The roots of modern Western Civilization lie on the hundreds of rocky islands that dot the Aegean Sea and on the rugged, mountainous mainland of Hellas (Greece). The earliest civilization that we call “Greek” began on the Island of Crete in the midst of the wine-dark Mediterranean Sea around 2500 BCE. People from Egypt, the Middle East, and to the west settled on this rocky island and began a brilliant “Minoan” civilization that would span about 1,000 years. From the early Greeks we inherited such important things as a belief in democracy, equality under the law, and even trial by jury. The Greeks are also responsible for introducing many literary forms and were pioneers in many fields such as physics, philosophy, logic, history, geometry, the theater, and biology.
Itinerary Overview

Day 1 - Monday, May 14
Flight to Athens

Day 2 - Tuesday, May 15
Arrive Athens – Walking Tour

Day 3 - Wednesday, May 16
Athens City Tour

Day 4 - Thursday, May 17
Athens – Ancient Agora & National Archaeological Museum

Day 5 - Friday, May 18
Athens to Mykonos

Day 6 - Saturday, May 19
Mykonos to Santorini

Day 7 - Sunday, May 20
Villages and Wines of Santorini

Day 8 - Sunday, May 21
Santorini to Heraklion

Day 9 - Monday, May 22
Knossos Palace - Flight to Athens

Day 10 - Tuesday, May 23
Flight from Athens to Charlotte

Athens and the Greek Isles
May 14-23, 2018

Join us in May, 2018, for an exciting 10-day tour of the Greek capital city Athens and three of the most beautiful Greek Isles: Mykonos, Crete, and Santorini. We will have the opportunity to sample traditional Greek food and beverages, enjoy Greek music and folk dancing, and travel across the spectacular Aegean Sea from one island to another on our itinerary. This Gaston College Tour promises to be an educational opportunity of a lifetime, even for those of us who have visited the Greek World in the past.

DAY 1
Monday, May 14
Flight to Athens
• Depart Charlotte on your overnight flight to Athens.

DAY 2
Tuesday, May 15
Arrive Athens – Walking Tour
• Arrival at the Athens airport. Your guide will greet you on arrival and you transfer to your hotel.
• In the afternoon, we will gather and drive to the center for our first orientation walk in the beautiful area of Plaka.
• Starting from Syntagma Square, we will explore the picturesque streets of Plaka with the neoclassical buildings and the numerous little shops and taverns. The way will lead us to the famous Tower of the Winds, and before we know it we will be bargaining for our little souvenirs in the busy flea-market in Monastiraki.
• We will continue our walk along Adrianou street right next to the ancient Greek and Roman market with great views to the Acropolis and the Temple of Hephaestus (the best preserved ancient temple).
• We will conclude at a local restaurant for our welcome dinner in Thisio.
• Return transfer to our hotel for overnight.

DAY 3
Wednesday, May 16
Athens City Tour
• This morning is dedicated to exploring the city of Athens. We begin with a panoramic tour to the most important monuments and landmarks of the city including the Panathinaikon (continued on page 3)
Museum, the largest and most comprehensive museum in Greece, housing findings from all over the country and from various periods of antiquity.

• The remainder of the day is at leisure.

DAY 5
Friday, May 18
Athens to Mykonos

• We have an early breakfast this morning and transfer to the port of Piraeus to catch the local ferry to Mykonos.
• Arrival at the famous island of the international "jetset", welcome assistance, and transfer to our hotel.
• Rest of the day at leisure.
• Make sure to explore the bustling Chora (Mykonos town), with the maze of the narrow cobblestone streets, the numerous little shops, and the white-washed houses.
• Explore Mando square, take your photos at the famous windmills, and enjoy your drinks at the sea-front "Little Venice". The nights in Mykonos are endless and famous throughout the world.

DAY 6
Saturday, May 19
Mykonos to Santorini

• Your morning will be at leisure to explore more of this unique island, and why not try one of its famous sandy beaches.
• Early in the afternoon, we will be transferred to the port of Mykonos, for the local high-speed ferry to Santorini.
• Arrival in Santorini, welcome assistance and transfer to our hotel.
• You may take your first walks to Fira this evening to explore the little streets with the stunning views to the volcano while enjoying a drink in one of the numerous cafes and bars.
• Overnight in Santorini.

DAY 7
Sunday, May 20
Villages and Wines of Santorini

• Today we will have a relaxing morning.
• Early in the afternoon, we will gather to explore the beauties of this unique island.
• We will first head to the southeast side of the island where most of the unique black-sanded beaches are located.
• We will see Perivolos and Kamari and then we will continue toward the inland villages.
• First stop will be at Megalochori, the unique traditional Cycladic village.
• We will walk and explore the village and then we will continue to Pyrgos with its castle, the

(continued on page 4)
cobbled streets, and the white-washed houses.
• Climbing further high we will reach the monastery of Profitis Ilias, at the highest point of the island, with astonishing views.
• Our tour continues to a local winery, where we will have the opportunity to learn all about the Santorinian wines and taste some of them while gazing the fantastic view to the volcano.
• We will then head to the northernmost tip of the island. Here is located the most famous village of the island, the spectacular Oia. Built at the edge of the caldera, with the best views to the volcano, the little islets and the Caldera, offers the most impressive images that will remain in your memories forever.
• We will take a walk to explore this unique village and find the perfect spot to watch the most famous sunset of the Aegean (weather permitting).
• Return drive to our hotel for the evening.

DAY 8
Sunday, May 21
Santorini to Heraklion
• The morning will be at leisure for you to explore more of this unique island.
• In the afternoon, we will be transferred to the port of Santorini, for the high-speed ferry to Crete.
• Arrival at Heraklion port, welcome assistance and transfer to your hotel in Heraklion for the evening.

DAY 9
Monday, May 22
Knossos Palace - Flight to Athens
• The day is dedicated to exploring the Minoan civilizations.
• After our breakfast, we will check-out from our hotel, and travel some 4000 years in the past, as we arrive at the Palace of Knossos. We will learn all about the mythical – half man, half bull – Minotaurs, labyrinth where he was hidden, and how he was slain by Theseus.
• We will visit the Palace, see the throne room, the royal apartments and the central courtyard, and learn about the early Minoan civilization at the famous site unearthed by Sir Arthur Evans.
• Later, we will drive back to Heraklion for our guided visit to the renovated Archaeological Museum with unique findings from the area.
• We will then continue on foot to explore the town with the Freedom Square, the pedestrianized streets, the Morozini Fountain (with its lions), the Basilica of St. Mark, the Venetian Loggia and the Church of St. Titus.
• You will also have some free time to explore the local market with various little shops offering unique local products.
• Later in the afternoon, we gather again and transfer to the airport for a short flight to Athens.
• Arrival and transfer to our hotel for overnight.
• After our return to Athens, we will celebrate the end of our exciting tour with a gala Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant in the Plaka, with a wonderful view of the Athenian Acropolis in the background.

DAY 10
Tuesday, May 23
Flight from Athens to Charlotte
• Our magnificent journey to Greece comes to its end today with a transfer to the airport at the indicated time, for our return flight back home arriving back in Charlotte later this evening.
Valid passport (Visas are not currently required for US citizens).

Any fees that might be imposed by the airlines at the airport for checked baggage (one checked bag up to 50 lbs. is allowed).

Porterage at hotels.

Lunches and dinners, drinks with meals.

Single room supplements (if requested).

Tips for restaurants, driver and tour manager. Personal expenditures such as telephone calls, snacks, drinks with meals, laundry, etc.

Cost of Gaston College registration on April 19, 2018.

What IS Included in the Tour Package

- Round trip flights from Charlotte, NC to Athens on a regularly scheduled airline.
- All airport taxes and fuel surcharges (which are subject to change until time of ticketing).
- Internal airfare from Heraklion to Athens including taxes and fuel surcharges.
- Accommodations in four- and five-star hotels (double-occupancy).
- All breakfasts at your hotel.
- Welcome dinner on our arrival day in Athens.
- Gala dinner on final day in Athens at the Strofi Restaurant.
- Professional English-speaking tour manager/escort, plus Gaston College Tour Director.
- Transportation by private coach.
- Ferry tickets from Piraeus-Mykonos, high speed ferry Mykonos-Santorini-Heraklion in economy class.
- All admission fees and excursions noted in itinerary.
- 100% Financial Protection through our Travel Trust Association License.

What is NOT included in the Tour Package

- Round trip flights from Charlotte, NC to Athens on a regularly scheduled airline.
- Any fees that might be imposed by the airlines at the airport for checked baggage (one checked bag up to 50 lbs. is allowed).
- Porterage at hotels.
- Lunches and dinners, drinks with meals.
- Single room supplements (if requested).
- Tips for restaurants, driver and tour manager. Personal expenditures such as telephone calls, snacks, drinks with meals, laundry, etc.
- Cost of Gaston College registration on April 19, 2018.

All-Inclusive Tour Price

Land and air package: $3,555 per person, double-occupancy hotel with transportation and fees (based on 21 paying tour members).
Reservation Form

Athens & the Greek Isles
May 14-23, 2018

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, DETACH AND SEND TO GASTON COLLEGE STUDY TOURS AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

Send a $500 (per person) deposit by check or credit card (credit card payments can be made at 704.922.6435). Deposits must be received on or before January 30, 2018 to Bob Blanton at the address below.

Full name (as it appears on your passport):
____________________________________________________

Current address: ______________________________________
____________________________________________________

Telephone number: ________________________________

Email: _____________________________________________

Valid passport number (for airlines): __________________

Expiration date: ____________________________________

Note: Many foreign countries now require that your passport be valid at least 6 months after you end your visit. Make sure yours will meet this requirement.

I wish to room with: __________________________________
____________________________________________________

I require a private room at additional cost: ________________
____________________________________________________

Special dietary/health needs (for hotels/airlines): ____________

☐ I am covered by my own health/hospitalization insurance policy while overseas. You must provide proof of coverage.

☐ I plan to purchase additional health/hospitalization insurance (on my own). Trip Mate is our preferred company.

Bob Blanton, Study Tours Director
Box 76, Gaston College
201 Highway 321 South
Dallas, NC 28034-1499