CLASSICAL CIVILIZATION MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The classical civilization major is designed to provide students with a basic knowledge of at least one ancient language and a comprehensive understanding of Greek and Roman civilization. Since the field of classical studies encompasses many different disciplines, students have the opportunity to adapt the program to their particular interests. Students interested in ancient Mediterranean archaeology may major in classical civilization or in archaeology (see listing for the archaeology program). Because of the heavy language requirement for graduate school admission, however, students interested in graduate work in classics should give serious consideration to the classics major.

Students can either follow the general track or pursue one of three specialized tracks: Poetry and Performance, Archaeology/Archaeological Science or History and Social Justice [see here (https://wesleyan.edu/classics)]. All tracks are rigorous and incorporate both language and cultural study; the specialized tracks offer an opportunity to do more interdepartmental and comparative work. While all pathways through the major share the same foundational courses in language, history, and material culture, students pursuing specialized tracks can take 2 complementary courses outside of the department as part of their elective courses, provided their course of study has been approved by their major advisor.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Greek and Latin are integral to the study of the Classical world, so prospective majors in classics (CLAS) or classical civilization (CCIV) are encouraged to begin their study of one or both of those languages early in their careers at Wesleyan or to continue their studies by enrolling in upper-level language classes. Competence in either language through at least the intermediate level is required for completing either a CLAS or a CCIV major. While there are no specific courses required for admission to the major, prospective majors should also plan to take at least one course offered by the department in the history, literature, or art and archaeology of the Greek or Roman world prior to declaring their major to familiarize themselves with the interdisciplinary nature of the field. The department requires that all students seeking admission to the CLAS or CCIV major, as well as those who are majors, maintain at least a B- average in courses taken within the department.

All students entering the major are required to complete the major declaration form on which they will outline the path they plan to pursue: selection of potential courses; track, if any; selections outside the department and how they will be in conversation with the major course selections to form a meaningful curricular whole. This initial outline will indicate the student’s aimed trajectory. Upon completion of the major, students will complete the final section of the form where they will have the opportunity to explain changes in this initial trajectory and reflect briefly on their choices and development as a whole. [see Form (https://wesleyan.edu/classics/Major%2DDeclaration%2DForm.pdf)]

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for the classical civilization major are a minimum of 10 courses in classical civilization, Greek, and Latin, including at least:

- Three language courses numbered 102 or higher.
- One introductory ancient history survey (CCIV231, CCIV232). This requirement should be completed by the end of the junior year.
- One course at any level in material culture.
- Two classical civilization seminars (CCIV courses numbered 276-399). An advanced Greek or Latin course (numbered above 202) may be substituted for one of the classical civilization seminars.

The first year of Greek or Latin (courses numbered 101 and 102) may not be counted toward the required minimum of 10 courses, but a full year of the student’s second classical language may count as one course toward that minimum.

The table below offers a comparison of potential course trajectories through the general and specialized tracks. See also Classics Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/clas/ugrd-clas).

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The Classical Studies Department offers two majors, Classical Civilization and Classics, both of which provide the opportunity to study all facets of the ancient world alongside the study of at least one of the classical languages through the intermediate level. The major in Classics places more emphasis on literature and textual studies, reading a range of works in poetry, drama, history and philosophy. The major in Classical Civilization encourages the parallel exploration of both the literary and archaeological remains of the Greeks and Romans, either through a general track or one of three specialized tracks. For a detailed description of the two majors and major requirements, see below. Through coursework, participation in study abroad, and independent research, majors in both concentrations develop expertise in these five areas, all of which will equip them for a variety of personal and professional pursuits:

- Linguistic agility. Reading knowledge of Latin and/or Greek, which confers a deep understanding of language—how it works and how to make it work for us—and an ability to critically analyze texts in a variety of media and genres.
- Interpretive acumen. Analytical ability to recognize patterns in texts and artifacts; to filter data to identify key ideas and structures; and to weigh and evaluate differing perspectives.
- Creativity. Integrating different categories of evidence (archaeological sciences, cultural studies, language) to ask questions of the past and to use constructive analogy to apply the approaches to classical studies to addressing questions outside the discipline.
- Effective communication. Present polished ideas and arguments to different types of audiences, using oral, written, digital, and performative media.
- Diversity, inclusion, and social justice. Rich understanding of the historical, material, and physical environment of these two civilizations—and how they interacted with the cultures around them—fosters intercultural awareness and a sympathetic capacity demonstrated in the ability to inhabit multiple perspectives.
STUDY ABROAD

Majors in both classics and classical civilization are encouraged to apply to study abroad, usually in the junior year. Wesleyan’s list of approved programs includes two that are particularly appropriate for departmental majors.

In Rome, the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies provides regular college credit and the opportunity to study firsthand the monuments and culture of ancient and modern Italy. Students interested in applying to the center are urged to take CCIV232, which is generally offered every other year, and to begin the study of Latin and/or Greek before the year in which they hope to be in Rome, since no first-year Latin or Greek courses are offered at the center. Applicants with a strong background in Greek and/or Latin will have a better chance of admission. Applications for spring term are due in early October and for fall term, in early March.

The College Year in Athens (CYA) program offers either a full year or one semester of study in ancient and modern Greek language, history, art, and archaeology; the program also offers advanced Latin and numerous courses in postclassical and modern Greek culture, politics, and history. CYA has a rolling admissions policy, but to avoid paying a large deposit with admission, applications must be received by mid-October for spring term and by mid-May for fall term.

Other options are also available. Students should consult with a faculty member well in advance of the term in which they hope to be abroad to discuss credit, the application process, and how their plans will influence their selection of courses at Wesleyan.

On their return to campus after study abroad to study classics, classics and classical civilization majors must take at least one additional language class numbered 201 or higher.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Students who receive a 4 or 5 on the Latin Advanced Placement exam may receive one Wesleyan credit after having completed with a passing grade a Latin course at Wesleyan at the level of LAT201 or higher.

HONORS

Majors interested in completing a senior thesis for departmental honors should consult with the faculty as early as possible and must submit a senior thesis proposal to the department by April 15 of their junior year. Enrollment in the senior thesis tutorial in the fall will be contingent upon the department’s approval of the proposal.

As a practical matter, students who have had no classical languages before coming to Wesleyan and who wish to major in classics should begin Greek or Latin in their first year or take an intensive summer course before the sophomore year. Students interested in the classical civilization major are also urged to begin language study as soon as possible.

Students interested in studying at the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome (see above under Study Abroad) should plan to take CCIV232 (offered in alternate years) before the term in which they plan to study abroad.

Where appropriate, students may ask to have courses in other departments substituted for classical civilization courses.

Students interested in teaching may have an opportunity to serve as teaching apprentices in introductory Latin or Greek courses.

PRIZES

The department awards three prizes annually.

Ingraham Prize. The gift of Robert Seney Ingraham, Class of 1888, and his wife, for excellence in New Testament Greek or, in years when a course in that subject is not given, for excellence in a course in Greek elective for juniors and seniors.

Sherman Prize. Established by David Sherman, D.D, Class of 1872, for excellence in classics.

Spinney Prize. The gift of Joseph S. Spinney, trustee 1875–82 and 1888–93, for excellence in Greek. Awarded for the best original essay on some aspect of Greek or Roman civilization.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Notes for both classics and classical civilization majors: