

Dartmouth College
Department of Classics
Classical Studies 1
Antiquity Today: An Introduction to Classical Studies

Spring Term 2002, 11 hour
Prof. Paul Christesen and James Tatum

The Role of this Course in a Dartmouth Education: General Comments

An American college student does not have to travel far to encounter a wide array of assertions assumptions concerning the origins in Greco-Roman antiquity of America's political and legal system, language, religions, and aesthetic culture. In many cases, these assertions have some basis in fact, and yet an uncritical acceptance of them not only institutionalizes invalid assumptions about our own culture, but sets up barriers to the dispassionate study of ancient cultures in their rich complexity and diversity. Only when the myths of origin themselves become the object of study--when our myriad cultural "archaeologies" in their real historical and political context--are we freed to engage the various disciplines which now constitute classical studies with full intellectual freedom and methodological rigor.

This course thus aims to bring to light assumptions students harbor concerning the origins of "western" civilization and to encourage them to interrogate these assumptions, discovering where the myths of origin themselves originate, where they can and should be challenged, and how contemporary classicists in a variety of academic disciplines have moved beyond the search for Greco-Roman origins to claim the study of ancient cultures as valuable in its own right.

Aims of the Course

To what extent then is it still correct to say that Greece and Rome are at the origins of American culture and government? What were ancient cultures really like, and how are Classicists of the 21st century interested in studying them? The course will introduce you to the full range of disciplines represented in the Department of Classics: archaeology, art history, linguistics, literary and cultural studies, history, and philosophy. Throughout the course we will move from present conceptions of Classical antiquity, to closer encounters with what present scholarship and thinking has revealed might have been the reality of life in the ancient world.

Its Place in the College Curriculum

Classical Studies 1 satisfies the Interdisciplinary Requirement, as well as EUR; PHR or LIT or SOC; INT; I.

Requirements and Work Load.

Weekly assignments: ca. 70 pages assigned readings in Coursepack, plus other materials (films, sound recordings outside of class).

Mid-Term Examination: 1 hour

Final Examination: 2 hours

Topics for Classes in Spring 2002 (Provisional)

Part I: The Image of Antiquity Today

Class 1: Rome: The Colosseum and its Uses

Film. Hollywood Gets It Wrong: "Gladiator"

Class 2: Inside the Colosseum with the Poets and Philosophers of Antiquity

Class 3: Athens: Greek Drama and its Theater

Class 4: Ritual and the Need for Violence: Euripides' *Bacchae*

Class 5: What are our sources for understanding Classical antiquity? How do we use them?

Part II: How To Get Closer to the Greeks and Romans

Class 6: Languages: The Alphabet, Literacy, Texts, and Homer

Class 7: Experiencing the *Iliad* as an oral epic poem

Epic Center: Audio performance of the *Iliad*, selected books.

Class 8: Languages: The Continuity of Latin Language and Culture

Epic Center: Classical and Romance Linguistics in a Nutshell

Class 9: Vergil's *Aeneid*: Founding the Classical Tradition

Part III. Empire in the Classical World

Class 10: Waiting for the Barbarians: Athens and the Delian League

Class 11: *Polis* and *Parthenon*

Class 12: The Problem of Athens According to Thucydides and Plato

Class 14: Aristophanes and the Solutions of Comedy

Mid-Term Exam (1 hour)

Part IV. How Opposites Came to Attract: Slavery and Religious Life in Antiquity

Class 15: The Slave as Hero in Roman Comedy (Plautus, *Pseudolus*)

Film. Hollywood Gets It Wrong Again: "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (Zero Mostel et al.)

Class 16: Realities of Social Life in a Slave Economy

Class 17: Roman Religious Ritual and the Citizen's Life

Class 18: Roman Philosophers on the Good Life

Class 19: The Challenge of Christianity

Part V: Ancient Institutions in Modern Guise

Class 20: The Ideal of Athenian Democracy

Class 21: Democracy and its Critics: Greek Inspirations

Class 22: Roads, Aqueducts, and Law: Roman Inspirations

Class 23: Roman Case Law at Work

 Lab: How to argue a case in a Roman law court

Class 24: Olympic Games in Antiquity and the Present

Class 25: Conclusion: Hollywood Finally Gets It Right: “Unforgiven”

 Film. “Unforgiven” (Clint Eastwood et al.)

 Epic Center: selected parts of the *Iliad* (audio)