British School at Athens
The Archaeology and Topography of Greece
17 August – 5 September 2026

The British School at Athens is delighted to report that its annual undergraduate summer course took place in August and September 2026.

Interest in the course remained exceptionally strong, with 123 students applying for 30 places. Systematic publicity, including promotion by BSA ambassadors, and the highly positive recommendations shared by previous participants were the principal factors contributing to this continued demand. Thirty students were initially selected; however, one participant withdrew at an early stage for health reasons, before it was possible to offer the place to another applicant. The course therefore proceeded with 29 students, representing 22 different UK universities.

As in previous years, the three-week programme began with a series of lectures introducing students to the chronology and geography of Greek history, as well as to the principal themes and skills explored throughout the course. Students also visited the Fitch Laboratory and took part in object-handling sessions in the BSA Museum and Archive.

This year, particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that the course offered a genuinely diachronic perspective, covering sites and museums as evenly as possible from the Bronze Age to modern Greece. Building on the very positive feedback received in 2025, we expanded the programme's consideration of cultural reception and the role of archaeology in the formation of the Greek state—and, more broadly, of national identities. A full day was devoted to these themes, including visits to the National Historical Museum, together with lectures addressing reception, philhellenism, and the reinvention of tradition.

Following site and museum-based teaching in Athens, Attica, and Central Greece, the group travelled for seven days throughout the Peloponnese. This part of the programme introduced students to sites ranging from prehistory—including Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos—to the Classical and Hellenistic periods, represented by Eleusis, Messene, and Nemea, and continuing through the Late Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman periods at Mystras and Methone. Among the particular highlights of the course were visits to the interiors of the Parthenon, the Temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai, and the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. These exceptional opportunities enabled students to engage directly with monuments and spaces that are rarely accessible to the general public.

Throughout the course, students were asked to maintain a journal documenting their experiences at the sites and museums. In addition to written observations, the journals

included sketches of artefacts and monuments, encouraging students to demonstrate their understanding of the material in a more creative and personal form. Tutors also offered optional evening workshops on additional aspects of the course, including sessions on epigraphy and curatorial practice.

Several activities were organised to encourage intellectual exchange and strengthen the sense of community between students and tutors. These included a session in which tutors presented their current research projects, a history and archaeology quiz, and a poetry competition inspired by the themes and places explored during the course. Together, these activities complemented the formal teaching programme while allowing students to engage with Greek history and archaeology in collaborative, imaginative, and reflective ways.

The course was directed and taught by Georgios Mouratidis, with additional teaching from BSA Director Rebecca Sweetman, Rachel Phillips (BSA Leventis Fellow) (BSA), as well as this year's BSA School Students, Ben Cassell, James Hua, Nikki Velidis, and Amalia Kakkisis (BSA Archivist), Edyta Marzec (BSA), and Niki Papakonstantinou (BSA).

In our continuing effort to make our courses as accessible to the widest range of participants as possible, Georgios Mouratidis got in touch with two students prior to the beginning of the course to discuss course practicalities and to arrange adjustments. All students were advised on practicalities related to site visits, such as if there are places to sit down on sites, what is the shade like, is it possible to fill up a water bottles, etc. Throughout the course, indication was given in advance of site visits, on whether toilet stops and places to buy snacks or water were available. A risk-assessment form was also given to all students to sign.

We are most grateful for the continuing support of several institutions and societies that continue to provide much needed financial assistance. In particular, we (and especially the students) are most grateful that we could offer this year 19 bursaries (as opposed to 14 last year) to help students who would otherwise not have been able to accept their places and who come from underrepresented backgrounds. Funding was received from the A.G. Leventis Foundation, The Craven Committee Oxford, The Classics Faculty at Cambridge, The Gilbert Murray Trust, The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and The Classical Association. Two students were offered full scholarships from the A.G. Leventis Foundation.

We were extremely excited to read that the student feedback questionnaires were unanimously positive, applauding in particular the great variety of topics covered, and the enthusiasm, knowledge and approachability of all course tutors. All students were given an anonymous feedback forms. Here is some feeback students noted:

“Visiting so many incredible sites and receiving such informative and well organised/ structured lectures.”

“The breadth of sites, museums and periods covered was particularly valuable, giving me a much richer understanding of Greek archaeology and helping me to develop and refine my own academic interests. Visiting sites in their landscape context, alongside discussion of their excavation, interpretation and presentation, was especially useful.”

“I had one of the best experiences of my life and I’m so glad I was able to participate, meet so many amazing people and learn so much in such a short amount of time. I cannot express my gratitude enough !!”

“Being able to visualise everything you learn about when learning about Ancient Greek archaeology in the vast amount of sites we went to, which had examples of everything. The staff were very helpful in guiding us around the sites very well, allowing us to fully understand the archaeology, history and topography of the sites.”

“These three weeks have been one of the most genuinely formative experiences of my academic life so far. I came in having spent years studying Greek archaeology and mythology from books and seminar rooms, and I'm leaving having actually stood in the places I'd only ever read about — the Agora, the Acropolis, Delphi, Mycenae, the Palace of Nestor, Bassai, and so many more. That shift from theory to place, including the opportunity to experience such a variety of museums and curatorial choices, has changed how I think about this field, and about the kind of work I want to do in it.”

“The effort that went into creating such a varied and engaging programme certainly did not go unrecognised and I think I can speak on behalf of everyone in saying how memorable and valuable the experience has been. I am sure that what we learnt and the perspectives we gained will continue to shape both our future studies and professional development.”

“I found this course to be especially valuable in building up knowledge of Greek history. Site lectures gave appropriate contexts, which helped fill in gaps in knowledge and paint a more complete picture of a given period/place/event.”

“Loved the course - the lectures were brilliant, and it was so nice that the tutors really feel a part of the trip. Thank you!”



UG26 group photo at the temple of Poseidon in Sounio



Ben Cassell talking with students about the theatre at Epidaurus and its acoustics.

The Archaeology and Topography of Greece
17th August – 5th September 2026

Sunday 16th August

20.00	Meet and greet

Monday 17st August

09.00	Course introduction and tour of the BSA & Library
10.30	Coffee break
11.00	Introductory lectures *The history of archaeology and the archaeology of history in Greece* *Understanding archaeological and historical evidence*
13.00	Lunch (provided)
14.00	Group Seminars *Introduction to pre-history* *Introduction to pottery* *Introduction to Epigraphy*
17.00	Depart for Mt Lykavettos (walking) *The ancient and modern topography of Athens*
19.00	Group dinner (provided)

Tuesday 18th August

09.00	Depart for the Athenian Agora *Politics and administration in Ancient Athens* *Agora Museum*
13.00	Lunch (own lunch)
14.00	Kerameikos *Death and burial through time* Pnyx *Democracy in Classical Athens*
17.00	Finish

Wednesday 19th August

09.00	Depart for the Acropolis *The Archaeology of the Acropolis Hill* *Interior of the Parthenon: the Parthenon Restoration Project*
12.00	The slopes of the Acropolis *Community in Ancient Athens: sanctuaries and theatres*
12.30	Lunch (own lunch)
14.00	The Acropolis Museum *Multi-temporality on the Acropolis Slopes* *Museums and Archaeopolitics* *Sculpture: Archaic korai* *The Great Panathenaea*
17.30	Finish

Thursday 20th August **Athens in the Roman period and the Late Antiquity**

09.30	*the Little Metropolis*
10.00	*Library of Hadrian*
11.10	*Roman Agora*
12.15	*Arch of Hadrian*
12.30	*Temple of Olympian Zeus*
13.30	*the Panathenaic Stadium*

13.30	Lunch (own lunch)
15.00	Piraeus Museum & shipyard
17.30	Finish

Friday 21st August

08.30	Depart for the National Archaeological Museum *Prehistoric gallery: funerary assemblages and their curation* ** Griffin warrior exhibition* *Pottery gallery: ceramic typologies and chronologies* *Sculpture gallery: self-representation and funerary monuments*
13.00	Lunch (own lunch)
15.00	Workshop *Communicating archaeology: knowledge exchange, impact and public engagement*
19.00	Optional group outing

Saturday 22nd August

FREE DAY

Sunday 23rd August

08.00	Depart for Marathon Site & Museum
11.00	Depart for Brauron *Myths & history* *Museum of Brauron*
12.00	Lunch (provided)
13.30	Depart for Thorikos & Lavrion *Town-planning and urban spaces* Mines & economy
15.30	Depart for Sounion *The role of maritime sanctuaries in the Archaic and Classical periods* *Trade and connection*
18.00	Depart from Sounion

Monday 24th August

10.00	Introduction to archaeological science and the work of the Fitch Laboratory
10.45	Group seminars *Archaeological science* I: *ceramic petrology* *Archaeological science* II: *osteoarchaeology*
12.00	Lunch (provided)
14.00	Visit Museum of Cycladic Art
16.00	Visit the BSA Archive / Optional Epigraphy session – making squeezes

Tuesday 25th August

08.00	Depart for Delphi (coach) *Myth, history and the Sanctuary of Apollo* *Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries*
13.30	Lunch (not provided)
14.00	Archaeological Museum of Delphi
17.00	Depart Delphi

Overnight in Leivadia

Wednesday 26th August

08.30	Depart for Chaeronea
	Ancient Macedonia & Greece after the Battle of Chaeronea
10.30	Osios Loukas Monastery
	From Late Antiquity to Byzantine
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Archaeological Museum of Thebes
	Pre-history and museum curation

Thursday 27st August

10.00	Depart for National Historical Museum
	The Greek War of Independence
	Politics and culture in Greece's capital
13.00	Lunch (not provided) & return to the BSA
15.00	Thematic lectures:
	Ancient monuments and the creation of the Greek state
	Reinvention of traditions & historical continuity

Friday 28th August
FREE DAY

Saturday 29th August **Depart from BSA for Peloponnese**

08.00	Depart for Eleusis (coach)
	'Decoding' the Eleusinian Mysteries
11.30	Ancient Corinth
	Roman and Christian Corinthia
	Domestic economies
14.00	Lunch (not provided)
16.00	Epidauros
	Performing in ancient and modern Epidauros
	Asklepion & Museum

Overnight in Nafplion

Sunday 30th August

09.00	Mycenae
	Treasury of Atreus
	The archaeology of Mycenae
	Mycenae Museum
12.00	Quick lunch (provided, on the road)
12.30	Nemea
	Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries
	The Nemean Games and Nemea stadium
14.00	Depart for Argive Heraion (n.b. no toilets at this site)
	Sanctuaries, landscapes, and territory in the Argolid
19.00	Group dinner (provided)

Overnight in Nafplion

Monday 31st August

08.30	Depart for Tiryns (coach)
	Late Bronze Age archaeology
11.00	Visit Tegea
	Sanctuary of Alea Athena at Tegea
	Museum of Tegea
	Lunch on the road (not provided)

13.30	Sparta
14.00	*Archaeological Museum of Sparta: the Spartan austerity*
15.30	*The Spartan Acropolis*
Overnight in Mystras	

Tuesday 1st September

09.00	Mystras
	The long history of Laconia, between Mystras and Sparta
	An introduction to Byzantine art and architecture
	Lunch in Kalamata
14.00	Kalamata Museum
16.00	Depart for Pylos
Overnight in Pylos	

Wednesday 2nd September

09.00	Depart for Methone (n.b. no toilets at this site, but plenty of cafes in town)
	Building fortifications in the Venetian period
11.30	Palace of Nestor
	Funerary landscapes: Messenia
	Conservation and public display of an archaeological site
13.30	Lunch
16.00	Pylos Castle
	Museum of underwater archaeology
	The battle of Sphacteria
	The battle of Navarino
17.00	Finish
Overnight in Pylos	

Thursday 3rd September

08.00	Depart for Messene
	Town-planning and urban spaces
	The ancient Gymnasium: education in the ancient world
13.00	Lunch (provided)
15.30	Bassai
	The Temple of Apollo Epikourios
17.00	Depart Bassai
Overnight in Olympia	

Friday 4th September

09.00	Depart for ancient Olympia
	Archaeological Museum of Olympia
	Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries
	The Olympic Games
13.00	Lunch
14.00	The museum for the history of ancient Olympic Games (Optional)
From 15.00	Free time
19.00	Farewell dinner
Overnight in Olympia	

Saturday 5th September

08.30	Depart Olympia for Athens Airport, to arrive by c.14.00



Giorgos Mouratidis about curation and the role of Ancient Greece in the formation of the Greek state, in the Acropolis Museum



James Hua touring students in Ancient Messene