

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

MODERN GREEK PROGRAM

SPRING 2019



INSIDE: *Students Teach Greek School*

.....
THYESPA 2018

.....
Building Bridges With Ohio Greek Communities



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF ARTS
AND SCIENCES

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We are grateful to artist ***Evangelia Philippidis*** for designing our Paideia Project image.



Modern Greek students at the Olympic Society Glendi.
For this and other Modern Greek events, see page 8.

OUR FUNDRAISING GOAL

A Message from **Georgios Anagnostou**
Director of the Modern Greek Program
The Ohio State University

Dear Friends of the Ohio Greek-American Community,

The Modern Greek Program is delighted to announce an exciting development. The Ohio Hellenic Paideia campaign to endow a Professorship at The Ohio State University to teach Modern Greek language and culture in perpetuity has reached its goal by receiving pledges exceeding \$1 million. More news about the professorship will be forthcoming as the university makes official arrangements.

We express our profound appreciation for the support of all the individuals and organizations who contributed to this effort. Our fundraising committee, composed of prominent local Greek American leaders and led by its Honorary Chairman, Congressman Zack Space, Honorary Advisor Professor Manuel Tzagournis, and Professor Eliseos Paul Taiganides, worked tirelessly to achieve our fundraising goal. We are grateful for their generosity.

We are honored for the trust you have shown to us. The Ohio State University Modern Greek Program is nationally and internationally distinguished. Your support creates a legacy, making possible continued teaching and research in Modern Greek language and culture, including Greek America.

We will continue, of course, with our educational mission. But we will also be undertaking a variety of outreach activities to work more closely with Hellenic American communities throughout Ohio. The Endowed Professorship will serve in perpetuity as a great resource and opportunity for Greek American youth from Ohio and elsewhere to explore and understand their heritage both in the classroom and through study abroad in Greece.

History will remember your achievement as a major contribution to enriching the paideia of generations of Greek Americans to come.

With appreciation, σας ευχαριστούμε!

Sincerely,



Professor Georgios Anagnostou

**The Endowed Professorship
fund for the Teaching and
Study of Modern Greek
Language and Culture
#645057**

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**Read more about the
Paideia Project:
[go.osu.edu/
paideiaproject](http://go.osu.edu/paideiaproject)**





STUDENTS TEACH GREEK SCHOOL

Since September 2018, two Ohio State Modern Greek students have been teaching in the Greek school of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Saturdays.

“We had the pleasure to have Emily Pandis and Niko Stamos on our Greek School teaching staff. They came with enthusiasm and an excellent knowledge of the Greek language. They each taught their classes with passion and transferred their love of the Greek language to their students. We were very lucky to have them as part of the teaching staff and we are looking forward for continued collaboration between the Modern Greek Program and the school.”

–Nadia Kotsonis and Koullis Peratopoulos, principals

“I really care about the Greek language and culture, and that is due in large part to Greek School as young child. When I was presented with the opportunity to teach within

a well organized and complete Greek language Program at the church I knew I had to be a part of it.”

“Being a Greek school teacher does require planning and lot of creativity, but seeing the students grow makes it more than worthwhile. The students themselves come to class very enthusiastic about learning Greek and seeing their faces light up when they learn how Greek language and culture has shaped our society is very pleasing. I really do want the students to feel connected to the Greek culture and language is one of the most important ways to do that.”

–Niko Stamos

“Being a Greek school teacher this past year has made me proud to be part of a community with teachers and parents that understand and promote the educational value of learning Greek in a classroom setting. It is truly heartwarming to see not only the progress of young



children, but the joy in their eyes and smiles when they are able to use what they have been taught with their teachers, classmates and at home with their families.

The Greek Language School allows students to explore and understand their heritage through language, and it gives them the opportunity to be immersed in an environment where the language has meaning. Through games, poems, songs, activities, crafts and cooking they are using Greek vocabulary to engage to everyday activities, and being able to create a link between usage and practicality is so important. Having witnessed this growth and the connections they make through the language, it gives me hope that these children will continue to pursue their journey with the Greek language.”

–Emily Pandis

OUR GRADUATES



Ana-Maria Thalassinou, a native of Columbus, graduated in May, 2018 with a double major in Modern Greek and Economics with a minor in Organization & Performance Psychology. She is now working as a Sr. HR Assistant for Amazon in Columbus after recently relocating back home from Baltimore, MD.



Athena Patitsas, a native of Columbus, graduated in May, 2018 with a double major in Modern Greek and Public Policy Analysis. She is now working as a Project Manager for Epic Systems, a healthcare software company in Madison, Wisconsin.



Sophia Deligiannidis, from Cohasset, MA, graduating with a minor in Modern Greek, won a prestigious position with the Teach for America Foundation and is now teaching in Cleveland.



Nick Kyriacou, from Louisville, Kentucky, graduated in May, 2019 with a double major in Physics and Astronomy & Astrophysics and a minor in Modern Greek. He will be attending the University of Michigan in the fall to pursue a Ph.D. in physics. Nick’s father came to the US from Cyprus.



Emily Pandis, born in Columbus, grew up in Kerkyra, Athens, Greece, and Powell. She graduated in May, 2019 with a triple major in Modern Greek, International Relations, and Islamic Studies, and a minor in History. She will pursue an M.A. in Global Governance, Politics and Security at American University in the fall.





THYESPA 2018

The Ohio State University Modern Greek Program has a longstanding collaboration with the THYESPA summer program of the University Athens. Since 2010, dozens of Ohio State Modern Greek students have attended this six-week immersion course in Modern Greek language, placing into corresponding levels of competence from A1 to Γ2 (Mastery). Students earn six credits; many win scholarships from THYESPA, and others benefit from Ohio State funding, thanks to the Kozyris Travel Award. In 2018, a record fourteen Ohio State students enjoyed an unforgettable experience of Greece and a significant improvement in their knowledge of Greek.



ERGON: A JOURNAL ABOUT GREEK/AMERICAN CULTURE

“Years in the village. My father in America. Not sharing the mornings, the mountains, / the rose bush, the air. Moving past the yellow hills, the blue, the almond blossoms, / separately, in separate countries.”

Written by Tryfon Tolides, an award-winning poet, the narrative verses above evoke the fragmentation of a family that immigration may bring about. The father is no longer present in the everyday routines of the family. Not being a part of village life and the surrounding landscape either, his absence looms large. His separation creates a void. He is nowhere to be seen in the midst of rose bush, the yellow hills, and in the background of the blue. His departure creates a drab emptiness, which the poet contrasts dramatically with a landscape filled with colors.

Immigration deeply affects individuals and families, those who leave and those who stay behind. It is an experience of new beginnings, difficult adjustments, filled with longing and anticipation. It is about growing roots as well as building institutions. For the American-born sons and daughters of immigrants, life also presents various challenges. Navigating two worlds, two languages, and two cultures is a common experience for the second generation. Immigration and ethnicity entail complex, often life-defining experiences. Not surprisingly, individuals, like Tolides, often resort to poetry, literature, film, photography, and scholarship to tell their stories, to make sense of the experience, to share it with others, to document it.

In order to convey this literary and cultural experience of immigration and diaspora, I launched almost a year ago, in October 2017, *Ergon: Greek/American Arts and Letters*, an online, free access journal. I wanted to share with readers news about and analysis of the latest documentaries, films, museum exhibits, or books about Greek America. I invited authors, photographers, and scholars to tell their stories. I encouraged scholars to write about the political and cultural relations between the United States and Greece. I wrote about available archives and shared information about resources where readers can learn about Greek American history and culture.

Ergon is a forum that brings together poetry, literature, interviews, film, photography, book reviews and scholarly analysis written in a manner that is accessible to non-academic audiences. Because this kind of venue was absent, I felt it was my responsibility as an educator to create one so that I could make this knowledge available to the public.

The narratives we tell about Greek America have been proliferating. New documentaries, novels, and films



are produced, both in the United States and Greece, sometimes earning prestigious international awards. The novel *Dendrites* (2015), for instance, a story written in Greek about two generations of a Greek American family in Camden, NJ, received the 2017 European Union Prize of Literature. The film *Brides* (2004), a compelling visual narration of the phenomenon of early twentieth century arranged marriages between Greece and the United States, won the first prize in the Greek State Film Awards. *Ergon* informs the public about the availability of these narratives and offers perspectives for understanding their significance.

Ergon is a labor of love. It has received grants by Ohio State’s Humanities and the Arts Discovery Theme, and the Modern Greek Studies Association (MGSA). Several individual donors have also contributed financially. These valuable gifts cover the cost associated with editing, copy editing, and website maintenance, making the operation of the journal possible. For this I am grateful.

—Georgios Anagnostou

Please visit us at: ergon.scienzine.com



A YEAR OF CONNECTIONS

One of my pleasures after teaching at Ohio State for so many years is to run into former students. Often, I recognize them but sometimes to my embarrassment I don't.

This is what happened last April 2018 during the annual student recognition and graduation in the Modern Greek Program. I had come to celebrate the achievement of our students and specifically to honor one of our graduates, Athena Patitsas. In addition to describing her many achievements, I was going to point out that her mother, Effie, had taken courses with me in Modern Greek literature and culture in the early 90's. With Athena's family in the audience, I wanted to highlight the bridges that can exist between generations in our small Program.

But before the ceremony, a guest came up and asked whether I remembered her. Staring at her, leafing through my mental album of faces, I tried to recall her but without any success. And she, aware of my struggle, identified herself as Brandi. Wow, I exclaimed, this was Brandi who had taken my first class I had taught at Ohio State in the fall of 1987. We immediately began recalling incidents from the class, especially how another student, David Alexander, would joke that if he and Brandi got married, she would be called Brandi Alexander.

When I asked Brandi why she was on campus, she responded with pride that her daughter, Emily Pandis, was doing the live radio broadcast that has become a feature of our annual celebration. Indeed, Emily had declared a Modern Greek major and was going to take my Autumn class on Modern Greek Literature, thus continuing the journey begun by her mother more than thirty years earlier. Like Athena, she represented one of the bonds that have linked the Program to the past and to different areas of the world.

Before the start of the new semester I discovered another connection in the Program. On a trip to Durham, North Carolina, I visited my former students Kyle and Rabina Walsh and their young daughter Nyssa. Kyle,

from Cleveland, and Rabina, from Cincinnati, had met as freshmen in my class in 2003 on Greek identities. In the following year, they signed up for my Honors Greek culture class that culminated with a trip to Greece during Spring Break. Upon graduation Kyle began a PhD in Public Health and Rabina went to medical school. With their degrees in hand, they decided to get married and invited my wife and me to their wedding in Cincinnati. Much to my surprise we were placed at the head table, for had it not been for my class, they claimed, they would not have met. At the



reception I was happy to speak with the best man and the maid of honor, both of whom had also taken that Greek culture class.

When I came back to campus for the start of the new academic year I was overwhelmed with news of cutbacks in the Humanities and threats to the existence of liberal education. Would the teaching of literature continue at the university? Will there be a Modern Greek Program in thirty years? But I take comfort in knowing that so many people had passed through our Program, had met there, had learned something about themselves and the world, and have also sent their children here as well. In a world of flux, it is good to remind ourselves that some institutions continue.

– Gregory Jusdanis

MODERN GREEK PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Ohio State students performed together with **Pavlos Vassiliou** and his band *Rebetiki Istoria* from Athens. Pavlos coached the students in dance and singing before the performance.

Dozens of students sang “Frangosyriani” and “Synefiasmeni Kyriaki” to the enthusiastic response of a packed gathering at the glendi of Olympic Society in November, 2017, while Eliseos Taiganides danced an inspired zeibekiko. The concert was a joint project of the **Olympic Society** and the Modern Greek Program. Students were inspired to meet and perform with this musical legend.



The distinguished Brazilian art historian Esther da Costa Meyer of Princeton University gave the thirtieth **Thomas E. and Anna P. Leontis Memorial Lecture** in Modern Greek Studies in spring 2018. She spoke on the neoclassical architecture of Havana, Cuba.

In June, 2018, Professors **Tim & Lita Gregory, Mark & Monica Fullerton** and others welcomed Ohio State THYESPA students with an orientation to Athens and a lecture on Ohio State archaeology in Greece, followed by a *souvlaki* dinner at the **Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens (AAIA)**. As part of the ongoing collaboration between the AAIA and Ohio State, Acting Director **Dr. Stavros Paspalas** gave students an archaeological introduction to Ancient Athens with a tour of Philopappos hill.

Yiorgos Anagnostou and **Christopher Brown** received a \$500.00 **Innovative Initiative Grant** from the Modern Greek Studies Association (MGSA) for students to curate a website for the Greek radio broadcasts which OSU Modern Greek students have performed over the last eight years. They can be found at <http://u.osu.edu/greekradio/>

Inaugurating the Ohio State **Laboratory for Greek Dialectology**, the Modern Greek Program and the Department of Linguistics hosted the **8th Midwest Workshop on Greek Language & Linguistics** in February. Speakers included students and faculty in Greek studies, and guests from the Universities of Chicago, Patras, Cyprus and Pittsburgh.

Professor **Jonathan Hall** of the University of Chicago presented the thirty-first **Thomas E. and Anna P. Leontis Memorial Lecture** in March. Hall’s talk, entitled “Chasing the Shadows of the Past in Late Ottoman and Early Revolutionary Argos,” presented a brilliant synthesis of ancient and modern Greek history.

FACULTY NEWSMAKERS

Gregory Jusdanis gave talks on literature and friendship at the University of Pristina in Kosovo and took part in a public forum on nationalism in Tirana, Albania in May 2018. In October, he gave a keynote address at the conference, **Greeks and the Others** in Santiago, Chile, and other lectures in Chile and Argentina.

In April 2019, he lectured on Cavafy’s poem “Ithaca,” at a recital at Georgia State University of a work based on his translation of Cavafy’s “Ithaca,” orchestrated by Atlanta composer Nikitas Demos. In May, he gave lectures at universities in Istanbul, Turkey, and lectured on Greek nationalism at the University of Cyprus.

During the summer of 2018, **Yiorgos Anagnostou** lectured on Greek Canadian studies at York College (Toronto), and on Greek American citizenship at Oxford University (UK). He also spoke at the **17th Annual Future of Hellenism in America Conference** on November 9-10, in Dallas, Texas, and on Greek immigration and diaspora issues at the Niarchos Cultural Center in Athens in December. He published an article on the controversy surrounding the MTV reality show “Growing up Greek,” and another on Greek American support of Greece during the Greek economic crisis.



Christopher Brown spoke at the Modern Greek Studies Association meetings in Atlantic City in November 2017, and in May

2018 in Deryneia, Cyprus. He accompanied Ohio State students in Cyprus, and then at THYESPA in Athens in June. He presented a web project, u.osu.edu/greek at the MGSA teachers conference at Columbia University in November 2018, and at Ohio State in February 2019.

In 2018, **Stavros Constantinou** inaugurated a Maymester course in Cyprus on *Geography of the European Union* which has attracted many students for its second iteration in May, 2019.

Brian Joseph has been elected to the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the US, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743, and is currently serving as president of the Linguistic Society of America. Professor Joseph was presented with a *Festschrift* before the **22nd Annual Kenneth E. Naylor Memorial Lecture** on April 5; it includes articles from over thirty friends, students, and colleagues, honoring his long and distinguished career of scholarship, service and teaching.



BUILDING BRIDGES WITH OHIO GREEK COMMUNITIES

On Saturdays, March 23 and November 17, 2018, the Modern Greek Program hosted students from the upper classes of the **Greek School of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral**, their teachers and some parents. Students gave presentations in Greek on their ancestral homes in Greece, and on heroes such as Heracles. Ohio State students enrolled in Modern Greek courses presented themselves and their work, and encouraged the younger students to continue with Greek studies. Highlights included a music video composed in Greek by **Theo Zoumpoulidis '19** and performed with his peers. This video and others can be viewed on the Modern Greek Program youtube channel: go.osu.edu/MGvideos



At the Annual Columbus Greek Festival in September, 2018, **Yiorgos Anagnostou** gave a series of lectures on modern Athens and **Christopher Brown** on Ancient Athens.

On March 26, a dozen Modern Greek students joined Paideia benefactors for breakfast at **HoneyDip Donuts and Diner** in Upper Arlington, a favorite *steki* of the Columbus Greek community.

On Wednesday, April 3, **Vasilis Konstantinidis**, *protopsaltis* at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Columbus and a native of Karpathos, honored us with a visit. He recited *mantinades* and talked about life and music in Karpathos. Listen to this interview at go.osu.edu/mantinades

On April 14, students, faculty and alumna **Marissa Kazes '16** spoke at St. Haralambos Church in Canton on the Modern Greek Program.

Thanks to co-sponsorship from the **Olympic Society**, in April 2018 and 2019 students, faculty, and friends of the Modern Greek Program heard the live final Greek radio broadcasts of the semester and celebrated our graduating seniors in Crane Café of Hagerty Hall with delicious and abundant food catered by Mediterranean Food Imports.

For Modern Greek Program News: u.osu.edu/moderngreek
Find us on Facebook: go.osu.edu/FBmoderngreek



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