

THE FIELD

Classics is an interdisciplinary field, embracing every aspect of the cultures of ancient Mediterranean and wider European world, as well as the multifaceted and long-lasting influence of those cultures across the world, including our own. Classics provides valuable insight into the ways in which the past has shaped the world's present languages, literatures, religions, political and scientific thought, and artistic traditions. The first requirement of a student in classics is a knowledge of the original language. All classics majors, therefore, are expected to complete a five-semester sequence in one of the classical languages. Students may take ancient Greek or Latin.

The classics department offers minors in Greek language, Latin language, classical civilization, and classical archaeology.

THE MAJOR

Students who major or double-major in classics must complete at least 10 courses (30–36 credits) in classics, Greek, or Latin in addition to UMass Amherst General Education courses. Approved courses in other departments or in the Five Colleges may be substituted.

Students interested in a classics major should contact a member of the department or seek advice from the undergraduate program director. Every student majoring in classics, in consultation with the undergraduate program director, is assigned a faculty member for regular advice on course selection, career choice, graduate-level studies, internships, and study abroad.

HONORS

Students may pursue honors opportunities within the major, including a senior thesis. Contact the departmental honors program director for more information.

STUDY ABROAD

Study abroad, especially in Greece or Italy, is strongly recommended for majors in classics. Students in recent years have attended programs such as the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, which offers a semester (either fall or spring) in residence in Rome, Italy, and the College Year in Athens, which offers either a year or a semester of study in Athens, Greece. The Vergilian Society in Cumae, Italy, the American Academy in Rome, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens all sponsor valuable summer programs as well.

INTERSHIPS

Internships, both short-term and long-term, are available in a wide variety of regional and national businesses, art and history museums, and archives. The Career Center of HFA Advising assists in directing classics students to such opportunities. Classics students also regularly participate in archaeological excavations and archaeological data projects, several of which are hosted by the Department of Classics itself, both in the United States and abroad.

JOINT MAJOR IN CLASSICS AND PHILOSOPHY

A separate interdisciplinary major, classics and philosophy, is jointly administered by the Department of Classics and the Department of Philosophy. This major is for philosophers who wish to read Plato and Aristotle in Greek and study the origins of the philosophical tradition in Classical antiquity and for classicists with a primary interest in the history of ancient ideas. Interested students should contact either the classics department or the philosophy department (413-545-2330, umass.edu/philosophy) for more information.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A major in classics, the oldest discipline in the liberal arts, is excellent preparation for any occupation or profession, including business, government, law, politics, management, computing, publishing, seminary, medicine, or teaching. It is especially valuable for vocations requiring refined analytical and verbal skills. Work in archaeology increasingly offers students the opportunity to develop highly transferable skills in data science as well. The major also prepares a student for graduate work in all areas of Classical studies: archaeology, language and literature, ancient history, and museum studies.

There is currently throughout the United States a critical shortage of qualified teachers of Latin at the secondary level. Because teaching at the high school level in public schools requires a teaching certificate, prospective teachers of Latin should concentrate in the Greek and Latin languages area and continue their studies at the master's level, either at UMass Amherst or elsewhere, in Latin and education. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not grant teaching certificates without an MA degree or its equivalent.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

Office: 524 Herter Hall
Phone: 413-545-0512
Website: umass.edu/classics