Lecture 3: The Greeks: The Polis, and Classical Greek Civilization

Minoans and Mycenaeans
- **Minoan Crete**, 2000-1450 BC
- **Mycenaean Greeks**, 1600-1200 BC
- Doriens invade Greece from the north
- Greece enters a dark age, 1100-750 BC

The Greek Polis (750 – 500 BC)
- Greek Polis develops during Dark Ages ca. 800 BC
  - Town/city and surrounding countryside
  - Many will have **Acropolis** and **Agora**
  - Citizens
- **The Hoplite**
- Colonization during the Archaic Period
  - Overpopulation
  - Help diffuse Greek culture
  - Each colony a separate polis

Sparta
- Spartan’s conquer Laconia and Messania (ca. 725)
- 640 BC Messanians revolt
- Lycurgus Reforms ca. 800-600 BC
  - **Gerousia** – Council of elders
  - **Apella** – Assembly of citizens
  - College of five **ephors**
- Strict military society
- Social structure
- Peloponnesian League ca. 500-350 BC

Athens
- By 700 BC Athens establishes Polis in Attica
  - Areopagus (Council of Nobles)
  - Nine Archons
  - Ecclesia (Assembly of Citizens)
- Solon (c. 640-c. 560 B.C.)
  - Canceled land debts
  - Creates four classes of citizen
- Pisistratus seizes power as a tyrant
- Cleisthenes Reforms government

Age of Pericles (ca. 462-404)
- “Golden Age” of Greece
- Athens moves to Empire
- Pericles vs. Cimon
- Meetings of assembly Pnyx
• Pericles introduces
  – State pay for officeholders
  – Lower class citizens can make office
  – Council of 500 prepares agenda for assembly (Ecclesia)
• Ostracism (487)

The Athenian Empire
• Delian League created in 478-477
• Athens provided bulk of fleet
• In 470 Naxos attempts to leave league
• League defeated Persia at Eurymedon in 469
• Athens embarks on a policy of expanding democracy
• Athens and Sparta clash
• 454 Delian treasury moved to Athens

Daily Life in Greece
• Greek life was simple and practical
  – Society of small farmers and artisans
  – Most Greeks ate grain, fruits (figs), eggs, fish, cheese
  – Meat was for special occasions and the wealthy
• Family life was patriarchal and practical
  – One had a wife to produce children (citizens)
  – “I give this woman for the procreation of legitimate children.”
  – Wives were excluded from much social life
• Slaves were most often domestic servants

Greek Classical Culture
• The study of History
  – Herodotus, The Persian Wars
  – Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian Wars
• The study of philosophy
  – Critical and rational thought about nature
  – Examine universe on basis of unifying principles
  – Socrates (469-399)
    Plato (429-347)
    - The Republic and distrust of democracy
• Aristotle (384-322)
  – Tutor to Alexander

The Rise of Macedon
• 404 Sparta hegemony
• The petty wars of the Greeks
  – Sparta invades Persia in 396
  – Corinthian War (395-386)
β Battle of Leuctra, 371