

GREEK

Overview and Contact Information

Ancient Greek is very much alive, not just in the medical and technical terms that pervade modern life, but in the numerous works that still speak to audiences today. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Greek tragedies, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* and, of course, the *New Testament* are just some of the names on Greek's list of "Greatest Hits."

These works, of course, can be read in translation, and the department offers a wide array of courses approaching the culture and history of Greek antiquity through readings entirely in English. But juxtapose any two translations of a work in Ancient Greek and you will quickly realize how much the translator stands between you and the original. For this reason, our language program is designed to allow students to read Homer's *Iliad* in Greek as soon as possible—and to help them learn to use the tools needed for learning Greek on their own. Beyond the first year, we offer a range of courses at all levels.

The Greek major (or minor) complements well the study of philosophy, religion, politics, English, ancient art history, and archaeology, and in some cases Greek is necessary for advanced study in these areas. It is also excellent preparation for law school, while some of our majors have completed their pre-med course work and gone on to medical school. Most important, the study of Greek (Latin, too) provides a strong foundation in the liberal arts, one that challenges students to think deeply about difficult questions and to value the power of language.

In addition to Greek the department offers majors in Latin, classics, and ancient studies. Classics combines the study of both ancient languages with courses in ancient history, art, philosophy, politics, or religion. Ancient studies approaches Greek and Roman civilizations from an interdisciplinary perspective with less emphasis on the ancient languages. There are also minors related to each of these majors.

The Greek major and minor are available only to students who entered the College before fall 2024. Students entering fall 2024 or later should instead refer to Classical Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/classical-studies/>). Students who entered before fall 2024 and who will graduate in May 2025 or later are eligible to choose either Greek or Classical Studies after consulting with the chair of the Classical Studies department.

Study Abroad

The department encourages study abroad. In recent years, students in the department have spent part of their junior year at Oxford, Saint Andrews, and other institutions in Great Britain. College Year in Athens also offers a one-semester program in Greece. Students who anticipate taking an advanced degree in archaeology, ancient art history, ancient history, or classics can 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/>)
- Classical Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/classical-studies/>)
- Classics (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/classics/>)
- Latin (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/latin/>)

Contact Information

Ombretta Frau, Chair
Geoffrey Sumi, Professor of Classics
Denise Falk, Academic Department Coordinator

112 Ciruti Center
413-538-2885
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/greek>
(<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/greek/>)

Learning Goals

Learning goals for students of classics and ancient studies are:

- To analyze critically ancient Greek and Roman texts, in their original languages and in translation, within their literary, philosophical, and historical contexts.
- To understand major monuments and artifacts within their historical and cultural settings; to develop a visual literacy of ancient art and sharpen the ability to see and express what one sees.
- To imagine fully and creatively ancient cultural communities when relying on limited written and material remains.
- To deepen the understanding of current problems by studying the responses of ancient Greeks and Romans to questions about the human condition, including, how to live well, and how to govern.
- To write and speak more confidently and effectively, and to develop well-reasoned arguments using primary evidence and/or secondary material, including print and digital resources.
- To expand intellectual breadth through studying the ancient Greek and Roman worlds through different disciplines and modes of inquiry.

Faculty

This area of study is administered by the Department of Classics and Italian. Advisors for Greek:

Geoffrey Sumi, Professor of Classics

Bruce Arnold, Associate Professor of Classics, Teaching Fall Only

Catherine Baker, Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics

Requirements for the Major

A minimum of 32 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
At least 12 credits at the 300 level in the language of concentration		12
20 additional credits in approved courses at the 200 level or above. These may be courses in Latin or Greek and/or a variety of courses in art history, classics (in English), history, philosophy, politics, or religion. ¹		20
Total Credits		32

¹ These courses should be selected after consulting with the student's advisor.

Additional Specifications

The Greek major and minor are available only to students who entered the College before fall 2024. Students entering fall 2024 or later should instead refer to Classical Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/classical-studies/>).

Requirements for the Minor

A minimum of 16 credits:

Code	Title	Credits
	12 credits above the 100 level in the Greek language	12
	At least 4 credits at the 300 level in the Greek language	4
Total Credits		16

Additional Specifications

The Greek major and minor are available only to students who entered the College before fall 2024. Students entering fall 2024 or later should instead refer to Classical Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/classical-studies/>).

Course Offerings

Classical Studies courses below include courses in Greek language, literature, and history.

CLAS-101 Elementary Latin I

Fall. Credits: 4

Offers study and practice in the grammar and syntax of classical Latin.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold, C. Baker

Restrictions: This course is limited to first-years, sophomores, and juniors

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-102 Elementary Latin II

Spring. Credits: 4

Offers study and practice in the grammar and syntax of classical Latin.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

C. Baker

Prereq: LATIN-101 or CLAS-101.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-111 Elementary Greek: Homer's *Iliad*

Spring. Credits: 4

This course introduces the ancient Greek language and epic meter through the study of the *Iliad*. The grammar of the *Iliad*, originally an oral poem, is relatively uncomplicated, so that by the middle of the first semester students will begin to read the poem in Greek. By the end of the year they will have read a portion of *Iliad*, Book I.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

The department

Notes: Taught in Greek.

CLAS-112 Elementary Greek: Homer's *Iliad*

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

An continuation of Classical Studies 111, introducing the ancient Greek language and epic meter through the study of the *Iliad*. By the end of the year students will have read a portion of *Iliad*, Book I.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: GREEK-101 or CLAS-111.

Notes: Taught in Greek.

CLAS-201 Intermediate Latin I

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Combines a thorough review of Latin grammar and syntax with an introduction to the life and literature of ancient Rome, based on the reading of selected passages of Roman prose and poetry.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: LATIN-102 or CLAS-102.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-202 Intermediate Latin II

CLAS-202CE Intermediate Latin II Topics: 'Cicero and the Enemies of the Roman Republic'

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

The career of the Roman orator and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero spanned the last generation of the Roman Republic, a period of political instability and civil war. As the leading orator of his day, Cicero often used his rhetorical skills to thwart those who he believed were bent on the destruction of the Roman Republic. In this course, we will examine the role of public oratory in the political process in this period with a close reading of Cicero's speeches and letters concerning one of his political enemies (Catiline, Clodius, or Mark Antony).

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: LATIN-201 or CLAS-201.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-202RC Intermediate Latin II Topics: 'Roma Ludens: Comedy and Satire in Ancient Rome'

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Could Romans be funny? Perhaps surprisingly, in a culture where seriousness (*gravitas*) and sternness (*severitas*) were praiseworthy attributes, Romans enjoyed theatrical productions adapted from Greek comedies - from raucous and ribald farces to more subtle comedies of manners. They also believed that satire, poetry that poked fun at the vices and foibles of human nature, was a truly Roman genre. Moreover, both comic and satirical elements appear in a wide range of Roman literature. Authors may include Plautus, Terence, Horace, Ovid, Martial, Juvenal, and others.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: LATIN-201.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-202VA Intermediate Latin II Topics: 'Vergil: *Aeneid*'

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

A study of the *Aeneid* with attention both to its presentation of the classic conflict between Greek and Roman value systems and to its controversial portrayal of empire in the Augustan age.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: LATIN-201 or CLAS-201.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-202WR Intermediate Latin II Topics: 'Myth, Memory, and History: Writing the Past in the Roman Republic'

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Livy and Sallust, the best known historians of the Roman Republic, viewed history writing as a moral enterprise, presenting events from the past as exemplary tales to inform and enlighten the lives of their readers. Their narratives thus are highly rhetorical, combining myth, memory, and history to reconstruct the past. Close reading of selections from Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and/or Sallust's monographs--the *Bellum Catilinae* and *Bellum Jugurthinum*--will lead to discussions about how Romans viewed their past and how they wrote about it.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: LATIN-201 or CLAS-201.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-216 Ancient Rome

Fall. 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

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-219 Cleopatra: The Not Humble Woman

Not Scheduled for This Year. 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.

CLAS-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

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-227 Ancient Greece

Not Scheduled for This Year. 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: CLAS-227

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

G. Sumi

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-231 Greek Tragedy, American Drama, and Film

Spring. Credits: 4

The Greeks, beginning with Homer, saw the world from an essentially tragic perspective. The searing question of why human societies and the human psyche repeatedly break down in tragic ruin and loss, particularly in the conflicts of war and in the betrayal of personal bonds of love and friendship, fascinated them as it still does us. The most consistent themes that emerged from such examination are the tragedy of self-knowledge and illusion, the tragedy of desire, the tragedy of crime and guilt, and tragedy as a protest against social injustice. This course examines the critical influence of the three most important Athenian dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, on the works of Nobel winner Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and important filmmakers, who have tried to recreate the powerful atmosphere and impact of the Greek tragic theater or reworked the tragic themes of classical myth for their own purposes in the modern age.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive

B. Arnold

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-234 Gods and Mortals: Ancient Greek and Roman Myth

Not Scheduled for This Year. 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

The department

Restrictions: This course is limited to first-years and sophomores.

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

CLAS-242 Kingdoms Human and Divine

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

How political authority is wielded is a theme of some of the greatest works in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition: Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, and Augustine's *City of God*. Authority exercised well gives rise to good order and human flourishing, but abusive authority results in the opposite: injustice, conflict, and ultimately destructive violence. In this course we will compare how these philosophers addressed the problem of political authority in the human realm with the theme of the kingdom of God in the Bible, especially as found in *The Gospel of Matthew* and *The Book of Revelation*.

Crosslisted as: RELIG-225KH

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

B. Arnold

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-247 Knowing God

Fall. 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.

Crosslisted as: RELIG-225KG

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

B. Arnold

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-250 Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies**CLAS-250EC Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies: 'Ecology, Crisis, and Renewal in Ancient Near Eastern Mythology'**

Fall. Credits: 4

Environmental crises like global warming, deforestation, and pollution are pushing ecosystems to the brink of collapse and endangering populations around the globe. Our present, though challenging to an unprecedented degree, is not the first time humans have faced crises related to climate, depletion of natural resources, and mass migration. In this course, we'll delve into the culture and mythologies of ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Levantine societies to see how they understood their relationships with their indigenous ecosystems, how they interpreted natural disasters and anthropogenic environmental destruction, and how they imagined starting over again after the end of the world.

Crosslisted as: JWST-225EC, RELIG-225EC

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives

E. Branton

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-250PE Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies: 'Pompeii and the Archaeology of Daily Life in the Roman World'

Fall. Credits: 4

In 79 CE, the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius buried the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, preserving them for future rediscovery. This course examines the unparalleled evidence for Roman daily life that archaeologists have uncovered at these sites since the start of excavation in the 1700s – including everything from public art and architecture to domestic spaces, farms, tombs, shops, graffiti, and even sewers. Through a thorough exploration of these sites, we will consider how individuals lived, worked, and died in the Roman world, and how the study of archaeology and the ancient world has evolved since the earliest excavations.

Crosslisted as: ARTH-290PE

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

C. Baker

CLAS-250PV Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies: 'The Prophetic Voice from the Bible to the Present'

Fall. Credits: 4

Is speech primarily a vehicle for ideas or is it an action that shapes societies and catalyzes power relations? In this course, we'll examine kinds of speech that have always pushed the boundaries. Students explore depictions of prophets and prophetic speech in the Hebrew Bible and in early Jewish literature, and will analyze how this ancient mode of harnessing the power of words has been given new life in modern American society, from the Civil Rights movement to viral video content. In doing so, we'll explore different ways of thinking about speech, protest, and the power of words to change the world.

Crosslisted as: JWST-225PV, RELIG-225PV

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives

E. Branton

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-250RA Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies: 'Roman Art and Archaeology'

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

This course provides an introduction to the art, architecture, and archaeology of the ancient Romans. At its height, the Roman Empire controlled much of the ancient Mediterranean. As Roman power spread, so too did Rome's art and architecture. This course examines the major developments in Roman archaeology from the foundation of Rome through the growing Republic of Pompey and Caesar, the Rome of the emperors, and the rise of Christianity. We will explore how material culture, from tombs and temples in Rome to the urban planning of provincial cities, can help us to better understand the connections between material culture and history, politics, religion, and daily life in the Roman world.

Crosslisted as: ARTH-290RA

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

C. Baker

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-250VA Intermediate Topics in Classical Studies: 'Ancient Greek Vases and Vase Painting'

Spring. Credits: 4

Greek painted vases are some of the most recognizable artifacts from the ancient Mediterranean. In this course, we will situate Greek vases and the scenes painted on them within Greek culture and its artistic production. We explore these vases, produced from the Minoan period through the Hellenistic age, from a variety of perspectives. Themes will include the artisans and workshops who produced these vases, the consumers – from ancient buyers to modern museums – who purchased them, the traders who moved them, the variety of styles and scenes, from mythological to daily life scenes, which decorated them, and the approaches to these vessels employed by current and past scholars

Crosslisted as: ARTH-290VA

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

C. Baker

Notes: Taught in English.

CLAS-295 Independent Study

Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4

The department

Instructor permission required.

CLAS-302 Cicero and the Enemies of the Roman Republic

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

The career of the Roman orator and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero spanned the last generation of the Roman Republic, a period of political instability and civil war. As the leading orator of his day, Cicero often used his rhetorical skills to thwart those who he believed were bent on the destruction of the Roman Republic. In this course, we will examine the role of public oratory in the political process in this period with a close reading of Cicero's speeches and letters concerning one of his political enemies (Catiline, Clodius, or Mark Antony).

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: Two courses in Latin at the 200-level or any 300-level Latin course.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-307 The Slender Muse

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

A study of the highly romantic poetry that launched a revolution in Latin literature, including such works as Catullus's *epyllion* on Peleus and Thetis and Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, with attention to the new understanding of poetry shown in these poems and to their commentary on the social turmoil of the last phase of the Republic.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: Any Latin course above LATIN-201/CLAS-201.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-309 Vergil: Aeneid

Fall. Credits: 4

A study of the Aeneid with attention both to its presentation of the classic conflict between Greek and Roman value systems and to its controversial portrayal of empire in the Augustan age.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

Prereq: Two courses in Latin at the 200-level or any 300-level Latin course.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-312 Roma Ludens: Comedy and Satire in Ancient Rome

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Could Romans be funny? Perhaps surprisingly, in a culture where seriousness (*gravitas*) and sternness (*severitas*) were praiseworthy attributes, Romans enjoyed theatrical productions adapted from Greek comedies - from raucous and ribald farces to more subtle comedies of manners. They also believed that satire, poetry that poked fun at the vices and foibles of human nature, was a truly Roman genre. Moreover, both comic and satirical elements appear in a wide range of Roman literature. Authors may include Plautus, Terence, Horace, Ovid, Martial, Juvenal, and others.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: Two courses in Latin at the 200-level or any 300-level Latin course.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-313 Myth, Memory, and History: Writing the Past in the Roman Republic

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

Livy and Sallust, the best known historians of the Roman Republic, viewed history writing as a moral enterprise, presenting events from the past as exemplary tales to inform and enlighten the lives of their readers. Their narratives thus are highly rhetorical, combining myth, memory, and history to reconstruct the past. Close reading of selections from Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and/or Sallust's monographs--the *Bellum Catilinae* and *Bellum Jugurthinum*--will lead to discussions about how Romans viewed their past and how they wrote about it.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: Two courses in Latin at the 200-level or any 300-level Latin course.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-316 Ovid: Metamorphoses

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4

A study of Ovid's ambitious epic celebrating change and transformative forces, with attention to the challenges it poses to traditional Roman values and to conventional Roman notions of the work appropriate to a poet. In particular, consideration will be given to the way Ovid's poem subversively responds to Vergil's work.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

B. Arnold

Prereq: Two courses in Latin at the 200-level or any 300-level Latin course.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-318 Petronius' Satyricon and the Roman Novel

Fall. Credits: 4

Petronius' *Satyricon* is one of the few surviving novels from the ancient world. Formed from a pastiche of other literary genres, including epic, comedy, and satire, it is a vivid account of the adventures of three men as they travel throughout Italy. Though fiction, and only partially extant, its realistic portrayal of Roman life offers a glimpse into the social mores in the early empire. Petronius himself was a member of Nero's court and the *Satyricon* a product of Nero's promotion of the arts. By giving rise to the picaresque genre the *Satyricon's* influence continued to be felt far beyond its own day.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language

G. Sumi

Prereq: 200-level Latin.

Notes: Taught in Latin.

CLAS-395 Independent Study

Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8

The department

Instructor permission required.