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BASIC INFORMATION

Course Dates: May 11 – May 28, 2015

If you are not traveling abroad before or after your program, you will need to book your flight such that you arrive in Athens before the program begins (so you will leave the US on May 10\textsuperscript{th}), and you depart from Athens the day after your program ends.

If you arrive in Athens before May 11\textsuperscript{th}, you will have to arrange your own lodgings until the night of May 11\textsuperscript{th}. SPEA accommodations at the American College of Greece begin on the night of May 11\textsuperscript{th}, though you may check-in at your room and drop off your bags during any time that day.

If you are not planning to travel after this program ends, you should book your flight to leave Athens on May 28\textsuperscript{th}.

Visas:

If you are an international student and/or are not eligible for a US passport, SPEA will provide you with a visa letter that you can use to obtain a tourist visa. You will then need to purchase a tourist visa, as you will not be able obtain a student visa, even though you will be studying in the European Union.

If you are a US citizen, you will not need a visa for the European Union if your stay is less than 90 days.
ATHENS, GREECE

Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece. It is one of the world’s oldest cities, with its recorded history spanning approximately 3,400 years. Classical Athens, as a landlocked location, was a powerful city-state that emerged in conjunction with the seagoing development of the port of Piraeus. A center for the arts, learning, and philosophy, and home of the ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle, Athens is widely referred to as the birthplace of Western civilization and democracy. Today a cosmopolitan metropolis, modern Athens is central to economic, financial, industrial, political, and cultural life of Greece.

Athens is recognized as a global city because of its geo-strategic location and its importance in finance, commerce, media, entertainment, arts, international trade, culture, education, and tourism. It is one of the biggest economic canters in southeastern Europe, with a large financial sector and the largest passenger port in Europe.

The heritage of the classical era is still evident in the city and is represented in many ways, such as by the ancient monuments and the works of art and architecture. The Parthenon is considered a key landmark of early Western civilization. The city also retains Roman and Byzantine monuments, as well as a smaller number of Ottoman monuments.

Following the Greek War of Independence and the establishment of the Greek Kingdom in 1832, Athens was chosen as the capital of the newly independent Greek state. This was largely due to historical and sentimental reasons. At the time it was a town of modest size built around the foot of the Acropolis.

The first modern city plan consisted of a triangle defined by the Acropolis, the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos and the new palace of the Bavarian king (now housing the Greek Parliament), so as to highlight the continuity between modern and ancient Athens. Neoclassicism, the international style of this epoch, was the architectural style through which Bavarian, French and Greek architects designed the first important public buildings of the new capital.

In 1896 Athens hosted the first modern Olympic Games, and it held the 2004 Summer Olympic Games as well. Many of the Olympic facilities are accessible to the public in Athens today.
ATHENS INTERNATIONAL to CAMPUS HOUSING

From the Athens International Airport, you can either take public transportation to the Aghia Paraskevi campus, where your dormitories are, or you can take a taxi. A taxi ride will take about 20 minutes while public transportation will be about an hour, but a taxi will be more expensive than taking the metro and bus. However, if you have several people traveling with you in the taxi, your ride will be cheaper. A solo taxi ride from the airport will cost about $45.

If you decide to take public transportation, find the Metro station within the airport, and buy a ticket for Metro Line 3. At the station “Douk Plakentias,” take the regular Line 2 (not the airport subway) to “Aghia Paraskevi” (direction “Aghia Marina”). When you get off at Aghia Paraskevi, the campus will be an 8-minute walk from the metro station.
Cultural Sites and Activities in Athens

As part of this course, the class will take excursions to the Acropolis; Delphi; Nauplio; Hydra, Poros, Aegina; and Cape Sounion. You will have the Sundays (May 17th and 24th) to travel as you see fit. Here are some places in Athens suggested by a tourism website:

- **National Garden**
  In the heart of Athens, the National Garden provides a green oasis for sunny afternoon trips. The Royal Garden has a private garden for the Royal Palace, which is now the Parliament Building. The Public Garden was established in 1923. This is a quiet and peaceful place away from the bustling city with a gorgeous green canopy of trees and vibrant plant life. Statues decorate the gardens as well as flowerbeds and small ruins of antiquity. The gardens of Zappeion can also be found here, which surround the ancient congress hall that was built in the 19th century.

- **Mount Lycabettus**
  For gorgeous sunsets and an amazing panoramic view of Athens, Mount Lycabettus is an incredible adventure. As the highest point in Athens, it allows visitors to see all across the Attica basin and the Aegean Sea. Climbers can also see as the chapel of St. George from its peak. A little cafe here will serve up a fantastic dinner for two. To start the hike, visitors go up the path that begins at the end of Aristippou Street in Kolonaki. The path continues to wind upwards around the mountain. Visitors can also take the funicular, which departs from Ploutarchou and Aristippou Street.

- **Temple of Olympian Zeus**
  This is the largest temple in Greece. The massive ancient complex took nearly seven centuries to complete. Building originally began in 515 BC by order of Peisistratos, but work stopped on the temple as it was seen as oppressive as Peisistratos and his son were seen as tyrants by the Athenians. Work resumed in 175 BC but was halted 10 years later when the Roman architect Cossutius died. Under Emperor Hardian in 132 BC, the temple was finally completed and dedicated to Zeus Olympios. The temple stands today mostly as a reminder of Greek history, but only 15 of 104 huge columns remain.

- **Plaka**
  One of the most popular tourist attractions in Athens is the Plaka District, which resides under the Acropolis and spreads out to Syntagma. This village is almost like an island within the city, and it’s the perfect way to experience authentic Greek culture. The area is quite private and boasts truly unique scenery with several cafes, ancient trees, green leaf canopies and stone walkways. The area is well-known for its food, boutique shops and cafes. Along Kydathineon Street, visitors find the Jewish Museum, Folk-Art Museum and Saita Taverna, which serves delicious bakalairo and other grilled meats.
Restaurants in Athens
There is a plethora of restaurant options in Athens, but here are some suggestions for restaurants that are inexpensive or moderately priced and that received high ratings from customers.

- **Rakor**: Greek and Vegetarian
  - Hours:
    - Sun 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm
    - Tue - Thu 2:00 pm - 12:30 pm
    - Fri - Sat 1:00 pm - 12:30 pm
  - Price range: $6 - $14

- **Kostas**: Greek
  - Price range: $5 - $10

- **43 Sarantario**: Greek and Mediterranean
  - Hours:
    - Sun 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm
    - Mon - Thu 5:00 pm - 12:00 am
    - Fri 5:00 pm - 12:30 am
    - Sat 1:00 pm - 12:30 am
  - Price range: $12 - $18