

Leslie Murray

Experiencing Greece through Ancient Legacies Program - August 2014



This summer's [Ancient Legacies](#) program took a group of students on a journey to the shores of Greece to study multiple areas and aspects of the Ancient Greek empire which also includes the west coast of Turkey. This program met and exceeded all my expectations.

The fun began in the Greek city of Athens where we visited the ancient ruins of the Acropolis. The site and the scenery were awe-inspiring and the learning experience was beyond anything I had ever thought possible. We also had a taste of the Greek culture and cuisine when we had the opportunity for shopping and dining during our free time. From Athens, we went to the amazingly beautiful city of Delphi and visited the Delphic Oracle at the Ancient Temple of Apollo. The simple joy of walking these ancient paths had already made the entire trip worthwhile, but we were learning about the ancient myths, architecture and philosophies from an actual philosopher in the places that it all actually occurred. How great is that? It was hard to believe that the trip was really just getting started.

We moved on from there, taking a plane ride to the beautiful island of Samos. On this island, I sampled octopus on the grill for the first time ever and I must say that I loved it. We went to visit the sacred Temple of Hera on our first morning. The hits just kept coming as we ventured to the remote Cave of Pythagoras. The cave was magical and the view from the cliff side was one that I will remember for a lifetime. While I was at the Cave of Pythagoras, I really got a sense of why the ancient people had chosen all of the sites we visited as "sacred." The views were amazing and something about each place gave me the sensation that I had become closer to the divine.

My time on this adventure was worthy of an A+ with honors. [Dr. Robert Hahn](#) was an amazing teacher in every sense of the word. His knowledge and experience helped make this trip the life-altering/affirming experience that it was for me. His planning and preparation were the best that anyone could have hoped for, and all the lessons in all the areas of study were prepared and delivered with perfect clarity.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Southern Illinois University for making the Ancient Legacies program abroad available. This opportunity to explore one amazing corner of the ancient world has been an experience for the ages. It has deepened my knowledge of antiquity and increased my desire to learn more about numerous historical and philosophical topics. I also want to thank SIU, and all those involved, for offering scholarship money to help me bear the financial burden of this adventure. As a non-traditional student with a family, this journey might not have been possible without the assistance I received. I would also like to thank each the professors and staff who have supported me and helped me to become a better student and citizen.

I would like to offer my support in promoting this adventure to future students and community members. This is a trip that anyone who loves to learn and wants to see the world should take. The Greek and Turkish people were incredible. They offered great food, unequalled hospitality and the most amazing experiences for those on the trip. Dr. Hahn has crafted the perfect intellectual adventure.

Leslie Murray is a junior studying Philosophy.