

**Government 351**  
**Xenophon's *Anabasis***

Skidmore College  
Spring 2011  
Tu Th 09:10–11:00  
Ladd 106

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or by appointment

The writings of Xenophon hold special interest to students of political philosophy. Like Plato, Xenophon was a student of Socrates, and wrote dialogues about him. Unlike Plato, Xenophon also wrote non-Socratic works, including (among others) the *Hellenica* (a “history” that picks up the Peloponnesian War roughly where Thucydides’ narrative leaves off), *The Education of Cyrus* (a work about Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian empire), and *The Anabasis of Cyrus*, which we will be reading in this course.

Xenophon thus comes to sight as a peculiar Socratic, one who appears to have understood the philosophic life exemplified by Socrates, and also to have had an interest in active political life. In fact, as we learn from the *Anabasis*, Xenophon himself became the leader of 10,000 Greek soldiers after their unsuccessful attempt to unseat Xerxes from the Persian throne and put Cyrus the younger in his place. He even seriously contemplated founding a Greek city in Asia Minor, rather than returning to Greece with his army. Xenophon’s gripping account of his ascent to rule and his rule over the 10,000 has had a profound influence on political leaders and thinkers from Alexander the Great to Cicero to Machiavelli to Montaigne, Rousseau, Shaftesbury, and Franklin.

We therefore approach the *Anabasis* to learn from Xenophon both the fundamental principles of outstanding political leadership, and to understand better the relation between the philosophic life, to which Xenophon eventually retired, hence original, Socratic wisdom, to a full and exemplary political life.

**I. Required Text**, available at the Skidmore Shop:

Xenophon, *The Anabasis of Cyrus*, translated and annotated by Wayne Ambler  
(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008)

**II. Course Requirements:**

Attendance requirements: Miss no classes. Absences must be excused before hand, and requests for absences must be accompanied by a doctor’s note or a relative’s obituary.

Three short essays (5 typed pages), due February 15, March 22, April 28.

Final comprehensive (essay) exam, as scheduled. (Study questions for this exam will be distributed on the final day of class).

The term grade will be computed as follows: first essay 15%, second essay 20%, third essay 20%; class attendance and participation 10%; final exam 35%.

**III. Class Schedule:**

Tuesday, January 25	Introduction to the course
Thursday, January 27	Book I, Chapters 1 & 2
Tuesday, February 1	Book I, Chapters 3-5
Thursday, February 3	Book I, Chapters 6-8
Tuesday, February 8	Book I, Chapters 9 & 10; Book II, Chapter 1
Thursday, February 10	Book II, Chapters 2-4
Tuesday, February 15	Book II, Chapters 5 & 6; <b>First paper Due.</b>
Thursday, February 17	Book III, Chapter 1
Tuesday, February 22	Book III, Chapters 2 & 3
Thursday, February 24	Book III, Chapters 4 & 5
Tuesday, March 1	Book IV, Chapters 1 & 2
Thursday, March 3	Book IV, Chapters 3 & 4
Tuesday, March 8	Book IV, Chapters 5 & 6
Thursday, March 10	Book IV, Chapters 7 & 8
Tuesday, March 15	Spring Break
Thursday, March 17	Spring Break
Tuesday, March 22	Book V, Chapters 1-3; <b>Second Paper Due.</b>
Thursday, March 24	Book V, Chapters 4 & 5
Tuesday, March 29	Book V, Chapters 6 & 7
Thursday, March 31	No class.
Tuesday, April 5	Book V, Chapter 8; Book VI, Chapter 1
Thursday, April 7	Book VI, Chapters 2-4
Tuesday, April 12	Book VI, Chapters 5 & 6

Thursday, April 14		Book VII, Chapter 1
Tuesday, April 19		Book VII, Chapter 2
Thursday, April 21		Book VII, Chapters 3 & 4
Tuesday, April 26		Chapters 5 & 6
Thursday, April 28		Chapter 7; <b>Third paper due.</b>
Tuesday, May 3		Chapter 8
Wednesday, May	11	<b>Final Exam, 9-12</b>