

CLASSICS (CLAS)

CLAS 1011 (c) Shame, Honor, and Responsibility

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

This course examines some of the fundamental problems posed in epic and tragic texts from ancient Greece and Rome: What is our responsibility to ourselves, to our families, and to our society and what is beyond our personal control? How does the society in which we are born shape our identities and our values? How can and do individuals choose to act within the constraints of social norms? We will explore these questions by focusing in particular on three concepts strikingly visible in ancient Greek and Roman epic and tragedy: shame, honor and responsibility. Texts include Homer's epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey; a selection of tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides; and the Roman poet Vergil's epic, the Aeneid.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020.

CLAS 1012 (c) Ancient Mediterranean in Modern Media

Joshua Hartman.

Non-Standard Rotation. Fall 2023. Enrollment limit: 16.

Examines works of pop culture in order to address the exciting questions that emerge when ancient and modern worlds meet. For example, by examining Assassin's Creed Odyssey and its depiction of Greek philosophy, students engage difficult questions that emerge from the works of Plato, one of the most influential Athenian philosophers. Some of these questions, such as Plato's idea that imitation and simulation lead to moral corruption, can only be answered to their fullest extent in conversation with modern media that offer immersive simulation and multi-sensory interaction. Similar approaches emerge from dialogue between ancient and modern art, which students explore through works like Percy Jackson and the Olympians and Homer, as well as centuries of scholarship about the ancient world and its legacy. Students hone their writing skills while simultaneously confronting issues important both to the discipline of classics and to critics of modern films, books, and video games.

CLAS 1017 (c) The Heroic Age: Ancient Supermen and Wonder Women

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

The modern concept of the superhero is an enduring vestige of the ancient concept of the hero, the ancient Greek word used to describe men of exceptional ability. Looks at heroes and heroines in ancient literature and culture, considering a range of sources from ancient Babylon to imperial Rome. Considers the changing definition of hero, the cultural values associated with heroism, the role played by gender and sexuality in the definition of the hero, and analogues to ancient heroes in modern cinema. Examines more nebulous and problematic models for the ancient villain and considers how contrasting definitions of hero and antihero can be used to understand ancient thought concerning human nature.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019.

CLAS 1025 (c) Ancient Empires and Ancient Others: Power, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

What was it like to live in the ancient Mediterranean? For hundreds of years (e.g., 200 BCE–600 CE), the answer to this question would depend, at least in part, on where someone lived and how they identified themselves in relationship to the Roman empire and its centers of power. This course examines not only what it may have been like to live within the Roman empire as a person who identified with other ancient communities, but also attempts to understand what contact with the Romans would have been like for people who lived under other ancient political systems. What were encounters with the Roman world like for those far away from Rome, for example, on trade routes that connected Rome to India? What was life like for those oppressed by Roman authority, who lived as colonized subjects or enslaved people? This course approaches these questions by directly examining ancient evidence, such as texts from within and beyond the Roman world, as well as the work of modern scholars.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2021.

CLAS 1101 (c, IP) Classical Mythology

Every Other Spring. Enrollment limit: 50.

Focuses on the mythology of the Greeks and the use of myth in classical literature. Other topics considered are recurrent patterns and motifs in Greek myths; a cross-cultural study of ancient creation myths; the relation of mythology to religion; women's roles in myth; and the application of modern anthropological, sociological, and psychological theories to classical myth. Concludes with an examination of Ovid's use of classical mythology in the "Metamorphoses."

Previous terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2020.

CLAS 1111 (c, IP) History of Ancient Greece: From Homer to Alexander the Great

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 50.

Surveys the history of Greek-speaking peoples from the Bronze Age (ca. 3000-1100 B.C.E) to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. Traces the political, economic, social, religious, and cultural developments of the Greeks in the broader context of the Mediterranean world. Topics include the institution of the polis (city-state); hoplite warfare; Greek colonization; the origins of Greek science; philosophy and rhetoric; and fifth-century Athenian democracy and imperialism. Necessarily focuses on Athens and Sparta, but attention is also given to the variety of social and political structures found in different Greek communities. Special attention is given to examining and attempting to understand the distinctively Greek outlook in regard to gender, the relationship between human and divine, freedom, and the divisions between Greeks and barbarians (non-Greeks). A variety of sources – literary, epigraphical, archaeological – are presented, and students learn how to use them as historical documents. Note: This course is part of the following field(s) of study: Europe. It fulfills the pre-modern requirement for history majors and minors. (Same as: HIST 1111)

Previous terms offered: Fall 2019.

CLAS 1112 (c, IP) History of Ancient Rome: From Romulus to Justinian
David Wright.

Non-Standard Rotation. Fall 2023. Enrollment limit: 50.

Surveys the history of Rome from its beginnings to the fourth century A.D. Considers the political, economic, religious, social, and cultural developments of the Romans in the context of Rome's growth from a small settlement in central Italy to the dominant power in the Mediterranean world. Special attention is given to such topics as urbanism, imperialism, the influence of Greek culture and law, and multiculturalism. Introduces different types of sources – literary, epigraphical, archaeological, etc. – for use as historical documents. Note: This course is part of the following field(s) of study: Europe. It fulfills the pre-modern requirement for history majors and minors. (Same as: HIST 1112)

Previous terms offered: Fall 2020.

CLAS 1113 (c, IP) The World of Late Antiquity

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 50.

The fall of Rome has captured the imagination of students and historians for centuries, perhaps to a fault. When conversations focus on destruction, they neglect the many times that the Roman state avoided catastrophes or recovered from them. Studying late antiquity, Rome's most turbulent and dynamic era, uncovers the story of such near misses and recoveries, revealing a civilization that survived for millennia through a paradoxical combination of conservatism and radical change. Even before late antiquity, Rome had changed dramatically from its origins as a city state, transforming into an imperial republic and, later, a monarchy. In late antiquity, that empire became Christian, and its monarchs became despots. Its citizens sought protection from saints as much as from soldiers, from bishops as often as from emperors. Yet for all these changes, the inhabitants of this world continued to claim, perhaps louder than ever, that they were still Romans.

Previous terms offered: Spring 2023.

CLAS 1114 (c) Power, Inequality, and Social Conflict in the Ancient Mediterranean

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 50.

The Athenian Democracy and the Roman Republic were formed in a crucible of conflicts over status, wealth, and the distribution of power. Although these different societies took different organizational directions, they faced similar challenges over time. Both also left behind a wealth of literary, legal, and material testimony to these challenges. Primary sources as varied as tragedy and comedy, law-court speeches, insult poetry, painting, sculpture, and philosophical texts provide insights into ancient ideas about freedom, sexuality, property rights, citizenship, individual flourishing, and commitments to a common good. This course takes a comparative approach to social history by exploring how Athenians and Romans tried to solve various kinds of social problems, and how such issues also became opportunities for growth and change. Broad introduction to ancient history, the use of primary sources, and general historical method. First-year students welcome. No prerequisites.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2022.

CLAS 2102 (c) Socrates and the Problem of History

Robert Sobak.

Non-Standard Rotation. Fall 2023. Enrollment limit: 35.

Explores the figure of Socrates as he is represented in various texts and artifacts in order to introduce students to problems of historical method. By closely reading authors such as Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, and Aristotle, students learn how to reconstruct a model of Socrates that is less idealized, but more historically accurate, than the Socrates we encounter in the historical imagination and popular culture. This course introduces students to methodological issues regarding evidence and argument that are directly relevant not only to ancient history and ancient philosophy, but to the epistemological contests currently taking place in our present moment.

CLAS 2202 (c, IP) Augustan Rome

Barbara Weiden Boyd.

Non-Standard Rotation. Spring 2024. Enrollment limit: 35.

Upon his ascent to power after a century of war, Rome's first princeps, Augustus, launched a program of cultural reformation and restoration that was to have a profound and enduring effect upon every aspect of life in the empire, from fashions in entertainment, decoration, and art, to religious and political habits and customs. Using the city of Rome as its primary text, this course investigates how the Augustan "renovation" of Rome is manifested first and foremost in the monuments associated with the ruler: the Mausoleum of Augustus, theater of Marcellus, temple of Apollo on the Palatine, Altar of Augustan Peace, and Forum of Augustus as well as many others. Understanding of the material remains themselves is supplemented by historical and literary texts dating to Augustus's reign, as well as by a consideration of contemporary research and controversies in the field. (Same as: ARCH 2202, URBS 2402)

Previous terms offered: Spring 2020.

CLAS 2214 (c, IP) The Republic of Rome and the Evolution of Executive Power

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 35.

Examines in depth the approaches to leadership within the governmental system that enabled a small, Italian city-state to take eventual control of the Mediterranean world and how this state was affected by its unprecedented military, economic, and territorial growth. Investigates and re-imagines the political maneuverings of the most famous pre-Imperial Romans, such as Scipio Africanus, the Gracchi, and Cicero, and how political institutions such as the Roman Senate and assemblies reacted to and dealt with military, economic, and revolutionary crises. Looks at the relationship of the Roman state to class warfare, the nature of electoral politics, and the power of precedent and tradition. While examining whether the ultimate fall precipitated by Caesar's ambition and vision was inevitable, also reveals what lessons, if any, modern politicians can learn about statesmanship from the transformation of the hyper-competitive atmosphere of the Republic into the monarchical principate of Augustus. All sources, such as Livy's history of Rome, Plutarch's "Lives," letters and speeches of Cicero, and Caesar's "Civil War," are in English, and no prior knowledge of Roman antiquity is required. Note: This course fulfills the pre-modern requirement for history majors and minors. (Same as: HIST 2008)

Previous terms offered: Spring 2022.

CLAS 2220 (c, DPI) Gorgons to Godzilla: Monsters in Greco-Roman Myth and Beyond

David Wright.

Non-Standard Rotation. Spring 2024. Enrollment limit: 35.

This course explores what makes a monster in the ancient world. Also examines what these monsters reflect about the societies they come from. Since monsters are often not static in the meaning and they change throughout time, students also investigate how later groups adopt and repurpose monsters as symbols of both disenfranchisement and empowerment. In this course students study monsters from various time periods and cultures within and outside the Ancient Mediterranean. Students encounter these monsters in literary texts, material culture, video games, TV, and film. Analyze myths and media through theoretical approaches such as critical race theory, gender studies, Queer theory, and postcolonial theory. Students can use this exploration of monsters of the past to reflect on and assess monsters made in contemporary society.

CLAS 2232 (c, VPA) Ancient Greek Theater

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 35.

Examines the development and character of tragedy and comedy in ancient Greece. Topics include the dramatic festivals of Athens, the nature of Greek theaters and theatrical production; the structure and style of tragic and comic plays; tragic and comic heroism; gender, religion and myth in drama; the relationship of tragedy and comedy to the political and social dynamics of ancient Athens. Some attention will be paid to the theory of tragedy and to the legacy of Greek drama. Authors include Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. Includes a performance component.

Previous terms offered: Spring 2020.

CLAS 2238 (c, IP) The Politics of Memory: Commemoration in Ancient Greece and Rome

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 35.

How will we be remembered? How should we be remembered? And how do we decide to honor or sanction events that have occurred or people who have died, whether in the past or in our own lifetimes? This course explores these questions by comparing the commemorative practices of ancient Greece and Rome with those of our own time. Examines public and private memorials to those who have died, including poems, eulogies, mausoleums, statues, and gravestones, along with tributes to those who have triumphed (and sometimes those who have lost), whether on the battlefield or in less deadly contests. Also considers practices such as *damnatio memoriae* (erasure from historical memory) and ancestor worship, literary tropes such as "immortality through song," and the changing interpretation and reuse of commemorative monuments over time. Includes analysis of materials in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, as well as field trips to local cemeteries and memorials. All readings in English.

Previous terms offered: Spring 2021.

CLAS 2241 (c, IP) Transformations: Mythical Metamorphoses from Classical Antiquity to the 21st Century

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 35.

The word "transformations" is a translation of the title of the Latin poet Ovid's most famous work, the *Metamorphoses*, whose theme is mythical transformation. The mythical changes narrated by Ovid have inspired creativity of all sorts in the arts and will serve as the basis for this course. The first half of the semester will be devoted to careful reading and discussion of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The remainder of the semester will turn its focus outward, to consider Ovid's afterlife in the many poems, novels, and plays his work has inspired. We will also consider Ovid's enduring status as "artist in exile." Readings for the course, in addition to selected works of Ovid, may include works by Shakespeare, Ted Hughes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Franz Kafka, Mary Zimmerman, David Malouf, Christoph Ransmayr, and Nina MacLaughlin.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2022.

CLAS 2243 (c, IP) When Silent Women Speak: Classical Heroines in Contemporary Literature

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 35.

The truism that the women of classical antiquity are silent plays out all too literally in the historical record: the women of ancient Greece and Rome have left only scarce and fragmentary remains of texts in their own voices. This erasure has provoked a remarkable response in contemporary literature, as writers have taken up the challenge to restore the missing voices of ancient women. In this course, several recent works of fiction will be read against their ancient models in epic and drama, and the cultural and political forces influencing both ancient and modern texts will be examined. Readings may include Madeline Miller, *Circe*; Margaret Atwood, *Penelopiad*; Pat Barker, *The Silence of the Girls*; Colm Toibin, *House of Names*; Christa Wolf, *Medea*; and Ali Smith, *Girl Meets Boy*; other readings may be included to reflect student interest. All readings are in English, and no prior familiarity with classical antiquity is required. (Same as: GSWS 2243)

Previous terms offered: Spring 2023.

CLAS 2736 (c) Ancient Greek Medicine

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

Seminar. Explores the development of scientific thinking in the ancient Greek world by examining the history of Greek medicine. Topics include the development of Greek rationalist thought; concepts of health and disease; notions of the human body, both male and female; the physician's skills (diagnosis, prognosis, remedy); similarities and differences between religious and scientific views of disease; concepts of evidence, proof, and experiment; and Greek medical thinking in the Roman world. All readings in English. This course emphasizes the skills and approaches to writing in the Classics discipline.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2019.

CLAS 2757 (c) Tacitus: On How to be a Good Citizen under a Bad Emperor

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

Can one honorably serve, and even flourish under, a leader who is widely understood to be dishonest, incompetent, and corrupt? Before the Roman author Tacitus was a historian, he was a senator who advanced himself politically during the rule of Domitian, who was arguably the very worst of the Roman emperors. As a central focus, a careful reading of the works of Tacitus, with accompanying secondary scholarship, seeks to answer the question of how and when to collaborate with a deplorable regime and what such collaboration might cost. All readings in English. (IRBW)

Prerequisites: CLAS 1112 (same as HIST 1112) or CLAS 2202 (same as ARCH 2202 and URBS 2402) or CLAS 2214 (same as HIST 2008) or ARCH 1102 (same as ARTH 2100).

Previous terms offered: Fall 2021.

CLAS 3305 (c) Leisure, Class, and the Liberal Arts in Ancient Greece

Robert Sobak.

Non-Standard Rotation. Spring 2024. Enrollment limit: 16.

Just as the English words school and scholar derive from the Greek word for leisure, so too do many of our own ideas about what constitute a liberal arts education derive from a particular place and moment in time: ancient Greece. Examines not only a wide variety of idealistic prescriptions for educational practice by writers such as Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle, but also the historical context within which such ideals were born. Confronts, among other things, questions of time, socio-economic status, political ideology, and intellectualism – issues that have as much importance today as they did 2,500 years ago.

Prerequisites: CLAS 1050 - 1099 or CLAS 2000 - 2969.

CLAS 3306 (c) Leadership, Morality, and the Ancients: The Works of Plutarch

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 10.

“One cannot read Plutarch without a tingling of the blood.” A prolific author, Plutarch produced dynamic writings on such topics as education, self-improvement, the nature of the soul, the virtues of men and women, music, natural science, vegetarianism, and love. His eclectic philosophical thought culminated in his greatest work, the “Parallel Lives,” a collection of biographies on statesmanship designed to present examples from Greco-Roman history—like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, not to mention preeminent leaders from Sparta and Athens—to serve as mirrors for ethical self-reflection. Considers the context of Plutarch’s philosophy and literary presentation and how they relate to modern leadership, ethical behavior, multi-cultural understanding, and the utility of moral instruction. Readings likely to include works of Plato as well as selections from Plutarch’s “Moralia” and “Parallel Lives.” All readings in English. Research Seminar.

Prerequisites: CLAS 1100 - 1999 or ARCH 1100 - 1999 or GRK 1100 - 1999 or LATN 1100 - 1999 or CLAS 2000 - 2969 or ARCH 2000 - 2969 or GRK 2000 - 2969 or LATN 2000 - 2969.

Previous terms offered: Fall 2022.

CLAS 3309 (c, IP) Ancient Epic: Tradition, Authority, and Intertextuality

Barbara Weiden Boyd.

Non-Standard Rotation. Fall 2023. Enrollment limit: 16.

Begins with reading and close analysis of the three foundational epic poems of classical antiquity, Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey and Virgil’s Aeneid, and then moves on to selections from several of the “successor” epics, including Apollonius’ Argonautica, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Lucan’s Pharsalia, and Statius’ Thebaid. Discussion of the ancient poems complemented by an ongoing examination of central issues in contemporary criticism of classical texts, including the relationship of genre, ideology, and interpretation; the tension between literary tradition and authorial control; and the role of intertextuality in establishing a dialogue between and among these poems and their poets. All readings are in English, and no familiarity with Greek or Latin is required.

Prerequisites: CLAS 1101 - 1102 or CLAS 1111 (same as HIST 1111)- 1112 or CLAS 1000 - 1049 or CLAS 2000 - 2969 or GRK 1101 or LATN 1101.

CLAS 3310 (c, IP) Imagining Rome

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

The mythical fate-driven foundation of Rome and the city’s subsequent self-fashioning as caput mundi (capital of the world) have made the city an idea that transcends history, and that has for millennia drawn historians, poets, artists, and, most recently, filmmakers to attempt to capture Rome’s essence. As a result, the city defined by its ruins is continually created anew; this synergy between the ruins of Rome – together with the mutability of empire that they represent – and the city’s incessant rebirth through the lives of those who visit and inhabit it offers a model for understanding the changing reception of the classical past. This research seminar explores the cycle of ancient Rome’s life and afterlife in the works of writers and filmmakers such as Livy, Virgil, Tacitus, Juvenal, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Keats, Goethe, Gibbon, Hawthorne, Freud, Moravia, Rossellini, Fellini, Bertolucci, and Moretti. All readings in English. (Same as: URBS 3410)

Prerequisites: ARCH 1102 (same as ARTH 2100) or ARCH 2201 or higher or CLAS 1000 or higher or GRK 1000 or higher or LATN 1000 or higher.

Previous terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2019.

CLAS 3314 (c) Ancient Odysseys

Non-Standard Rotation. Enrollment limit: 16.

Wily Odysseus, the man of many ways, is famous as a clever strategist, an outstanding archer, and a first-rate fighter; he is also an expert storyteller, whose fantastic tales are embedded within the compelling narrative of Homer's *Odyssey*. Both the figure of Odysseus and the epic poem that tells his story had an enduring power and influence over centuries of Greek and Roman culture. Begins with a careful reading of the *Odyssey*; then turns to other texts that engage with the poem, whether by explicitly exploring Odysseus' character and motivations, or by using the narrative patterns and themes of the epic to construct their original tales of heroes (and heroines) who experience "odysseys" of their own. Texts likely to include Sophocles's *Philoctetes*, Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Lucian's *True Histories*, Petronius's *Satyrica* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Considers the importance of storytelling in the construction of human identity and the meaning of a human life. Readings in English.

Prerequisites: CLAS 1000 - 1999 or CLAS 2000 - 2969 or ARCH 1000 - 1999 or ARCH 2000 - 2969 or GRK 1000 - 1999 or GRK 2000 - 2969 or LATN 1000 - 1999 or LATN 2000 - 2969.

Previous terms offered: Spring 2022.

CLAS 3325 (c) Deadly Words: Language and Power in the Religions of Antiquity

Todd Berzon.

Non-Standard Rotation. Spring 2024. Enrollment limit: 16.

In the ancient Mediterranean world, speech was fraught with danger and uncertainty. Words had enormous power—not just the power to do things but a tangible power as things. Words attached themselves to people as physical objects. They lived inside them and consumed their attention. They set events in motion: war, conversion, marriage, death, and salvation. This course investigates the precarious and deadly presence of oral language in the religious world of late antiquity (150 CE to 600 CE). Focusing on evidence from Christian, Jewish, and pagan sources—rabbinic literature, piyyutim, curse tablets, amulets, monastic sayings, creeds, etc.—students will come to understand the myriad ways in which words were said to influence and infect religious actors. For late ancient writers, words were not fleeting or ethereal, but rather quite tactile objects that could be felt, held, and experienced. It is the physical encounter with speech that orients this course. (Same as: REL 3325)

Previous terms offered: Spring 2022.