CLASSICS MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

A major in classics will concentrate on Greek, Latin, or a combination of both languages. Students considering graduate school in classics should choose the classics major track and are strongly urged to acquire a firm grounding in both languages. It is recommended, though not required, that students considering graduate work in classics learn a modern foreign language (preferably Italian, French, or German) and that they take courses in other subjects related to their particular area of interest (literature, history, philosophy, religion, art, archaeology).

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.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A minimum of 10 courses in Greek, Latin, and classical civilization, including at least:

- Six courses in Greek or Latin beyond the introductory level (courses numbered 201 or higher).
- One introductory ancient history survey (CCIV231; CCIV232). This requirement should be completed by the end of the junior year.
- One classical civilization seminar (CCIV courses numbered 276-399).

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.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Classical studies—the study of the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome—is inherently interdisciplinary, requiring competency not only in Greek and Latin language and literature but also ancient history and science, religion, art, and archaeology. The Classical Studies Department offers two majors, classics and classical civilization, 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, while the major in classical civilization encourages the parallel exploration of both the literary and archaeological remains of the Greeks and Romans. 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.

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:

- 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 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.

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.