

CLASSICS

Overview and Contact Information

The discipline of classics comprises the study of the language, literature, history, culture, and society of the Greeks and Romans and of the ancient Mediterranean world from about the eighth century BCE to the fifth century of our own era (c. 476 CE). Literary genres (such as epic poetry, drama, and historiography), political institutions and ideals (such as democracy and free speech), as well as principles of philosophy and science are all part of the rich legacy that the ancient Greeks and Romans bequeathed to western Europe. Many of their ideas and institutions were consciously revived in the Renaissance and Enlightenment and remain with us today.

The department offers courses in ancient Greek and Latin at all levels (for Sanskrit, see Asian Studies), as well as a wide array of courses (in English) approaching the culture and history of Greek and Roman antiquity from a variety of perspectives. Majors have the opportunity to spend part or all of their junior years abroad (e.g., in Rome, Athens, or Great Britain).

The department offers four majors. The classics major is a 40-credit major combining the study of both ancient Greek and Latin with a variety of courses in ancient history, art, philosophy, politics, or religion. Students may also major in Greek or in Latin or in ancient studies.

Study Abroad

The department encourages study abroad. In recent years a number of students in the department have spent part of their junior years at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (ICCS) in Rome. Some have pursued their studies at Oxford, Saint Andrews, and other institutions in Great Britain. Arcadia College and College Year in Athens both offer programs in Greece. Students who anticipate taking an advanced degree in archaeology, ancient art history, ancient history, or classics can also apply to summer sessions of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

See Also

- Ancient Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/ancient-studies>)
- Greek (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/greek>)
- Latin (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/latin>)

Contact Information

Ombretta Frau, Chair

Denise Falk, Academic Department Coordinator

112 Ciruti Center

413-538-2581

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/classics>

Faculty

This area of study is administered by the Department of Classics and Italian. Classics faculty include:

Paula Debnar, Professor of Classics

Geoffrey Sumi, Professor of Classics

Bruce Arnold, Associate Professor of Classics, Teaching Spring Only

Mark Landon, Visiting Lecturer in Classics

Requirements for the Major

A minimum of 40 credits:

At least 8 credits in Greek at the 200 level or above	8
At least 8 credits in Latin at the 200 level or above	8
12 credits at the 300 level in Greek or Latin	12
At least 8 additional credits at the 300 level in approved coursework ¹	8
At least 4 additional credits at the 200 level or above in approved coursework ¹	4
Total Credits	40

¹ After consulting with her advisor, a major may choose from a variety of related courses in art history, Asian studies, classics (in English), history, politics, or religion at the 200 level or above. Courses at the 100 level normally do not count toward the major; however, in the case of second (or third) languages, 8 credits of Greek, Latin, or Sanskrit at the 100 level may count toward the major.

Additional Specifications

- Students anticipating graduate work in classics should begin the study of both Greek and Latin as soon as possible.
- Students who declare a classics major automatically fulfill the College's "outside the major" requirement.

Requirements for the Minor

A minimum of 16 credits:

4 credits from Greek or Latin at the 100 or 200 level	4
8 credits from Greek or Latin at the 200 or 300 level	8
4 credits from Greek or Latin at the 300 level	4
Total Credits	16

Additional Specifications

- The minor must include courses in both Greek and Latin.

Teacher Licensure

Students interested in pursuing licensure in the fields of Latin and classics can combine their course work in Latin and classics with a minor in education. In some instances course work in the major coincides with course work required for licensure; in other cases, it does not. For specific course requirements for licensure within the majors of Latin and classics, please consult your advisor or the chair of the classics department. Further information about the minor in education (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/psychology-education/#minortext>) and the Teacher Licensure program (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/psychology-education/#teacherlicensuretextcontainer>) is available in other sections of the catalog, or consult Ms. Lawrence in the psychology and education department.

Licensure also requires a formal application as well as passing scores on the Massachusetts Test of Educator Licensure (MTEL) in both the literacy component and the subject matter component. Copies of the test objectives for the MTEL are available in the classics department and in the Department of Psychology and Education.

Additional information about the Licensure Program, including application materials, can be found on the Teacher Licensure Program website (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/teach>).

Course Offerings

CLASS-205 Cleopatra: "The Not Humble Woman"

Spring. Credits: 4

In this course Cleopatra will be considered both as a political figure of importance in her own right and also as an enemy queen, representing a presumptuous challenge to the political hegemony and cultural values of the Romans. She may serve, therefore, as a lens through which one may view social and political tensions within Roman society over the nature of authority and empire. Readings include Vergil, Horace, Propertius, Lucan, Caesar, Sallust, Plutarch and the plays of Shakespeare and Shaw, where she is ambivalently portrayed as a woman who desires power or, contrariwise, as a romantic idealist who scorns temporal powers in fulfillment of private desires.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

B. Arnold

Notes: Taught in English.

CLASS-211 Gods and Mortals: Myth in Ancient Art and Literature

Spring. Credits: 4

We will accompany Odysseus on his return from Troy, retrieve the Golden Fleece with Jason, and race with Ovid through his witty—and often troubling—retelling of Greek myths from a Roman perspective. This course examines how Greek and Roman authors and artists from very different periods used myth to explore questions about life, art, and politics. Works may include: Homer, *Odyssey*; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*; Greek tragedy, and ancient images representing myths.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

P. Debnar

Advisory: Course open to first years and sophomores. Juniors and seniors should contact the professor for permission.

Notes: Taught in English. Optional screenings of films related to ancient myth.

CLASS-212 Greek Tragedy, American Drama, and Film

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This course examines the critical influence of the three most important Athenian dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, on the works of modern dramatists and filmmakers, including Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Roman Polanski, Woody Allen, Ridley Scott, Jules Dassin, Theodoros Angelopolous, and others. Attention is given to the different concepts of tragedy underlying the genre, such as the tragedy of self-knowledge and illusion, the tragedy of desire, the tragedy of sin and redemption, and tragedy as protest against social injustice.

Crosslisted as: THEAT-234GT

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

B. Arnold

Notes: 2 meetings (75 minutes) plus 1 screening

CLASS-215 Classical Political Thought

Fall. Credits: 4

Through the works of such thinkers as Aeschylus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Seneca, and Pizan, this course explores the broad themes of ancient and medieval political thought. We will pay particular attention to the ways these writers characterized the relationship between the individual and community; the roles knowledge, reason, emotion, and rhetoric play in political life; the link between gender and citizenship; and the various forms political community can take.

Crosslisted as: POLIT-211

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences

E. Markovits

Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

CLASS-225 Athenian Democracy and Its Foes

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Democracy first took root in Athens in the late sixth century BCE and flourished, with only brief interruptions, until the city came under the power of Macedon in the latter part of the fourth century BCE. This course will trace the development of Athenian democracy and examine such topics as citizenship; the role of women, the family, and non-citizens in Athens; the legal system; education; and public entertainment. It will also compare democratic Athens with Sparta, its antithesis in the classical period. Sources will include Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and others.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

P. Debnar

CLASS-226 Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Public Entertainment in Ancient Rome

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

"Bread and circuses" (*panem et circenses*) was a catchphrase in the Roman empire that described the political strategy of controlling an unruly populace through free bread and public entertainment. Against a backdrop of Roman social and political institutions, this course focuses on the imperial ideology, aristocratic ethos, and cultural practices that underpinned this catchphrase, as well as questions concerning the careers of entertainers—gladiators, charioteers, and actors—who were at once celebrities and social outcasts; the rules of spectatorship at the games; the use of these games as a form of social control; and the logistics of feeding the city population.

Crosslisted as: HIST-226

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

G. Sumi

CLASS-227 Ancient Greece

Fall. Credits: 4

This course will trace the emergence and expansion of Greek civilization in the Mediterranean between the Bronze Age and Alexander the Great. Among themes to be explored are political structures, trade, slavery, gender relations, and religion, as well as the contributions of ancient Greeks to literary genres (drama, rhetoric, historiography, philosophy) and to the visual arts. Throughout we will consider how the history of the ancient Greeks can speak to modern concerns. Sources will include works of ancient Greek literature and history (e.g., Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Plutarch) as well as archaeological and epigraphic evidence.

Crosslisted as: HIST-227

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

P. Debnar

CLASS-228 Ancient Rome

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Ancient Rome and its empire can be viewed both as a measure of human achievement and a cautionary tale of the corrupting effects of unbridled power. This course covers the history of Ancient Rome from its mythologized beginnings (753 BCE) to the rise and spread of Christianity under the Emperor Constantine (312 CE). Topics include the creation and development of Rome's republican form of government as well as its eventual transition to monarchy, the causes and consequences of the acquisition of empire, the role of the army in administering the provinces and defending the frontiers, the image of emperor, the economy, and religion.

Crosslisted as: HIST-228

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

G. Sumi

CLASS-229 The Tyrant and Gladiator: Bad Roman Emperors from Caligula to Commodus

Spring. Credits: 4

Caligula was a god (or so he thought); Nero fiddled while Rome burned; Commodus dressed as a gladiator and fought man and beast in the arena. The history of the Roman empire is replete with scandalous stories about eccentric and even insane emperors whose reigns raise questions about the nature of the emperor's power and his role in administering the empire. In this course a close study of Roman imperial biography and historiography—the source of so many of these stories of bad emperors—will be weighed against documentary and archaeological evidence in order to reveal the dynamic between the emperor, his court, and his subjects that was fundamental to the political culture of imperial Rome.

Crosslisted as: HIST-229

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

G. Sumi

CLASS-260 Knowing God

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This course examines the following key texts from the ancient world that treat significantly the problem of knowing God and the mystery enveloping such knowledge: Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Plato's *Phaedo*, Cicero's *Concerning the Nature of the Gods*, Job, Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, and others. Attention is also given to the different ways of thinking about the divine and human natures in these works, which are broadly reflective of Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian value systems.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

B. Arnold

CLASS-295 Independent Study

Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4

The department

Instructor permission required.

CLASS-329 Politics and Greek Tragedy

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Students in this course will explore ancient Greek tragedy as a way of thinking through such central problems of political life as freedom, identity, responsibility, and justice. The course will place the ancient texts in their particular historical context, while also attending to the material as a springboard for confronting contemporary political questions. The course will also address the broader implications of turning to ancient material and to literature as sources for political theorizing.

Crosslisted as: POLIT-329

Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences

E. Markovits

Prereq: 8 credits in Politics or Classics.

CLASS-349 Socrates Against the Sophists

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

In a number of Plato's dialogues we find the character Socrates debating various sophists— itinerant teachers-for-hire whose views were often diametrically opposed to Socrates' own. This seminar is structured around a close, careful reading of three such dialogues: the *Euthydemus*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias*. These dialogues will offer a general introduction to Socratic philosophy, but we will also focus on a few issues in much greater detail. Chief among those special topics will be questions about the nature and value of moral knowledge, the possibility of moral education, and the efficacy of the Socratic method of inquiry.

Crosslisted as: PHIL-350NT

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

D. Hagen

Prereq: 8 credits in Philosophy or Classics (or in a combination of Philosophy and Classics).

CLASS-395 Independent Study

Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8

The department

Instructor permission required.

Courses in Other Departments Counting toward the Major and Minor in Classics

Art History

ARTH-290PM	Issues in Art History: 'Pompeii'	4
ARTH-310LM	Seminar in Ancient Art: 'Love and Metamorphosis'	4
ARTH-310RL	Seminar in Ancient Art: 'Roman Luxury'	4

Classics

CLASS-205	Cleopatra: "The Not Humble Woman"	4
CLASS-211	Gods and Mortals: Myth in Ancient Art and Literature	4
CLASS-212	Greek Tragedy, American Drama, and Film	4
CLASS-215	Classical Political Thought	4
CLASS-225	Athenian Democracy and Its Foes	4
CLASS-226	Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Public Entertainment in Ancient Rome	4
CLASS-227	Ancient Greece	4
CLASS-228	Ancient Rome	4
CLASS-229	The Tyrant and Gladiator: Bad Roman Emperors from Caligula to Commodus	4
CLASS-260	Knowing God	4
CLASS-295	Independent Study	1-4
CLASS-329	Politics and Greek Tragedy	4
CLASS-349	Socrates Against the Sophists	4
CLASS-395	Independent Study	1-8

Greek

GREEK-101	Elementary Greek: <i>Homer's Iliad</i>	4
GREEK-102	Elementary Greek: <i>Homer's Iliad</i>	4
GREEK-222	Classical Greek Prose and Poetry	4
GREEK-250	Intermediate Greek Tutorial	2-4
GREEK-322	Classical Greek Prose and Poetry	4
GREEK-350	Advanced Tutorial	2-4

History

HIST-226	Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Public Entertainment in Ancient Rome	4
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HIST-227	Ancient Greece	4
HIST-229	The Tyrant and the Gladiator: Bad Roman Emperors from Caligula to Commodus	4
Latin		
LATIN-101	Elementary Latin I	4
LATIN-102	Elementary Latin II	4
LATIN-201	Intermediate Latin I	4
LATIN-207	The Slender Muse	4
LATIN-209	Vergil: <i>Aeneid</i>	4
LATIN-210	Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i>	4
LATIN-225	The Dido/Aeneas Story	4
LATIN-302	Cicero and the Enemies of the Roman Republic	4
LATIN-307	The Slender Muse	4
LATIN-309	Vergil: <i>Aeneid</i>	4
LATIN-310	Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i>	4
LATIN-312	Roma Ludens: Comedy and Satire in Ancient Rome	4
LATIN-319	Power, Politics, and Scandal: Roman Imperial Biography and Historiography	4
LATIN-350	Junior/Senior Tutorial	2-4
Philosophy		
PHIL-201	Philosophical Foundations of Western Thought: 'Ancient History of Philosophy'	4
Theatre Arts		
THEAT-234GT	Topics in Theatre Studies: 'Greek Tragedy and Film'	4