CL5305 Greek Law and Lawcourts

Our main evidence for the Athenian democracy in the fourth century are the speeches composed for delivery in the Athenian popular courts. At the same time, the speeches also offer a unique insight into Athenian social relations and social values through the stories told by individual litigants to their audiences consisting of large number of ordinary citizens who were serving as judges. This course offers an opportunity to study the ways in which the lives of the inhabitants of late fifth and fourth century Athens – citizens, resident aliens, and slaves – were regulated by the city's laws, and equally important how this normative framework could manipulated and sometimes even subverted by members of the community. The course will also offer an introduction to classical Athenian rhetoric, and the seminars will focus on the rhetorical strategies adopted by Athenian litigants in a wide variety of contexts. A broad range of Athenian lawcourt speeches in translation will be complemented by the study of texts (also in translation) by Plato, Xenophon and Aristophanes.

Tuesday 10-11 (lecture) and 11-12 (seminar)

Professor Lene Rubinstein (RHUL)