

PRESS RELEASE: UA NEWS

UA, Aristotle University Collaborate to Celebrate Aristotle's 2,400th Birthday

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Dr. Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers teaching students at the theater of Epidaurus in Greece.

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – Everything has a foundation.

And much of the foundation that modern science and the philosophy of logic is built upon is the work of Greek philosopher Aristotle, who turns 2,400 years old this month.

To pay tribute to his contributions, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, has declared 2016 as Aristotle Anniversary Year.

The University of Alabama, in collaboration with Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece, is participating in that celebration by throwing Aristotle a weeklong birthday bash with events spanning March 21-25.

Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers, director of the UA in Greece Summer Abroad Program and a UA associate professor in modern languages and classics, said most

people don't know the full extent of Aristotle's influence on nearly every academic discipline.



Dr. Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers (in red shirt) and a cohort of UA and Aristotle University professors in front of Thessaloniki's trademark Medieval building, the White Tower in Greece.

"He has made contributions to arts, sciences and all fields of knowledge through his writings and work," said Tsakiropoulou-Summers, a native of Greece and graduate of Aristotle University. "In every discipline in the university, he has set some type of foundation or principle.

"For example, in math he has set the principle of systematic logic to approach any problem using axioms and hypotheses. For astronomy, he came up with the theory of how does time work, which was a new concept in astronomy at the time. In physics, he started the theories of motion and velocity.

"His physics was the university textbook in Europe until Isaac Newton replaced it. So, he made great contributions. He's considered the father of marine biology. He started a system of taxonomy based on fish anatomy and identified 495 marine species such as the octopus. He also recognized that dolphins are mammals, not fish."

Tsakiropoulou-Summers said UA and Aristotle University's "Aristotle Week" celebration would promote knowledge and raise awareness of Aristotle's contributions through a number of events:

- Quotes from Aristotle will be featured on electronic signs around campus during the week.

- Students will participate in an essay competition on Aristotle’s contributions to whatever field of knowledge in which they’re majoring. Portions of their essays will be part of an exhibit on Aristotle that will include maps, photos and books written on him. The exhibit will be on display outside Gorgas Library, room 205, throughout the week.
- Richard Richards, chair of philosophy, will give a lecture called “Aristotle’s Evolutionary Spirit” at 3:30 p.m. March 23 in Smith Hall, room 205.
- On March 24-25, the “Women Democracy and Ideology of Exclusion: From Antiquity to the 20th Century” international women’s conference will be held at Gorgas Library, room 205. The conference will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 24 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 25. The closing reception for the conference will be held at the Cultural Arts Center in downtown Tuscaloosa at 5:30 p.m. March 25. It will be followed by a staged reading of the comedy by Aristophanes called “Women at the Assembly,” in which Athenian women are dressed like men to infiltrate the government and change state laws to their favor. Dr. Steve Burch, UA professor of theater and dance, will direct the comedy.

For more information about the conference and to register, go to <http://womenanddemocracy.ua.edu/>

All “Aristotle Week” events are free and open to the public.

The department of modern languages and classics is part of UA’s College of Arts and Sciences, the University’s largest division and the largest liberal arts college in the state. Students from the College have won numerous national awards including Rhodes Scholarships, Goldwater Scholarships and memberships on the USA Today Academic All American Team.

The University of Alabama, a student-centered research university, is experiencing significant growth in both enrollment and academic quality. This growth, which is positively impacting the campus and the state's economy, is in keeping with UA's vision to be the university of choice for the best and brightest students. UA, the state's flagship university, is an academic community united in its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Alabamians.

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