MSSG PROGRAM

* **Program Summary**

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| **Program title** | McGill Summer Studies in Greece (MSSG) |
| **Program organizer** | McGill Modern Greek Studies |
| **Collaborative parties** | International Hellenic University (IHU),  School of Humanities |
| **Program Location** | International Hellenic University,  Thessaloniki, Greece |
| **Duration** | Forty hours in four weeks |
| **Dates** | June (to July) McGill summer term dates (4 weeks) |
| **Number of courses** | 1 course per 30 students |

* **Program Description**

The **McGill Summer Studies in Greece** (**MSSG**) aims to organize an intensive summer semester program in the humanities and social sciences during the month of June in the Mediterranean port and hub-city of Thessaloniki (Salonica). This Balkan academic metropolis, aka the “co-reigning city of Byzantium”, the “Jerusalem of the Balkans”, is situated in the northern part of Greece, next to the UNESCO world heritage site of Mt Athos, at the crossroads of 5 countries and boasting 2400 years of cosmopolitan history.

While the program is designed for McGill students from all faculties, its uniqueness lies in that it also aims to attract participants from other Canadian and international institutions. This will become possible through our partnership with the International Hellenic University (IHU), giving students the opportunity to register for either McGill or ECTS credits, appealing this way to all those interested in either North American or European credits.

Courses will be taught collaboratively by McGill professors and local faculty. Among the McGill Faculty, who could participate we include T. Anastasiadis, Hans Beck (History and Classical Studies), Lynn Kozak (Classical Studies), Cecily Hilsdale (Art History), Maria Popova (Political-Science), Sven-Oli Proksch (Political-Science), Ipek Türeli (Architecture). The four-week courses during the month of June will be held at the IHU campus, which is located in Thessaloniki, Greece’s second largest city and the capital of the administrative region of Macedonia. Throughout the duration of the courses, we will organize several 1-day educational excursions to local museums and archeological sites and one 4-day archeological field trip. The students will be lodged in a 4\* or better hotel (in 2015 they stayed at Makedonia Palace, 5\*).

* **Justification of Location**

Regarding the location of the summer semester on European civilization, we propose Greece and the city of Thessaloniki for the following reasons:

[*Greece*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKxcHajQ0lA)

* Greece’s historical and cultural heritage, and its natural beauty is a point of interest for millions of people around the world. The country’s government has moreover decided to promote the development of international academic partnerships and summer programs.
* The country’s attraction is obvious if one considers that there already exist at least forty University summer programs in Greece following different forms (field courses, satellite campuses, year abroad programs)
* Students will have the unique opportunity to take courses pertaining to European Civilization within a country whose impact has been pivotal to the development of ancient as well as modern European culture and history.
* Situated in the southeastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads between three continents—Europe, Asia and Africa—Greece is at the same time situated in a key position given the current political developments in the region for who wishes to observe them from close while being both a secure destination and easily accessible by a diversified student body, the variety of which will further enrich the educational and cultural experience of all students attending the MSSG.

[*Thessaloniki*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0Uz8e4TmRM)

* The city of Thessaloniki, embodying both classical and modern elements, is the second largest city of the country and the economic and cultural capital of the northern part of Greece.
* Throughout time, Thessaloniki has been a crossroads for five different cultures: the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and Jewish. As a result, one can find within the city’s preserved byzantine-ottoman fortifications one of the most impressive concentrations of Hellenic temples, roman fora, byzantine citadel and churches, ottoman mosques and baths as well as a wide array of museums (including the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki and the Museum of Byzantine Culture, but also more unexpected ones as for example the Lazarist museum including the largest collection on the world of soviet avant-garde art). The surrounding regions propose a variety of prominent archaeological and heritage sites—many of which are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites— covering in continuity more than 2300 years of history. Among these one may mention the ancient sites of Pella, Dion, Olynthos; the Macedonian tombs of Vergina; the unique monastic community of Mt Athos; the monasteries of the Meteores. All these sites are less than a 2-hour drive from the city and so are sites in nearby Bulgaria. Athens and Istanbul are a 6-hour drive from Salonica. This rich historical setting will certainly enhance the students’ learning experience, as they will have the opportunity to visit inner city or regional historical/archeological locations, as part of their course work.
* Famous for its vibrant contemporary cultural scene, Thessaloniki is the host of many international events, such as the Thessaloniki International Trade Fair and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, which attract people from all around the world. The city also has a very strong academic community, home of the country’s largest academic institution, The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Recently, Thessaloniki was awarded the prestigious title of “European Youth Capital 2014,” after presenting its candidature program entitled “Time-Chronos,” which aims to project the city’s history and role in South Eastern Europe. Within this setting, students attending the MSSG program will have the unique opportunity to experience life in a Greek modern city and to be part of a very lively cosmopolitan scene.
* **Our Collaborator:**

**International Hellenic University (IHU)-- School of Humanities**

The International Hellenic University (IHU) is an accredited, research-focused public university offering graduate degrees in English. It is comprised of three Schools—School of Economics and Business Administration, School of Humanities, and School of Science and Technology—and all courses are taught by world known and distinguished academics, exclusively in English. The IHU was created as an independent structure drawing its faculty from the other two Universities of Thessaloniki (Aristotle University and the University of Macedonia in Social Sciences and Economics) in order to offer competitive graduate degrees entirely taught in English. Ever since its creation, the IHU attracts students from Greece, but also from countries all around the world thanks to its international outlook and devotion to academic excellence.

Moreover, the ministry of education in Greece has recently assigned to the IHU the task of being the link with all Hellenic studies programs abroad.

In terms of the MSSG program, we will be collaborating with the School of Humanities (SoH). The Dean of the School of Humanities, professor [Vasilis Gounaris](http://www.hist.auth.gr/old_hist/en/Teaching-Staff/Basil-Gounaris) (D. phil, St. Anthony’s College, Oxford 1988) is our main partner and interlocutor. The academic and logistics coordination on their side will be assumed by Dr Georgios Antoniou (Ph.d. European University Institute, Florence, 2007). Having organized in the past international conferences and workshops and also hosted two international summer schools (the most [recent one](http://www.ihu.edu.gr/index.php/llps/item/168.html) having been hosted last year in collaboration with LSE and Charles University in Prague), the SoH is an institution with significant experience in preparing and coordinating large-scale academic events. The value of this collaboration also lies in SoH’s commitment to manage the on-location bureaucratic and organizing details and to offer students access to its up-to date and cutting edge technological infrastructure and facilities.

The IHU will take care of all the local logistics questions.

* **Other local partner: the French School of Archeology, Classical and Modern Greek studies**

The French School in Athens is one of the two leading foreign institutions based in Greece on studies concerning Greek Antiquity and Modernity. Thanks to their partnership we will be able to include a end-of the school 4-day field trip in the archeological sites of Thassos and Philippe that the School has been excavating for the last 100 years. The students will have the unique experience of working on-site with archeologists or museum curators or restorers.

* **Significance for McGill University**

The MSSG is a pioneering project that is highly in accordance with McGill University’s commitment to innovation and excellence.

First of all, the MSSG is a project that connects in a unique way a leading North American institution with an upcoming Greek University having a distinct European and international profile and having a loosely federative structure drawing its academic resources from the distinguished faculty of other local universities without being impeded in its function by a cumbersome administrative structure. Most summer programs of foreign institutions in Greece are limited to touristic-focused trips, archeological field courses or delocalized campuses, and are often addressed exclusively to their own students. Unlike these projects, by collaborating with IHU and by offering North American and European academic accredited courses, the MSSG is an innovative venture that brings together Canadian, local Greek, and international students and faculty in a common classroom. The distinctiveness of this collaboration will not only serve as a platform for productive cultural exchange among all participants, but most importantly it will reinforce McGill University’s reputation as one of the world’s best-known innovative and leading academic institutions.

Furthermore, since the MGGS is open to students from all over the world, the program will serve as an advocate of McGill University’s leading role in academia and therefore will potentially attract to its highly diverse student body more of “the best and the brightest minds.”

The project will also increase our visibility and allow us to outreach to a series of leading Foundations of Greek heritage that have announced their will to support any educational initiative bringing together Greek and foreign scientific/academic partners, enhancing academic emulation and know-how transfer.

For all these reasons, we believe that this project will not only benefit McGill students, but it will also promote McGill University’s outstanding role in innovation and excellence.