the atrocities that took place on Corcyra. What did they do that was blameworthy? Why was it blameworthy?

4) The Athenian decision to accept Corcyra into its alliance was one of the principal events precipitating this great war. How’s that alliance working out for the Athenians?

5) The Spartan envoys had made some predictions in the event that Athens refused their overtures of peace, then Cleon made some predictions regarding what would follow if he were allowed to besiege Pylos. Which predictions were justified by the events immediately following?

Wednesday, February 22  Midterm

Monday, February 27  Athenian Reversals
Thucydides’ History, IV.58-101

1) How does Hermocrates establish his own ethos in this his speech (why can the Sicilians trust his advice)? Why is this mode of establishing ethos especially important when addressing an audience of foreigners and sometime-foes?

2) What was the Athenian response to the peace treaty? What does their response reveal about their character?

3) What did the Spartan “policy” with regards their Helots lead them to do when faced with the threat of revolt? Compare and contrast what the Spartans are “compelled” to do at home to preserve their safety and what the Athenians are “compelled” to do abroad.

4) Why might Brasidas’ words have succeeded in persuading the Thessalians to let his army pass? Thucydides describes his policies as “just and moderate.” Are justice and moderation his motives for acting? Is Brasidas a typical Spartan?

5) According to Thucydides, Spartans are less eloquent than Athenians. Does that matter?

6) How does Brasidas establish his ethos with the Acanthians? What emotions does he appeal to? Name a paradigm in this speech. Find an enthymeme and supply the missing premise.

7) Can one people force another to be free?

8) What species of rhetoric is Pagondas’ speech to his troops? What of Hippocrates’?

Wednesday, February 29  An attempted (and Tenuous) Peace
Thucydides’ History, IV.102-135
Paper outline due at beginning of class

1) What were the perceived qualities of Brasidas that tempted the Athenian allies to revolt and side with him? What other factors influenced their choice?

2) Who bears the greatest guilt for breaking the terms of the armistice between Athens and Sparta? Why did Brasidas choose as he did?

3) Why did Perdiccas’ army flee the battlefield? Why did Brasidas’ army retaliate? Why did Perdiccas act contrary to “his natural interests” and repudiate Sparta? What do these episodes reveal to us about the fortunes of war?

4) Why are these “allies” so inconstant? What motivates their decisions?

March 2-11 – Spring Break

Monday, March 12  A More Perfect Union?
Thucydides’ History, V.1-31

1) What species of rhetoric is Brasidas’ address to his troops at Amphipolis? What logical proofs does he provide why they should expect to win? What emotions does he appeal to? What proofs of ethos?

2) Why did both sides begin to turn their thoughts to peace? Have their original reasons for going to war been resolved?

3) Why, according to Thucydides, did Cleon and Brasidas oppose peace? What does this tell us about their respective characters? Do their motives coincide with the good of their respective cities? What does this observation tell us about the allurements of war and what it brings out in people? What are Nicias’ and Pleistoanax’ motives for securing peace?

4) What qualities made Brasidas a good leader? What were his weaknesses?

5) Thucydides mentions that the Spartans suspected Pleistoanax of bribing the prophetess of the Delphic oracle. What would be the significance, within the context of this history, of an omen being of merely human origin?

6) How were the Athenian and Spartan allies treated during the peace negotiations? How did they respond? Did Sparta achieve its stated goal of freeing the Athenian allies?

7) What are Thucydides’ reasons for regarding this history as one long war, in spite of the interval of peace? Why does he step back from his narrative and give, as it were, a second introduction to this war in V.26?

8) How do the Corinthians convince the Argives to come out against Sparta? Why do they suggest selecting “a few individuals with plenipotentiary powers” rather than The People to open negotiations with potential allies?

Wednesday, March 14  The Fog of Peace
Thucydides’ History, V.32-75

Round 1, Class Oratorical Contest: Cleon’s Speech to his Troops at Amphipolis
1) What came of Brasidas’ assurances to the Sciones (IV.120)? What does this tell us about the vicissitudes of war?

2) What possible motives could Xenares and Cleobulus have for their secret machinations?

3) What can we discern about the character of Alcibiades upon our first introduction to him?

4) Why was Nicias Disgraced? Who is most at fault in Athens?

5) What was the real reason for the invasion of Epidaurus? What was the pretext?

6) Is Agis a good leader? Why or why not?

7) Compare and contrast the respective choices of Agis and Thasylus, and their respective outcomes. What accounts for their differences? How does the fate of Agis compare to that of Demosthenes under similar circumstances (III.98, 114)? Do the Spartans have the generals they deserve? Do the Argives?

8) Before the action at Mantinea, each army has its own way of rallying the troops. What does each method reveal about the character of its people?

Monday, March 19

Catastrophic Rhetorical Failures

Thucydides’ History, V.76-VI.7

Round 2, Class Oratorical Contest: The Spartan Funeral Oration

1) How did the oligarchic party in Argos persuade the people to forsake Athens and come to terms with Sparta?

2) Do the Melians consistently follow the injunction of the Athenians to consider only interest and disregard considerations of justice? Were the Melians “compelled” to submit to Athens?

3) Do the Athenians say anything that is untrue? If so, what is the falsehood (and what is the truth)?

4) The Melian Dialogue and its aftermath is one of the most infamous episodes in Thucydides’ History. What, in particular, makes it so shocking?

5) In the Melian and Sicilian expeditions, in what ways do the Athenians act true to the principles and guidance of Pericles? In what way do they depart from them? (Cf. II.62.2, 63.2) What is Thucydides suggesting about the Athenian demos at this time when he describes their ignorance of Sicily? What might he be suggesting about their leaders?

6) What is the real reason for the campaign against Sicily? What is the pretext? How do we know it is a pretext?

Wednesday, March 21

New Enterprises

Aristotle’s Rhetoric, Bk. II, chapts. 12-14

Thucydides’ History, VI.8-61

Round 3, Class Oratorical Contest: Melian Speeches

1) Given what Aristotle describes as the different characteristics of “youth” and “old age,” which one would be most relevant to an audience of Athenians? What about an audience of Spartans?
2) Track the organization of Nicias’ speech: Thesis, propositions, proofs, and conclusion. How does Nicias establish his own ethos? How does he assail Alcibiades’ ethos? What emotions does he appeal to?

3) What does Nicias have to say about those men who take a care for their persons and estate? Contrast such a person with a Brasidas or an Alcibiades. What about Pericles? What type of man best comports with the common good of the city? Does it matter whether the city is at war or at peace?

4) What does Thucydides believe are Alcibiades’ motives for wanting to engage Sicily and Carthage? How do they compare to Nicias’ accusations? What is the astonishing claim he makes regarding the consequences of Alcibiades’ character?

5) How does Alcibiades establish his ethos in his speech? Does he successfully refute or justify all the accusations leveled at him by Nicias?

6) Track the organization of Alcibiades’ speech: Thesis, propositions, proofs, and conclusion. What emotions does he appeal to? Do his arguments hang together logically? What species of rhetoric is this speech?

7) What qualities make Alcibiades a good leader? What are his weaknesses?

8) Why did Nicias’ second speech backfire?

9) Why was Alcibiades implicated in the desecration scandal? Why was he unwilling to sail before being tried?

10) What makes Hermocrates a good leader? What are his weaknesses?

11) What does Athenagoras primarily appeal to in his speech?

12) What proofs does Thucydides use to support his contention that his account of the Athenian tyrants is superior to what is commonly believed about them? Why might this be an appropriate place for a digression on the difficulty people have discerning the truth about things?

13) Why was Alcibiades unwilling to face his trial in Athens?

Monday, March 26

Alliances and Betrayals
Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Bk I, chapt. 8 and Bk. II, chapt. 15-17
Thucydides’ *History*, VI.62-93

First draft of paper due at beginning of class

1) When delivering a speech to a different culture, what elements of the speechmaking process remain the same? What is different? How can one avoid giving a speech that gets “lost in translation”?

2) What emotions does Nicias appeal to in his speech to his troops? What motives does Thucydides ascribe to the various fighters on the field?

3) What makes Hermocrates a good leader? (Consider his actions here, as well as in previous speeches: IV.59-64 & VI.33-34.) What are his weaknesses?
4) How does Euphemus defend Athens’ right to rule her subjects? How does it compare with what the Athenians said to the Melians?

5) Why do the Athenians argue that they would not rule their Sicilian allies in the same way as their Hellenic ones? Is that argument convincing? Is everything they say true? How do their reasons for commencing hostilities against Syracuse compare to the Spartans’ reasons for invading Attica?

6) Which speech should be most convincing to the Camarinaeans? Why? How did they in fact respond? Is that wise policy?

7) How does Alcibiades respond to the Spartans’ prejudice that he has harmed Sparta? To the prejudice that he is too democratic? Why does he need to do this? How else does he establish his ethos? Does he exemplify all the qualities of good ethos?

Wednesday, March 28

New Grounds for an Old War

Thucydides’ History, VI.94-VII.18

1) Why is the Athenian action in Laconia described by Thucydides as “breaking their treaty with the Spartans in the most overt manner”? Why is it also called a “pretext” for Spartan hostilities? What is the real reason for their hostilities?

2) What qualities make Gylippus a good leader? What are his weaknesses?

3) What did Nicias hope to accomplish with his letter? What emotions did he appeal to? How successful was his appeal? Place one of his arguments in the form of an enthymeme. Name a paradigm.

4) Why do the Spartans believe that they were the originators of the first war, but Athens began it this time? Why does it matter who originates a war?

5) How well do the events in Athens live up to the predictions of Alcibiades to the Spartan assembly? How well do the events in Sicily live up to the predictions of Alcibiades to the Athenian assembly?

Monday, April 2

The Besiegers Become the Besieged

Thucydides’ History, VII.19-50

Round 4, Class Oratorical Contest: The Trial of Athens

1) Were the Athenians right to devote Charicles’ forces to the plunder of Laconia? Were they right to direct Demosthenes to help Charicles plunder and fortify Laconia? Were they right to send back the Thracian swordsmen? Was Conon right to request reinforcements for Naupactus? Were Demosthenes and Eurymedon right to comply? How successful was Nicias when he wrote a letter appealing to the Athenian assembly?

2) Why were the Syracusans triumphant in the naval battle against the “unbeatable” Athenians?

3) What, according to Demosthenes, was Nicias’ mistake?

4) Why does Nicias balk at the prospect of retreating right now? What reasons does he give his men? What is his final reason for delaying their departure?

Wednesday, April 4

Tragedy
1) Why was Syracuse unlike any other enemy the Athenians had ever encountered before? What does this distinction reveal about the reasons Athens has succeeded in the past (or perhaps what is required of any aspiring empire)?

2) What are the two principal reasons, according to Thucydides, why men fight in wars?

3) What reasons does Nicias give why Athens can prevail when he addresses his troops? What emotions does he appeal to? Is this speech likely to put heart into disheartened troops? Why or why not?

4) What reasons does Gylippus give why Syracuse can prevail when he addresses his troops? What emotions does he appeal to? Is this speech more likely to accomplish what it was meant to do? Why or why not?

5) Why don’t the Athenians think to ask for their dead? Why is this significant?

6) Nicias’ address to his retreating men is the last speech in the History. Is it a good speech? Could you make a better one under the circumstances?

7) In Gylippus’ speech to his troops, what appeals to righteousness or justice did he make? In Nicias’ speech to his troops during their retreat, what appeals to righteousness or justice did he make? What affect will each one’s appeals likely have on their respective troops? Were the Athenians correct when they told the Melians that “right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power”? What is the significance of right? What is its real relationship to power?

8) Thucydides calls Nicias “a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved” his tragic fate. What were his merits? What were his weaknesses?

9) Why did the Sicilian expedition fail (refer back to II.65)?

10) Does Thucydides wish us to pity the fallen Athenians, to believe that they are suffering their just deserts, or both? Why is the Peloponnesian War the greatest one ever fought?

Monday, April 9

Attacks and Counter-attacks

Thucydides’ History, VIII.1-44

1) What was the reaction in Greece, politically, to the news from Sicily?

2) What rhetorical strategy does Alcibiades adopt with regard to the Chians? Does it work for Alcibiades? How does it work out for the Chians?

3) In what ways does Phrynichus demonstrate good leadership? What is the outcome?

4) Why did the Chians refuse to aid Lesbos when Astyochus asked them to? Why did Astyochus refuse to assist the Chians? Why did Astyochus change his mind? Then change it back again? What appears to be motivating these men? (Question to be continued in next day’s readings)

5) What was Lichas’ criticism of the treaties with the Medes (Persians)? What do these initial treaties suggest about the motives of the Spartans?

Wednesday, April 11

Dissolution
Round 5, Class Oratorical Contest: Alcibiades to the Chians

1) What strategies does Alcibiades use to undermine the Spartans? Why is he doing this?

2) According to Phrynichus, who really rules in a democracy? Why would the rule by the “best people” be even worse?

3) What do the machinations of Phrynichus, Alcibiades, and Pisander reveal about how best to lead the Athenians at this point in the narrative?

4) The previous day’s readings recounted Astyochus’ refusal to assist the Chians, then his change of mind, then another change of mind. In today’s reading, why did he change it back again? Then again? What finally brings him to Chios? What appears to be motivating Astyochus?

5) Why did trust break down in the city of Athens? What did it say of the condition of the city that it was preparing to sacrifice its democracy? (Or that it was prepared to force its “allies” to give up their own democracies?)

6) How does Alcibiades establish his ethos once he is recalled in Samos? What were Alcibiades’ gifts of leadership? What were his failings

Monday, April 16

The End
Thucydides’ History, VIII.87-109 and Epilogue

1) What was the real reason that some oligarchs wanted to push for more democratic reforms? What was their pretext?

2) Which leaders were acting on behalf of the common good for Athens?

3) What was the real purpose of the Five Thousand? What was the pretext? In what way did circumstances force change in the original arrangement? What does Thucydides’ judgment about Athens at the peak of its political arrangements reveal to us about what he considers to be political greatness?

4) What accounts for the Athenian victory at Kynossema?

5) How do the leaders at the end of the war compare to those we encountered at the beginning? What accounts for the change?

6) Who won the war?

Wednesday, April 18

Course Review and Summation

Final draft of paper due at beginning of class

Laurel wreath will be awarded to the winner of the class oratorical contest.

Thursday, April 26

Final Exam, 2:00 – 5:00