

ANCIENT STUDIES

The Department of Classics:

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The Study of Ancient Studies

The Interdisciplinary Program in Ancient Studies is administered by Classics

Classics is the study of the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome (c. 900 BCE to 500 CE): their languages, literature, history, philosophy, art, and ways of life. The purpose of this program is to enable the student to explore the cultural context of the ancient Mediterranean as a whole while concentrating on one specific Mediterranean or Mesopotamian culture. Central to the concept of the program is its interdisciplinary approach, in which the student brings the perspectives and methodologies of at least three different disciplines to bear on his or her area of specialization.

Faculty participating in the program are scholars specializing in all aspects of ancient culture and civilization from the Departments of Anthropology; Art History and Archaeology; Classics; History; Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies; Philosophy; and Religion, ensuring that a wide variety of approaches are available.

Student Advising Consulting Advisers

Students should consult with the DUS who will direct them to the appropriate faculty advisor for their [research interest area](#).

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Enrolling in Classes

Students starting in the Major should start with the [language placement exam](#) to determine the appropriate language level for their prior knowledge. Exams are administered in late August by the Department of Classics. Students who cannot take the exam should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies to make arrangements.

For those students who are starting the major without prior knowledge of the ancient languages please start at the beginning of the sequence (1000 level) in one of the ancient languages and speak to the Director of Undergraduate Studies to determine your best course of study.

Preparing for Graduate Study

<https://classics.columbia.edu/preparation-for-graduate-study>

Students who are considering graduate work in Classics should be aware that because our Classics major is not a pre-professional degree, simply fulfilling the normal major requirements will not guarantee admission to

a graduate program. By far the most important element in preparation for graduate school admission is a good command of both the Latin and the Greek languages, so students who wish to go to graduate school should attempt to reach the advanced level in both languages. The two courses at the intermediate level required in the secondary language for the Classics major are not enough for admission to most graduate programs, and the language requirements of both Classical Studies and Ancient Studies are well below the level normally necessary for graduate school admission. The importance of languages holds not only for students wishing to study ancient literature, but also for those interested primarily in other aspects of the ancient world (history, art, philosophy, religion, etc.), because it is not possible to pursue advanced research successfully unless one can make use of the primary sources. Students who have not done the requisite amount of language work and wish to go to graduate school can enroll in a post-baccalaureate program (either at Columbia or at another institution) to do one or two years of intensive language work before starting graduate school.

While knowledge of Latin and Greek is the most important factor in graduate school admission, it is by no means the only one. Students considering graduate work are also advised to write a senior thesis (and not to substitute the thesis for any of the other advanced courses). If possible, it is a good idea to use some of your summers (especially the one between junior and senior year) on a relevant activity such as archaeological fieldwork experience, travel and/or study in Greece or Italy, learning French or German, improving your Latin or Greek, or working as a research assistant for a Classicist. It is also useful to get high scores on the GRE test, and these are best achieved by obtaining and studying information on the types of questions asked on the test and taking practice tests.

The department does offer a combined BA/MA program in Classics allowing them to complete the MA in Classics within one year of receiving their BA.

The array of graduate degrees on offer in the US and abroad can be bewildering—including master's and doctoral programs in Classics and a variety of related subjects—and the character and quality of graduate programs differs widely. It is therefore important to gather information and seek advice.

If you are considering graduate work, you should discuss your plans with the Director of Undergraduate Studies and other faculty members no later than the beginning of the fall semester before you hope to apply (i.e., typically the fall of your senior year).

Coursework Taken Outside of Columbia Advanced Placement

The department grants 3 credits for a score of 5 on the Latin AP exam, which also satisfies the foreign language requirement, upon successful completion (with a grade of B or higher) of a Latin class at the 3000-level or higher.

Barnard College Courses

The Department of Classics at Columbia and the Department of Classics and Ancient Studies at Barnard College work closely together. Students may take courses at Barnard to count towards the Major or Minor. Students at Barnard should speak to their advisor at Barnard regarding Columbia courses as the departments are distinct and the requirements for their respective majors are different.

Transfer Courses

Students transferring to Columbia should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies to discuss equivalencies and what level of courses they wish to take.

Study Abroad Courses

Seeing the ancient sites and monuments is an important part of the study of antiquity, and there are a number of ways to acquire some familiarity with the physical remains of Greek and Roman civilization. [The Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome](#) offers in each term an excellent one-semester program, usually taken in the junior year, and the [College Year in Athens](#) offers a wide variety of courses ranging from language and literature to history, art, and archaeology. During the summer there are more options, including the outstanding [Summer Sessions of the American School for Classical Studies in Athens](#). A listing of fieldwork opportunities is published annually by the Archaeological Institute of America.

Summer Courses

Courses are offered over the summer by the department providing opportunities to study the ancient languages over the summer.

Courses are also offered in Classical Civilization including Worlds of Alexander and Classical Mythology.

Core Curriculum Connections

Faulty and Graduate Instructors from the Department of Classics Teach in the Core, usually Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization.

Some Classics courses can be used to count toward the Global Core requirement as noted in the course information.

Undergraduate Research and Senior Thesis

Undergraduate Research in Courses

Students should consult with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Nikolas Kakkoufa at nk2776@columbia.edu. Students can register for Directed readings with a faculty member

Senior Thesis Coursework and Requirements

Students are required to take the Major Seminar UN3996 as part of the program. The course focuses on the preparation for the Senior Thesis and methods in the field of Classics. Currently students have the option to participate in a trip abroad to sites in the ancient world.

Undergraduate Research Outside of Courses

Students are encouraged to participate in the [Ancient Play](#) put on yearly by the Barnard Columbia Ancient Drama Group.

Columbia runs its own archeological summer program at [Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli](#). Contact [Professor Francesco de Angelis](#).

Students wanting Columbia or Barnard credit for work done abroad should discuss their plans with the director of undergraduate studies at an early date to enable them to incorporate experience abroad most practically into their programs here.

The Department is able to support a limited number of students to study ancient languages over the summer through the Comager Fund and

the Undergraduate Latin fund. Interested students should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Undergraduate students can apply to the SNFPHI Summer Research Internship in Public Humanities and Hellenic Studies. This six week internship invites undergraduate students to explore public humanities, gain hands-on experience with its objectives, methods, and outcomes, and pursue a group project that connects research on Greece with a broad public audience. The internship is structured around: (1) a seminar in Hellenic Studies in which students explore aspects of modern Greek history and culture relevant to their internship research, (2) a workshop in which students are trained in the methods and tools of public-facing research, and (3) a group project in which students work closely with Columbia faculty and public humanities partners in Greece

Department Honors and Prizes

Department Honors

Departmental Honors are awarded for overall outstanding performance in the Classics.

Academic Prizes

The department offers two prize competitions yearly ([Earle](#) and [Romaine](#)) in sight translation of Greek and Latin. These prizes are awarded on the basis of examinations given each spring.

Two prizes are given to graduating Columbia College seniors:

- [The Caverly Prize](#) is awarded annually for outstanding performance by a graduating Columbia College major.
- [The Stadler Prize](#) is awarded annually to a graduating senior of Columbia College who is judged by the faculty to have demonstrated academic excellence through course work and the writing of a senior essay on some aspect of the history or culture of the classical world.

Other Important Information

Students interested in majoring in Ancient Studies should reach out to the Department early in their academic career. Students should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies with any questions.

Students participating in dual degree programs should contact the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Guidance for Undergraduate Students in the Department

Program Planning for all Students

The Classics department also participates in the interdepartmental Ancient Studies major, which is designed for students whose interests encompass the ancient Mediterranean as a whole rather than the Greco-Roman world in particular.

Course Numbering Structure

In both Greek and Latin prerequisites are the course with the number before in the sequence. Students can test out of the prerequisite with a placement test or through the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

In both languages the sequence is as follows:

1101: Elementary I

1102: Elementary II

1121: Intensive Elementary

2101: Intermediate I

2102: Intermediate II

For 2101 Either 1102 or 1121 is required as a prerequisite or a placement test.

Guidance for First-Year Students

The director of undergraduate studies is responsible for overseeing the path of study followed by each student in classics or classical studies. Through close interaction with the director of undergraduate studies, as well as with other faculty members where appropriate, each major is strongly encouraged to debate the strengths and weaknesses of his or her own trajectory of study even as the requirements for the major are being completed.

Students should contact the director of undergraduate studies with any questions about the classics majors and course offerings. The director of undergraduate studies can provide students with a worksheet to help in planning their progress toward major requirements.

Guidance for Transfer Students

Students should contact the director of undergraduate studies with any questions about the classics majors and course offerings. The director of undergraduate studies can provide students with a worksheet to help in planning their progress toward major requirements.

Undergraduate Programs of Study

Major in Ancient Studies

The major in ancient studies requires 12 courses (a minimum of 36 points), two of which must be:

Major Seminar

ANCS UN3996 THE MAJOR SEMINAR

Senior Thesis

ANCS UN3998 DIRCTD RSRCH-ANCIENT STUDIES I

The selected program of study for the major must collectively satisfy the following criteria:

Language Study *

Select two courses of an ancient language at or above the intermediate level, i.e., 1200-level or above.

Fundamental Breadth **

Select two introductory courses on some aspect of the ancient Mediterranean. Some examples include:

HIST UN1010 ANCIENT GREEK HIST, 800-146 BC

AHIS UN3248 Greek Art and Architecture

AHIS UN3250 Roman Art and Architecture

PHIL UN2101 HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY I

CLLT UN3132 Classical Myth

Advanced Study

Select two advanced courses on the ancient Mediterranean, typically at the 3000- or 4000-level.

Cultural Concentration

Select four courses on the culture of the language chosen, including one history course.

* The minimum language requirement must be completed by the end of the first semester of the student's senior year, so that the student is equipped to use sources in the original language in their thesis. Students are strongly urged to begin study of an ancient language as soon as possible and to complete more than the minimum requirements, since the best way to gain an understanding of a culture is through the actual words of its people. Those considering graduate work on the ancient world should also be aware that most graduate schools require more than two years of undergraduate language training for admission.

The language offered in fulfillment of this requirement should generally match the student's area of cultural concentration; special arrangements are available with other universities for students whose cultural concentration require languages not normally taught at Columbia.

Students entering with expertise in their chosen languages are placed in advanced courses as appropriate but are still required to complete at least two semesters of language courses at Columbia; exceptions to this policy may be made in the case of languages not normally taught at Columbia. Language courses at the 1100-level may not be counted toward the major. Language courses, including those at the 1100-level, must be taken for a letter grade.

** Relevant introductory courses are offered by the Department of Classics or from offerings in the Programs or Departments of Ancient Studies, Art History and Archaeology, History, Philosophy, or Religion. Students should confirm a course's relevance with the director of undergraduate studies as soon as possible.

Of Related Interest

Art History and Archaeology

AHIS UN3248 Greek Art and Architecture

Classics

GREK UN1101 ELEMENTARY GREEK I

LATN UN1101 ELEMENTARY LATIN I

GREK UN1102 ELEMENTARY GREEK II

LATN UN1102 ELEMENTARY LATIN II

LATN V1120 Preparation for Intermediate Latin

GREK UN1121 INTENSIVE ELEMENTARY GREEK

LATN UN1121 INTENSIVE ELEMENTARY LATIN

GREK UN2101 INTERMEDIATE GREEK: PROSE

LATN UN2101 INTERMEDIATE LATIN I

LATN UN2102 INTERMEDIATE LATIN II

CLLT UN3132 Classical Myth

CLCV GU4110 Gender and Sexuality In Ancient Greece

History

HIST W4024 The Golden Age of Athens

Philosophy

PHIL UN2101 HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY I

Religion

RELI V3120 Introduction to the New Testament

RELI V3140 Early Christianity

Women's and Gender Studies

WMST GU4300 Queer Theory/ Visual Culture