Democracy: Power to the People

Athens and America

Saturday, April 20, 2013

We offer this workshop to teachers interested in democracy, ancient and modern. We will begin with Athenian democracy, how it was put together structurally, what it thought of itself, and then what ancient contemporary states thought of it. Athens was the first to develop a democracy as we understand it, and, when “power goes to the people,” what obligations fall upon “the people” and individual citizens? We will examine this question, a question raised (and answered?) from Plato to Locke and Jefferson and still relevant today.

We want participants to contribute to the discussions with their own knowledge of American democracy, and we also want them to have a chance to raise questions that they may long have had: what was the role of women in the Athenian political and social system? Did the Athenians have gun control? Did Athenians have the right of free speech and free assembly. What were their military obligations? Why did they, in a very democratic process, execute Socrates? We offer an afternoon panel to respond to these kinds of questions and any others you may have and to initiate discussion of them. We don’t promise definitive answers, but we are always ready to talk about these things.

9:30  Registration

10:00  Nuts and Bolts of Athenian Democracy: Illustrated

    Jon Mikalson, Professor of Classics, UVa

11:00  Athenians and their Democracy, as the Spartans saw them (Lendon)

    Ted Lendon, Professor of History, UVa

12:00 – 1:00  Lunch

1:00 – 2:00  “Consenting to Obey in Ancient and Modern Democracies”

    George Klosko, Professor of Politics

2:00- 3:30  How did the Greeks do it?

    Panel, attempting to respond to any and all questions about Greek political life, social life, economy, military operations, and other such things