

## **"Greek-American Studies are Growing at North American Campuses"** **by Artemis Leontis**

Greek-American studies have been undergoing steady growth at institutions of higher learning in North America for the past decade. More and more undergraduates in American universities and colleges are finding opportunities to study the culture, history, and experiences of Greek Americans. The facts speak for themselves. The report that follows is based on preliminary data collected from Modern Greek programs in the U.S. and Canada and from faculty with interests in Greek-American studies. It finds that Greek-American topics form a part of the curriculum in nearly half the Modern Greek programs in North America and in other places as well.

Modern Greek programs with at least one full-time faculty member (from lecturer to endowed Chair) dedicated to Modern Greek studies include the following: Boston College, Brown, Columbia, Drexel, Harvard, Hellenic College, University of Illinois-Chicago, Michigan, Missouri-St. Louis, Université de Montréal, New York University, Ohio State, Princeton, Queens College CUNY, Rutgers, York, San Francisco State, Simon Fraser, and Yale.

Nearly half of these Programs offer at least one regularly taught course dedicated to the study of Greek Americans: Columbia, Drexel, Hellenic College, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio State, Queens, York, San Francisco State. The topics and fields of study cover an interesting range. Queens College CUNY offers the broadest array of courses, beginning close to home with the Greek-American community in the city, and extending to the region and the country, studying Greek-Americans as one of six major ethnic groups in New York City, Racial and Ethnic Minorities in America, and Greek Americans and Politics. Columbia, Michigan, Ohio State regularly offer at least one course devoted entirely to the history and culture of Greek Americans and reaching audiences as large as 45 students per year. Columbia and San Francisco State teach Greek-American Literature. All these programs regularly send students into the surrounding Greek community to interview living Greeks. Drexel University incorporates the study of Greek Americans in courses on Greek Music and Dance, Literature and Poetry; but it also fully devotes an upper-level language class for heritage speakers to the subject of Greek Americans. York's "The Greek Diaspora," a year-long history course with an average of 60 students, studies Greek Americans as a very substantial portion of its exploration of the history of Greek migrations throughout the world.

Besides courses in these programs, one also finds topics on Greek Americans appearing in other places. For example, Alexandros Kyrou (Associate Professor of History and Director of the Program in East European and Russian Studies at Salem State University) teaches courses on American Immigration and the Greek Diaspora and on the Greek-American Experience. George Kaloudis (Professor of History and Director of BA programs in History and Political Science at Rivier College in Nashua, New Hampshire) is devoting a portion of his class, entitled History and Politics of Modern Greece, to Greek Americans, because he is working on a book on Greeks of the Diaspora in the U.S. Finally, Yale University's Modern Greek program has recently inaugurated an event series, "Greek Diasporas: Legacies, Prospects, and Challenges," with lectures on Greek Americans.

Yale is just one place where community outreach focuses on dynamic aspects of Greek-American culture and society, from music to literature to oral history projects. In fact, most Modern Greek programs host events covering Greek-American topics and featuring Greek Americans. They regularly bring to campuses today's living Greek Americans who excel in music, fiction, poetry, theater, film, journalism, or scholarship. Although Greek-American studies is a very young field, I can't think of a single Modern Greek program in North America that does not include some aspect of Greek America in its activities.

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