Undergraduate Programs Frequently Asked Questions

Why Study Classics?

The civilizations of Greece and Rome hold an extraordinary place in the American past and present, thanks to their central role in forming the basic conceptual categories that shape our intellectual, professional, and civic lives. To study Classics is to take an active part in the humanistic enterprise, and to grasp the complexity of its diverse historical manifestations from Plato's Academy to our own.

Yet work in Classics is not confined to celebrating the achievements of antiquity and analysing its impact on the present. The vast temporal and geographic gulf that divides these ancient cultures from modernity brings students and scholars of Classics face to face with the Otherness of antiquity and forces a critical examination of our purported cultural roots. In adjusting our perspectives on ancient Greece and Rome, we find that our perception of ourselves, too, has been altered, and our interests, preconceptions and prejudices challenged, by a critical examination of their "classical" genealogy. Like a fun-house mirror in which we can observe ourselves in a state of distortion, simultaneously familiar and other, Greek and Roman antiquity furnishes us with a special vantage point from which to critique what is taken for granted in our own time and place.

As a field of study Classics is intrinsically comparative, since it concerns two related but distinct peoples. The complex relationship between the ancient Greeks and the Romans offers a productive model of cultural interpretation and appropriation that is enduringly relevant today. Classics is also the first area study. That is, it concerns a wide range of cultural productions (literature, history, philosophy, science, architecture, art and other material remains), and employs the full range of methodologies developed for their interpretation. The long history of our discipline continues to be enriched by new interpretive tools. The Department of Classics, through its undergraduate programs, is striving to play its role at the heart of the educational mission of the liberal arts by awakening students to the unique combination of ancient and modern, language and interpretation, text and culture, that Classics at its best can offer.

What jobs do Classics majors get?

Our alumni pursue careers in education, law, journalism, business and entrepreneurship, health sciences, and many other fields. See our Careers page for examples of alumni job titles and career-related resources.

Can I double-major?

What's the difference between a major and minor?

How can I get more information?

Please contact the Classics adviser or a faculty member you've taken a course with. They will be happy to tell you more about our programs.