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## **Catching the Crook in Classical Athens opens popular PUBLIC Professor 2015/2016 lecture series**

Imagine defending yourself of a major crime where your fate is determined through a simple majority vote – by 1,500 or more local citizens. Such was the way of Athenian society, the world’s first democracy, and a major focus of Dr. Craig Cooper’s research portfolio.

Cooper will present *Catching the Crook in Classic Athens* as the opening session for the now annual and extremely popular PUBLIC Professor lecture series, Thursday, Sept. 24 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Lethbridge City Hall.



“Athenians espoused this idea of rule of law, that every citizen was equal before the law regardless of their social status,” says Cooper, the dean of the University of Lethbridge’s Faculty of Arts & Science. “There is a debate among scholars about whether Athenians, though they ideologically and rhetorically espoused the rule of law, actually upheld the notion or put it into practice.”

The PUBLIC Professor initiative was introduced last year as a thought-provoking series of pub-style talks that bring a range of experts and researchers from across the arts and sciences to the community for a spirited conversation.

“We are a publicly funded institution, so I think we have a responsibility to communicate with the public about what we do,” says Cooper of the PUBLIC Professor series. “I think what we do is very important across the disciplines, whether it’s from the sciences or the humanities, and I think it’s important to share this with the general public.”

So popular were the talks last year, the size of the crowds necessitated a change in venue from the U of L's Dr. Foster James Penny Building to City Hall.

Cooper, an expert in ancient Greece, ancient Greek biography and historiography, turned to study Athenian law when he was asked to fill in one semester to teach a course on Athenian Law and Society at the University of Winnipeg. It quickly became his favourite course to teach and a passionate area of research.

He says the workings of ancient Greek courts and the lessons learned from studying them still have relevance today.

“Looking at any society and its aspects are relevant because it helps us reflect on our own. Here was the first democracy and this is how it ran. They would not in any way consider what we do as democratic,” says Cooper. “What concerned humans 2,000 years ago and what may have led to litigation, in some ways, were the same concerns we have now, so there is that continuity of the human experience. For me, it’s also an intrinsically interesting topic.”

In total, seven talks make up the 2015/2016 PUBLIC Professor series schedule. All the talks are free and open to the public, with free appetizers and bar service available. The full lineup is as follows:

**September 24, 2015** – Dr. Craig Cooper (Arts & Science) – Catching the Crook in Classical Athens

**October 22, 2015** – Dr. Olga Kovalchuk (Biological Sciences) – Epigenetics of Health and Disease

**November 19, 2015** – Dr. Craig Coburn (Remote Sensing) – Understanding the Complexities of Imaging the Earth: The Challenge of Image Calibration

**November 26, 2015** – Dr. Jennifer Copeland (Kinesiology) – Physical Activity Versus sedentary Time and How They Interact to Affect Health

**January 21, 2016** – Dr. Harold Jansen (Political Science) – The Impact of Digital Technology on Democratic Citizenship in Canada

**February 25, 2016** – Dr. Shawn Bubel (Archaeology) – Prehistoric Bison Hunters in Southern Alberta: Excavations at the Fincastle Site

**March 17, 2016** – Dr. Reg Bibby (Sociology) – Beyond the Gods & Back: The Return of Religion in Canada

\*All presentations are from 7 to 9 p.m. at Lethbridge City Hall. Seating is limited – no RSVP required.

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