

WHY STUDY GRECO-ROMAN CIVILIZATION?

To understand WESTERN CULTURE:

ΚΑΙ ΔΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΚΑΛΑ ΦΥΣΕΙ ΗΕΝ ΔΑΔΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ, ΗΟΗΩ ΔΕ
ΕΤΕΡΑ, ΤΑ ΔΕ ΔΗ ΔΙΚΑΙΑ ΟΥΔ' ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΟ ΠΑΡΑΠΗ ΦΥΣΕΙ ...

They say that natural beauty is distinct from conventional beauty, and that there is no natural form of justice at all ...
—The Athenian, speaking of poets and philosophers in Plato's Laws

Classics is the ideal course of study for coming to grips with the **central conflicts of Western civilization**—democracy vs. autocracy, war vs. peace, tradition vs. innovation. The penetrating treatments these conflicts received from Greek and Roman writers and artists have exercised immeasurable influence on Western imaginations for two millenia. A major or minor in Classics perfectly complements the study of art history, archaeology, philosophy comparative and modern literatures, English, anthropology, history, and theology.

To understand the HUMAN SPIRIT:

ΟΦΟΗ ΤΙ ΤΟ ΗΗΧΛΗΟΕΗ ΤΕΧΗΔΣ ΥΠΕΡ ΕΛΠΙΔ' ΕΧΩΗ
ΤΟΤΕ ΗΕΗ ΚΑΚΟΗ, ΑΛΛΟΤ' ΕΠ' ΕΟΘΛΟΗ ΕΡΠΕΙ.

Possessed in his resourceful skill of a cleverness beyond belief, [man] cometh now to evil, now to good. —Sophocles

If you want to appreciate the **paradoxes of the human condition**, study Greco-Roman antiquity. The sharpness and sweetness of love, the conflict of love and duty, the friction between individual and society, the promise and danger of the keen mind—all these aspects of human experience and many others received rich treatments in the literary texts of the

Greco-Roman world. The tragedies of Sophocles and Seneca, the philosophy of Plato and Augustine, the oratory of Demosthenes and Cicero, and the poetry of Homer and Vergil are only some of the texts that provide enduring insights into relations of self, society, family, gender, and power.

To understand the sources of CHRISTIAN FAITH:

ILLE VERO LIBER MVTAVIT AFFECTVM MEVM ET AD TE
IPSVM. DOMINE. MVTAVIT PRECES MEAS ET VOTA AC
DESIDERIA MEA FECIT ALIA.

That book changed my disposition and turned my prayers to you, Lord, and altered my hopes and desires.
—Augustine on Cicero's Hortensius

If you want a deeper understanding of Christianity, study **the societies in which Christianity was born and grew**. Christian faith developed out of and in contrast to the cultures of Greco-Roman antiquity. In subsequent centuries the ethical and aesthetic strivings of paganism continually inspired and challenged devout Christians. A major or minor in Classics is thus an excellent preparation for advanced study in theology, religious studies, church history, and medieval studies.

To learn to THINK CAREFULLY:

CERTIS INGENIIS IMMORARI ET INNVTIRI OPORTET.
SI VELIS ALIQUID TRAHERE QVOD IN ANIMO
FIDELITER SEDEAT.

If you wish to derive something that will remain faithfully in your soul, it is necessary to be molded and nourished by true intellects. —Seneca

If your goal in college is to **learn how to think**, study Greco-Roman antiquity. Classical studies is interdisciplinary—taking in literature, art, architecture,

and military, political, and social history—and thus provides students with a model for thinking about how whole societies work. Studying Greco-Roman antiquity provides a fine sense for the workings of literary and historical writing. Written for members of sophisticated intellectual cultures, classical works require students to foster a sense for those cultures in their own minds. That process, rewarding in itself, also gives students keen insight into the place of speech in contemporary cultures, from advertising to political oratory.

WHY LEARN GREEK AND LATIN?

To meet great minds ON THEIR OWN TERMS:

QVINTVS ENNIVS TRIA CORDIA HABERE SESE DICEBAT,
QVOD LOQVI GRAECE ET OSCE ET LATINE SCIRET.

Quintus Ennius used to say he had three hearts, because he could speak Greek, Oscan, and Latin. —Aulus Gellius

Much can be learned from the texts of the Greco-Roman world in translation. More still can be gained from reading them in Latin and Greek. Even short exposure to these languages provides powerful tools for analyzing the original texts. With advanced study students enjoy **unmediated contact with the writers of Greco-Roman antiquity**. For these students the appreciation of a phrase in a letter of St. Paul, of an effect in a passage of Vergil, or of an important nuance in a dialogue of Plato are everyday experiences.

To learn to READ and WRITE with CARE:

CITO SCRIBENDO NON FIT VT BENE SCRIBATVR, BENE SCRIBENDO FIT. VT CITO.

If one writes quickly, one may not write well; but if one can write well, one can write quickly. —Quintilian

Do you want to be able to read and speak precisely and focus on complex problems easily? Study Latin and Greek. Learning these difficult languages teaches students to pay **sustained attention to detail** and **employ words with care, efficacy, and sophistication**. Classical training has thus always been valued as preparation for careers in law and medicine and is equally valuable for any profession where logical thought and clear communication are important. Students of Latin and Greek have the highest GRE's of any undergraduate major.

To understand LANGUAGE:

ΟΥΔΕ ΤΟΥΤΟ Γ' ΕΧΕΙ ΕΙΠΕΗ, ΤΙΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΩΣΗ ΗΗΗ
ΤΑ ΟΙΟΗΑΤΑ ΟΙΣ ΧΡΩΗΕΘΑ

Can't you even tell me who gives us the words we use?
—Socrates in Plato's Cratylus

Learning Greek and Latin involves not only learning the languages but also their grammars, **the foundation of modern linguistic thought**. Beginning language courses introduce phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and stylistics, which in advanced courses become sophisticated tools for the understanding not only of Greek and Latin, but of any languages or literatures ancient or modern. Students of Greek and Latin acquire broad understandings of the **etymology and vocabulary of English**, including its scientific, legal, and theological terminology.





THE BENEFITS OF CLASSICAL STUDY

"The classicist, more than others, is aware of language, its derivations, its antecedents, its limitations, its meanings, its use. Further, it seems to me the classicist understands the elusiveness of truth; and the limitation of language in capturing the truth. It is clear to us in legal education that a student exposed to the Classics has a keener insight into this phenomenon; and, in his studies, therefore, will more perceptively understand the nature of the legal process. Accordingly, we look most favorably on any student with training in the Classics."

*Dr. Spencer H. Boyer, Associate Dean
Howard University School of Law*

"Law schools report that by yardsticks of law review and grades, their top students come from math, the Classics, Law and literature—with political science, economics, 'pre-law,' and 'legal studies' ranking lower" (*Harvard Magazine*, May-June, 1998, p. 50)

"I knew I was continuing on to law school when I began my education at Notre Dame in the Department of Classics. While attaining my Classics degree I studied History, Archaeology, Culture, Linguistics, Philosophy and comparative language issues, all under the guise of studying 'dead' languages. ...My skills at language analysis and the ability to read and decipher complex tests served me very well both in law school and in my career."

*Bill O'Connor (ND '86), partner
Dann, Pecar, Newman, & Kleinman*

"Latin and Greek were used for a long time as the language of scientists, and many of the words and ideas in medicine are in these two languages. The simple capacity to dissect a word and divine its meaning is a blessing when you have over a hundred new words thrown at you each day in medical school. Then, less obvious but more important, Greek and Latin teach you how to analyze and think. There is a lot of information that is processed when translating, and each step has to be explained and justified. In Greek, for example, many words derive their meaning from their relationship to other words. In turn, these words must combine to form a sentence and an idea. Likewise, to determine the health or function of an organ, its relationship to the entire body must be examined, so that the person and the organ can be treated. To do this requires both a reductionistic and a holistic approach - a very hard ability to learn, but much easier if given some prior experience."

Eric Ehrensing (ND '90)

THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS



WHY STUDY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS?

To enjoy an unparalleled EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:

ΔΛΟΙΤΑ Δ' ΕΙΗ ΜΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ ΟΜΙΛΕΙΝ

*May it be mine to be among the good and please them.
—Pindar*

In our language and culture classes students have easy access to their instructors, receiving a degree of **individual attention** impossible in crowded programs. Advanced courses have abundant opportunity for discussion, independent work and collaborative projects. Take a Classics class, and the professor will know your name, your abilities, and your character when you need a **letter of recommendation**. The Department of Classics also offers opportunities for **travel and study abroad**.

The Department of Classics studies **Greco-Roman Civilization** from the Late Bronze Age to the disintegration of the Roman Empire and provides instruction in the ancient **Greek** and **Latin** languages, **Greek and Roman literature**, and the history, art, religion, philosophy, and archaeology of the Greco-Roman world.

Homer's Greece and Plato's Athens, Cicero's Rome, Vergil's Italy, and Augustine's Africa can be explored in two major courses of study and a variety of minor options. A broad survey of the literature and culture of Greece and Rome is provided by the Classical Civilizations Major. The Major in Classics adds a close study of the ancient languages.

For further information:
<http://www.nd.edu/~col/>

