

Ancient Sicily: History through Art, Architecture and Culture

Syllabus

Coordinators:

Linda Guccione (lindaguccione@yahoo.com)

Bob Martin (martin500@icloud.com)

Our class meets on Wednesdays at 10 am via Zoom. We will email a reminder a few days ahead of time and will send the link again about an hour before class. The link will be open about 9:45.

Participants' Roles

Each class has topics listed for each hour of that class. Please select the topic(s) you would like to present and email both Bob and Linda your choice. If more than one item is listed for an hour, you can narrow it down if you like. There is a wealth of information online about ancient Sicily and the various groups that ruled, lived there and/or added to the culture. Feel free to ask the coordinators for suggestions.

Each class has Essential Readings assigned (links provided). These are articles or videos to give you background on the topics to be covered in that class. **Further Readings**, which are optional, are listed as well if you would like to dive a bit deeper into the material for that class.

More Reading: For anyone who would like to read a comprehensive but concise history of Sicily, we recommend the following book (this is not required for the course):

Sicily: An Island at the Crossroads of History by John Julius Norwich

Class 1 Introduction to Sicily

First Hour: Introductions; housekeeping; Why Sicily is important; Geography
Robert Martin

Second Hour Presentation: History of Sicily with Timeline
Linda Guccione

Essential Reading:

Paul Mellon Lecture - Sicily: An Island at the Crossroads of History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRke-V1GZ88> 52 minutes

by John Julius Norwich

Great survey of Sicily history, art and architecture.

Wikipedia: History of Sicily 12 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Sicily

A very readable and informative account.

Further Reading (Optional):

Timeline of Sicilian History
<https://timeforsicily.com/history/>

History Summarized: Sicily 13 minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9aS8yy1n98>
Short video showing Sicilian History

Class 2 - Prehistory and Myth

First Hour Presentation: Bronze Age Sicily, Caves at Levanzo, Grotto dell'Addaura,
The Dolmens of Sicily, Segesta
Carolyn Rosenthal

Second Hour Presentation: Mythology about Sicily
Lou Giancola

Essential Reading:

Prehistoric Sicily: Journey Into The Stone Age
<https://magna-sicilia.com/en/2022/09/01/prehistoric-sicily-journey-into-the-stone-age/>

Exploring The Ancient Elymian Ruins Of Segesta Sicily
<https://www.thegeographicalcure.com/post/ruins-of-segesta-sicily>

Further Reading (Optional):

The Dolmens of Sicily
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1148/the-dolmens-of-sicily/>

Bronze Age Sicily
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1190/bronze-age-sicily/>

Demeter's Island: Religion and Ritual
<https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/sicily/religion.html>

Class 3 – Phoenicians and Carthaginians

First Hour Presentation: Mazara del Vallo and Motya (alt. spelling Mozia)
Mark Rubinstein

Second Hour Presentation: Ziz (now Palermo) and Soluntum
Linda Guccione

Essential Reading:

Sicilian Peoples: The Phoenicians by Vincenzo Salerno

<http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art150.htm>

Punic Palermo

<http://www.bestofsicily.com/mag/art115.html>

Punic Palermo - City of Phoenicians and Carthaginians

<http://www.seepalermo.com/punic.htm>

Further Reading (Optional):

Wikipedia: Motya 6 pp

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motya>

Mothia Island and Lilibeo: The Phoenician-Punic Civilization in Italy

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/2029/>

Moza Youth: <https://www.getty.edu/news/getty-voices-sicilian-journeys/>

Island of Mozia: <https://www.isoladimozia.it/?lang=en>

Wikipedia: Mazara del Vallo

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazara_del_Vallo

Mazara del Vallo (Dancing Satyr)

https://www.thethinkingtraveller.com/italy/sicily/towns-and-cities-in-sicily/mazara-del-vallo?_its=JTdCJTlydmlkJTlyJTJNBjJTYWQ2NTZiNmItYjA5MCM0M2Y1LWE5MzgtM2EyMzVIODk0NWVlJTlyJTJDJTIyc3RhdGUIMjI0M0EIMjJybHR%2BMTY5NjM1NTgzMH5sYW5kfjJfMjcwNjJfc2VvXzZhNTJkZjNmODRmMmFjODZlODg2ZjY5MzQwODViNzcwJTlyJTJDJTIyc2l0ZUIkJTlyJTJNBmJlEyMyU3RA%3D%3D

Soluntum

https://www.thethinkingtraveller.com/blog/archaeological-sites-in-sicily?_its=JTdCJTlydmlkJTlyJTJNBjJTYWQ2NTZiNmItYjA5MCM0M2Y1LWE5MzgtM2EyMzVIODk0NWVlJTlyJTJDJTIyc3RhdGUIMjI0M0EIMjJybHR%2BMTY5NjM1NTgzMH5sYW5kfjJfMjcwNjJfc2VvXzZhNTJkZjNmODRmMmFjODZlODg2ZjY5MzQwODViNzcwJTlyJTJDJTIyc2l0ZUIkJTlyJTJNBmJlEyMyU3RA%3D%3D

Wikipedia: Sicilian Wars

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicilian_Wars

The Sicilian Wars, or Greco-Punic Wars, were a series of conflicts fought between ancient Carthage and the Greek city-states led by Syracuse,

Class 4 - Magna Grecia – I

First Hour Presentation: Syracuse
Monica Schaberg

Second Hour Presentation: Greek Temples: Agrigento, Selinunte
Monica Schaberg

Essential Reading:

Greek Temples of Sicily 5 pp

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1402/greek-temples-of-sicily/>

A short introductory essay with very good photos.

Ancient Sicily & the Valley of Temples 12 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UswjHNEfZ3Q>

Further Reading (Optional):

Classical Greek Architecture in Sicily PDF 21 pp

https://www.academia.edu/5435959/Classical_Greek_Architecture_in_Sicily?auto=download

History of Syracuse 6 pp

<http://ancientworld.hansotten.com/italy/sicily/syracuse/>

Thucydides on the Colonization of Sicily

<https://www.livius.org/sources/content/thucydides-historian/the-colonization-of-sicily/>

Thucydides is not very reliable, but he is interesting!

Magna Grecia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Graecia

What was Magna Grecia

Class 5 - Magna Grecia - II

First Hour Presentation: Greek Amphitheaters: Taormina, Syracuse
Robert Lev

Second Hour Presentation: Greek Culture: Archimedes and Aeschylus in Syracuse
Robert Martin

Essential Reading:

Wikipedia: Greek Theatre of Syracuse 4 pp

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Theatre_of_Syracuse

Wikipedia: Greek Theatre of Taormina

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_theatre_of_Taormina

Wikipedia: Aeschylus:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeschylus>

Wikipedia: Archimedes of Syracuse:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archimedes>

Further Reading (Optional):

The Discoveries of Archimedes
<https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/sicily/archimedes.html>

Literature and Theatre (Sicily)
https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/sicily/literature_theater.html

Ancient Greek Theatre: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i41fSuyMUkE>
A short video overview of Greek theatre culture

Wikipedia: Theatre of Ancient Greece
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_of_ancient_Greece
A look at Greek theatres, origins, architecture, performances

Greek Theatre of Taormina:
<https://www.traveltaormina.com/en/monuments/greek-theatre-taormina.html>
A short history and the parts of the theatre; includes the video below.

Video showing what the theatre at Taormina looked like originally and what it looks like now:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hnv0P5Bh7eg&t=191s>

Wikipedia: Taormina <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taormina>
History of Taormina

Greek Theatre of Syracuse: <https://www.siracusatravel.com/the-greek-theatre/>
A description of the theatre in Syracuse

Classical Greek Culture:
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/classical-greece/a/greek-culture>
Overview

Class 6 – Magna Grecia - III

First Hour Presentation: Greek Sculpture, Ceramics, Artwork
Suzanne Lewis

Second Hour Presentation: The Battle of Himera (480 BCE)
John Brush

Essential Reading:

The Battle of Himera 480 BC (Sicily) 7 minutes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aCflYIsfYw

Wikipedia: South Italian Ancient Greek Pottery
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Italian_ancient_Greek_pottery

Making Greek Vases 4 minutes
<https://www.wondersofsicily.com/sicily-greeks.htm>

Further Reading (Optional):

Sculpture: The Agrigento Youth
<https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/a-close-look-at-the-agrigento-youth/>

Southern Italian Vase Painting
https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sivp/hd_sivp.htm

Wikipedia: South Italian Ancient Greek Pottery
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Italian_ancient_Greek_pottery

Wikipedia: Archaeological Museum of Aidone
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological_Museum_of_Aidone

Ancient Sicilian Coins:
<https://www.getty.edu/news/ancient-sicilian-coins-miniature-masterpieces-full-scale-challenges/>

Class 7 –Rome and Byzantium

First Hour Presentation: Villa Romana del Casale
Carol Hoppe

Second Hour Presentation: Byzantines: Capella Palatina
Linda Mathewson

Essential Reading

Villa Romana del Casale
https://www.villaromanadelcasale.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/guida_042012_ENG.pdf
Description, history, archaeology, mosaics of a Roman villa in Sicily

Wikipedia: Byzantine Sicily (Theme) 4 pp
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicily_\(theme\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicily_(theme))

Wikipedia: Byzantine Mosaics
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_mosaics

Wikipedia: Cappella Palatina

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappella_Palatina

A magnificent blend of Islamic, Byzantine and Norman art and architecture

Further Reading (Optional):

Ancient and Byzantine Mosaic Materials 2 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPjbiP66-6M&t=140s>

Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage 11 minutes

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/roman-empire/v/punic-wars-between-rome-and-carthage>

A short video explaining very simply the 3 Rome/Carthage Punic wars and how they affected Sicily

Cappella Palatina

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/byzantine1/x4b0eb531:middle-byzantine/a/the-cappella-palatina>

Class 8 - Arab Sicily

First Hour Presentation: Cuba Palace (Palazzo della Cuba) and Zisa Palace
Carol Marshall

Second Hour Presentation: Arab Agriculture, Food and Other Legacies
Dolores DeLellis

Essential Reading:

Wikipedia: The siege of Syracuse from 877 to 878 3 pp

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Syracuse_\(877-878\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Syracuse_(877-878))

How the Arabs conquered Sicily

Intellectual history of Islamic Sicily 831-1072 By Zakaria Virk

https://www.academia.edu/6551884/Intellectual_History_of_Islamic_Sicily_831_1072

Sicily's Arab Identity:

<https://italysegreta.com/sicilys-arab-identity/>

Further Reading (Optional):

Wikipedia: Emirate of Sicily

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emirate_of_Sicily

Arabic Architecture in Sicily: Palermo to Messina

<https://discovermessina.com/arabic-architecture-sicily-palermo-to-messina/>

Wikipedia: Zisa Palace, Palermo

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zisa,_Palermo

Palermo: La Zisa

<https://www.wondersofsicily.com/palermo-la-zisa.htm>

Palermo: La Cuba

<https://www.wondersofsicily.com/palermo-la-cuba.htm>

Islam in Sicily

9 pp

by Ibnu Hasan

[https://www.academia.edu/3627180/Islam_in_Sicily?email_work_ =](https://www.academia.edu/3627180/Islam_in_Sicily?email_work_=)

Class 9 – Norman Sicily

First Hour Presentation: Norman/Arab Architecture - The Cathedral at Cefalu
Linda Guccione

Second Hour Presentation: Monreale Cathedral
Ron DeLellis

Essential Reading

Palermo—Celebrating Throne and Altar

<https://www.kanopy.com/video/148735>

This 29-minute video provides a beautiful look at the Norman palaces and cathedrals of Palermo, emphasizing the strong influence of both Arabs and Byzantines.

The visual culture of Norman Sicily

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/byzantine1/x4b0eb531:middle-byzantine/a/the-visual-culture-of-norman-sicily>

Further Reading (Optional):

Unesco: Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedral Churches of Cefalù and Monreale

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1487/>

Class 10–

First Hour Presentation: Cathedral at Syracuse
Pamela Ardizione

Second Hour Presentation: Palazzo dei Normanni_ and Sicily's Dark Ages
Robert Martin

Essential Reading:

Wikipedia: Palazzo dei Normanni pdf 3 pp
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palazzo_dei_Normanni

Wikipedia: Cathedral of Syracuse
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral_of_Syracuse

Further Reading (Optional):

Palazzo dei Normanni
<https://www.theworldofsicily.com/en/sights/sights-of-palermo/palace-of-the-normans/>
History, rooms, images

Palazzo dei Normanni
<https://www.federicosecondo.org/en/virtual-tour-2/>
History, virtual tour (no commentary)