

JOSIAH OBER – Bio

Josiah Ober (born in 1953) is an American historian of ancient Greece and classical political theorist. He is currently Constantine Mitsotakis Professor in the Departments of Classics and Political Science of Stanford University. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

After graduating in history at the University of Minnesota, in 1980 he completed his PhD at the University of Michigan.

In 1990 he joined Princeton University where he held several teaching and leadership positions, among which Chairman of the Department of Classics.

In 2006 he moved to Stanford University where he was Chairman of the Department of Political Science from 2010 to 2013 and is currently Director of the Stanford Civics Initiative.

In 2025 he won the Balzan Prize for Classics: Athenian Democracy Revisited

Among his main publications:

Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People. 1989. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule. 1998. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens. 2008. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

The Rise and Fall of Classical Greece. 2015. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Demopolis. Democracy before Liberalism in Theory and Practice (J.R. Seeley Lectures). 2017. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

The Greek and the Rational. The Discovery of Practical Reason. 2022. University of California Press: Oakland, CA.