Classical Civilizations

The Classical Civilizations program is designed for the student who possesses a passionate interest in exploring the history, languages, and cultures of the ancient Greek and Roman world. The program, with its emphasis on a comprehensive introduction to these civilizations, gives undergraduates an opportunity to study the societies of ancient Greece and Rome in depth. These cultures, through their theatre, philosophy, science, and government, helped shape the modern world for good and ill; studying them brings new insight into our own era and lives.

THE PROGRAM

The Department of Classical Civilizations—one of the oldest at our University—provides undergraduates with access to over 2,500 years of human experience drawn from the multicultural world of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East. Classical Civilizations is an interdisciplinary program devoted to the study of the Mediterranean world, with an emphasis on the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome. In addition to the language and culture courses related to a student’s area of interest, students take classes in several different academic disciplines, including philosophy, religious studies, and history.

Students complete a balanced, inclusive curriculum divided between the study of ancient languages (Latin, Greek) and their contemporary societies—literature, history, archaeology, mythology, and art. Through this combined focus, students gain a broader comprehension of and appreciation for the rich cultural and humanistic heritage stemming from the classical world.

Moreover, through addressing relevant issues of gender, identity, sex, ethnicity, and interaction between cultures, the curriculum reaches well beyond the borders of Greece and Rome to embrace other civilizations, including our own. By immersing students in an examination of the languages and ethnically diverse societies of antiquity, the program prepares them for careers within a world that is increasingly diverse, interdependent, and global in outlook, in such fields as politics, ethics, business, law, sciences and education.

THE MAJOR

The program’s courses are by nature interdisciplinary, with application to the sciences, art, theatre, literature, philosophy, religion, politics, and government. In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of Classics, courses from numerous other departments are also accepted as electives towards a major or minor.

Examples of CLAS courses include the following:

- The Ancient City
- Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology
- Ancient Rome in Popular Culture
- Greek Gods & Heroes
- The Iliad & The Odyssey
- Introduction to Classical Literature
- Women in Antiquity
CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Eta Sigma Phi is an honorary collegiate society for students of Latin and/or Greek. The society consists of students who share a love of all things Greek and Roman, whether it be the languages, culture, literature, or the arts. Key events that the society helps put on are the department’s annual Homerathon—an all-day public reading on an ancient epic from start to finish—and Poetry by the Pond, a poetry reading held outside each year to celebrate the last day of classes.

The Gonzaga Classics Club seeks to promote awareness of Latin, Greek and the Classical world on campus. The club hosts events and meetings that seek to foster interest in the Latin and Greek languages and provide learning opportunities for students interested in the ancient world. The club is well known for its annual book sale fundraiser.

OUTCOMES

Students graduating with a degree in Classical Civilizations will develop the following:

- The skills of close reading and analysis through the study of ancient texts and material culture
- Linguistic and cultural fluency with the classical roots of Western Tradition
- Professional-level writing and communication skills
- Historical perspective and insight into their own lives and the world today

Graduates with degrees in Classical Civilizations have gone on to success in a wide variety of careers, including law, medicine, politics, business, software, broadcasting, and much more.

The study of the classics prepares students for careers in teaching, historical research, and museum work, but it can also be used to prepare for studying numerous other disciplines and other professional programs.

Recent graduates of Gonzaga’s Classical Civilizations Department have entered master’s or doctoral programs at the following institutions:

- Gregorian University, Rome
- Mundelein Seminary
- New York University
- Oxford University
- Trinity College, Dublin
- University of Glasgow
- University of Notre Dame
- University of St Andrews

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gonzaga.edu/classical-civilizations