The Classics Department offers courses listed in this catalogue under “Classics,” “Greek,” and “Latin.”

The Department of Classics encourages the study of the civilizations of Greece and Rome. The study of classics and classical civilization is an interdisciplinary endeavor based on courses in languages, literature, history, archaeology, philosophy, political science, religion, and art. As fields that examine the humanistic values of the ancient world and their impact on the premodern and modern ages, classics and classical civilization hold an important place at the heart of a liberal education. Students find the study of the classics beneficial in developing methodological and analytical thinking and most advantageous in pursuing careers in medicine, law, higher education, management, government, publishing, art, teaching, and other fields. We are committed to enhancing our students’ abilities to think analytically, speak persuasively, and write convincingly.

The department offers majors and minors in classics and classical civilization, as well as majors in classics-English, classical civilization-English, and classical civilization-anthropology.

Students majoring in classics may concentrate in Greek literature, Latin literature, or a combination of both.

Students majoring in classical civilization do not have to take the ancient languages. Rather they focus on Greek and Roman literature (in English), drama, myth, ancient history, and courses in archaeology, classical art, religion, philosophy, politics, ancient science, and ancient medicine.

Our joint majors are designed for students whose interests range from the classical world to English literature and anthropology.

All of our majors may spend a semester in Greece or Italy in programs specially designed for Americans. They can also experience field archaeology through summer programs offered by other institutions. Courses taken outside the department may count for the major only when pre-approved by the department advisor.

Requirements for the Major in Classics

A student majoring in classics may concentrate in either Greek or Latin. It is recommended, however, that students planning to pursue the study of classics in graduate school study both Greek and Latin, selecting courses in consultation with their Classics Department advisor.

The major consists of at least 10 courses, at least six courses in language, including three courses numbered 200 or higher in Greek and/or Latin and four additional courses offered by the department or approved by the student’s Classics Department advisor.

Requirements for the Major in Classical Civilization

(No knowledge of Latin or Greek is required.)

The major in Classical Civilization consists of at least 10 courses offered by the department or approved by the student’s Classics Department advisor. At least one course must be among those offered by the department at the 300-level.

Requirements for the Major in Classics-English

In classics: six semester courses of Greek or Latin approved by the student’s Classics Department advisor, three of which are numbered 200 or higher.

In English: 172 or 200, 271, two period or survey courses, and two electives.

Requirements for the Major in Classical Civilization-English

In classics: six semester courses approved by the student’s Classics Department advisor.

In English: 172 or 200, 271, two period or survey courses, and two electives.

Requirements for the Major in Classical Civilization-Anthropology

In classics: six semester courses approved by the student’s Classics Department advisor.

In anthropology: Anthropology 112, 313, 333, and three elective seminars selected in consultation with the anthropology advisor, at least two of which should be at the 300 or 400 level.

The point scale for retention of each of the above majors applies to all courses that may be credited toward the major. No requirement for a major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
Requirements for the Minor in Classics

The minor consists of seven courses (with at least five in Greek, Latin, or a combination of both, including two courses in Ancient Greek or Latin numbered 200 or higher. Additional courses to be chosen in consultation with the student's Classics Department advisor.

Requirements for the Minor in Classical Civilization

The minor consists of seven courses chosen in consultation with the student's Classics Department advisor, one of which must be among those offered by the department at the 300-level. No knowledge of Ancient Greek or Latin is required.

The point scale for retention of each of the above minors applies to all courses that may be credited toward the minor. No requirement for a minor may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Course Offerings

[CL133] Greek Myth and Literature  Greek myth has shaped how we understand ourselves, each other, and the world around us. We will explore the answers that the myths of ancient Greece offer to life's biggest questions by reading texts that form the foundation of western culture.  Four credit hours.  L.

[CL136] Myth and Magic  Popular culture is fixated on magic, from Harry Potter to Game of Thrones, but the roots of this interest can be found in the myths and magical practices of antiquity. Love and hate, hope and fear, ambition and greed - powerful emotions drove Circe, Medea, and Hekate in myth as well as ordinary mortals in the ancient world. The focus will be on the role of magic in the contested realm of antiquity's social and gender hierarchies. We will examine the function and fascinating allure of witchcraft by analyzing extracts from literary texts (e.g. Homer, Theocritus, Pindar, Vergil, Horace, and Lucan), protective amulets, and ancient spells designed to seduce the beloved, ward off rivals, silence legal foes, rig sports events, reveal the future, and summon demons.  Four credit hours.  L, I.

CL138f Heroes of the World  The Greeks, the Romans, the Irish: peoples around the globe have produced their own unique heroes appropriate to the needs and desires of their particular cultures. Nevertheless, these heroes share a variety of traits and experiences. We will examine the similarities and differences of the heroes of Ireland, Greece, Rome, and other cultures and explore why we crave heroes and how that craving has shaped us all.  Four credit hours.  L.  O'NEILL

[CL143] Introduction to Greek and Roman Archaeology  The material remains of the ancient Greeks and Romans—pottery, sculpture, monuments, temples, and other artifacts. Our inquiry will focus on construction of identity, development of religion and myth, organization of social and political structures, and components of everyday life. Our exploration of the remains of Greek and Roman civilizations from the Trojan War through the fall of Rome will take us from temples in the mountains of Greece to Roman shipwrecks in the deepest trenches of the Mediterranean Sea. The broad range of evidence will also highlight the diverse archaeological methodologies used to uncover and interpret these remains.  Three credit hours.  H.

[CL146] Art and Archaeology of Ancient Greece  The material culture of the ancient Greeks—their pottery, sculpture, monuments, temples, and other artifacts—has long gripped the imaginations of the societies that came after. But what can these often fragmentary remains really tell us about how people lived? This course will introduce students to the types of evidence and methods that art historians and archaeologists use to reconstruct the ancient Greek world, tracing its development from the end of the Bronze Age up to Late Antiquity. Our inquiry will focus on the construction of identity, development of religion and myth, organization of social and political structures, economy, and components of everyday life. Additionally, we will also consider the "afterlife" of Greek antiquity and the politics of archaeology and cultural heritage.  Three credit hours.  A.

[CL149] Gladiators and Ghosts: Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Rome  Offers an introduction to death - and life - in ancient Rome. Come explore Roman culture, history, philosophy, art, and literature (from love poetry to ghost stories) as we investigate Roman attitudes toward death and the afterlife. We will consider questions like how death was linked to spectacles, how the dead were memorialized, and how famous death scenes in literature served as rubrics for judging an individual's virtue. Special emphasis will be placed on Roman attitudes as compared to what is found in other ancient and modern societies. Previously offered as Classics 197B (Jan Plan 2020).  Three credit hours.  L.

CL153f Environmental Approaches to Antiquity  The unparalleled speed and intensity of humanity's effects upon the earth make the environment seem like a uniquely modern concern, but the ancient Greeks and Romans asked many of the same questions as us. How long will the earth support life? How will environmental change influence human migration and history? What duties do humans have to other species? In this course we will not only analyze their answers to such questions but consider topics as diverse as environmental determinism and its legacy in modern racism; the unsustainability of ancient imperialism; the fall of the Roman Empire; and the impact of monotheism upon classical conceptions of nature.  Four credit hours.  H.  TAYLOR
Ancient Medicine  We explore the beliefs, practices, and cultural frameworks that shaped ancient Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Babylonian healing practices. By examining texts, objects, and architecture, we investigate how different healers understood concepts like physical and mental 'health' and 'disease'. We also ask questions like: Who could be healers? What tools and techniques did they use? How was medical knowledge developed and tested? What social and ethical systems informed medical decision-making? How did patients’ genders, ethnicities, ages, and abilities affect their medical experiences? And how can reflecting on these questions help us to better understand modern medical systems, practices, and beliefs?  Four credit hours.  H. MILLER

[CL161] Reading Greek Philosophy Listed as Philosophy 161.  One credit hour.

Archaeology  Three credit hours.  INSTRUCTOR

History of Architecture I: From Pyramids to Cathedrals Listed as Art 227.  Four credit hours.  A. AMERI

History of Ancient Greek Philosophy Listed as Philosophy 231.  Four credit hours.  H. GORDON

Roman Legends and Literature Through reading the works of selected Roman authors in translation, an examination of major concepts in mythology: cosmogony, the hero, the interplay of legend and history, etc. Analyze the great stories of classical myth in Roman epic, tragedy, comedy, elegy and lyric. Open to first-year students.  Four credit hours.  L.

[CL242] Italian Ecopoetics: Beauty, Loss, and Desire Listed as Italian 242.  Four credit hours.  L.

Myth and Archaeology  Is myth fiction or does it have some basis in fact? Since the 19th century, there have been numerous claims that archaeological evidence has been discovered to prove the veracity of myths from the Trojan War to episodes in the Bible. An exploration of the often explosive and controversial intersection between myth and archaeology.  Four credit hours.  L. O’NEILL

Festival, Competition, and Performance in Ancient Greece  The Olympics are the most famous of the festivals held by the ancient Greeks to honor their gods with competitions — athletic contests, as well as musical, poetic, and dramatic performances. We will explore these fascinating festivals and the myths that gave them meaning with special attention to the games at Olympia and Delphi, and to the festivals of Athena and Dionysus at Athens. We will ask questions such as: What can these competitions tell us about ancient Greek understandings of the body? How did the festivals contribute to the shaping of identities? What political purposes did they serve? What do they tell us about life in the ancient city? What can they say about the world in which these ancient people lived?  Three credit hours.  H. BARRETT

Classical Political Theory Listed as Government 271.  Four credit hours.

Greek and Roman Science and Technology  How did ancient Greeks and Romans make sense of the world around them? And how did they use technology to exert control over that world? Offers an introduction to scientific and technological developments in the ancient Mediterranean and their afterlives in Islamic, Enlightenment, and modern-day science. We begin by exploring ancient scientific theories and practices relating to astronomy, physics, biology, medicine, geography, and mathematics. Then, with the help of Colby’s Museum of Art and the Mule Works Innovation Lab, we will research and create 3-D printed models of technologies involved in constructing, outfitting, and enjoying a Roman bath complex. Humanities lab course.  Four credit hours.  MILLER

History of Gender and Sexuality in Antiquity Listed as History 324.  Four credit hours.  H, I.

Pompeii  Four credit hours.  TAYLOR

Honors Thesis  Four credit hours.  FACULTY