CLASSICS

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Long ago the Greeks and Romans conceived the idea of the liberal arts and made them the basis of higher education. Today the Department of Classics keeps that classical tradition alive at St. Olaf by offering courses in the languages, literature, and culture of Greece and Rome. The study of Graeco-Roman civilization in its ancient Mediterranean context gives students perspective on their own place in history while increasing their understanding of the world into which Christianity was born.

Many students satisfy the world language requirement with three semesters of ancient Greek or Latin. (Modern Greek is not offered at St. Olaf.) Greek is especially helpful for pre-seminary and pre-medicine students, Latin for pre-law students. Either language makes a good match with the Enduring Questions program.

In addition to Greek and Latin courses, the department offers a variety of Level I and Level II classics courses that require no knowledge of Greek or Latin and fulfill OLE Core curriculum requirements.

Students often combine a major in Greek, Latin, or classics with another major in the humanities, mathematics, sciences, or fine arts. A classical background enriches one's experiences in college and in later life, while the verbal and analytical skills acquired by learning classical languages are of lasting benefit in whatever career one chooses.

Three different majors in classical language are available to St. Olaf students: Greek, Latin, and classics. The classics major combines Greek and Latin and is the most rigorous. All three majors have as their objectives competence in classical language at an advanced level, skill in translating and analyzing classical literature of different genres, and familiarity with classical civilization. Ancient studies and medieval studies, two interdisciplinary majors administered by the Department of Classics, are described elsewhere in this catalog.

Overview of the Majors

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Classics Major

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Greek Major

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Latin Major

Distinction

See Academic Honors

To attain distinction in classics, a student must demonstrate talent with classical languages and literature, skill in conducting research on a classical topic, and broad knowledge of classical civilization. Specific guidelines are available from the Department of Classics. Classics majors who wish to pursue distinction should notify the department chair no later than January 1 of their senior year.

Special Programs

For more than forty-five years the Department of Classics has offered students the opportunity to study in Greece and/or Italy during January. CLASS 251 Classical Studies in Greece (study abroad) now alternates with CLASS 253 Classical Studies in Italy (study abroad). Both courses focus on ancient history and art. Students who have taken Greek, Latin, or other courses in ancient studies receive priority in the selection process.

Students may choose to use their classical language courses as the foundation for a Latin, Greek, or classics major or as the core of an interdisciplinary major in ancient studies or medieval studies.

St. Olaf's Latin Education program has been discontinued. Students interested in obtaining a K-12 Latin teaching license are encouraged to complete an undergraduate major in Latin or classics and then apply to a graduate program that offers a Master's degree combined with teaching certification in Latin.

Recommendations for Graduate Study

A doctorate in classics requires a reading knowledge of German and French (or Italian) as well as advanced proficiency in both Latin and ancient Greek. Students who do not reach the advanced level in Latin and Greek before they graduate from St. Olaf have the option of applying to a post-baccalaureate program that will help prepare them for further graduate study.

Recent St. Olaf graduates have been accepted into post-baccaulaureate, M.A., and Ph.D. programs in classics at Bryn Mawr College, Indiana University, Penn State, the University of Arizona, UCLA, the University of Colorado, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Illinois, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, the University of Minnesota, the University of Missouri, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Oxford, the University of Texas, the University of Virginia, the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Washington University in St. Louis, and William & Mary. Others have been accepted into graduate programs in classical archeology at Cornell University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Bristol, and the University of Vienna, and into medieval studies programs at the University of Limerick, the University of Minnesota, the University of Oslo, the University of Southampton, and the University of Toronto.

Requirements Requirements for the Greek Major

Code	Title	Credits
Seven Greek courses ¹		7.00
One classics or ancient Greek history course		1.00
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
Total Credits		9

Students who begin Greek at GREEK 231 or higher have the option of taking six courses in Greek

*By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.

Requirements for the Latin Major

Code	Title	Credits
Seven Latin courses ¹		7.00
One classics or ancient Roman history course		1.00
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
Total Credits		9

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Students who begin Latin at LATIN 231 or higher have the option of taking six courses in Latin

*By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.

Requirements for the Classics Major

Code	Title	Credits
Six Latin or Greek courses ¹		6.00
Three courses in the other language		3.00
One classics or ancient history course		1.00
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
Total Credits		11

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Students who begin one of the languages at the 231 level or higher have the option of taking five courses in that language

*By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.

Courses Greek Courses

GREEK 111: Beginning Greek I

In this two-course sequence students learn the basics of ancient Greek. By studying the language's vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, they not only gain appreciation for its intricacies and nuances but also learn more about their own language and about language in general. Completion of both GREEK 111 and GREEK 112 equips students to translate almost any ancient Greek text with the aid of a dictionary. Offered annually in the fall semester.

GREEK 112: Beginning Greek II

In this two-course sequence students learn the basics of ancient Greek. By studying the language's vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, they not only gain appreciation for its intricacies and nuances but also learn more about their own language and about language in general. Completion of both GREEK 111 and GREEK 112 equips students to translate almost any ancient Greek text with the aid of a dictionary. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisite: GREEK 111 or equivalent.

GREEK 231: Intermediate Greek

Third-semester Greek students translate selections from Plato's dialogues (*Apology, Crito, Phaedo*) while reviewing vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Topics for class discussion include the life and death of Socrates and the significance of the dialogues as works of literature. Offered annually in the fall semester. Also counts toward applied linguistics concentration.

Prerequisite: GREEK 112 or equivalent.

GREEK 253: New Testament Greek

The New Testament is the most famous and most widely translated Greek text from antiquity. Students have the opportunity to read one or more of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, or selected Pauline letters in the original language. Questions about the transmission of the text and about its theological implications provoke lively discussions. Offered annually in the spring semester. Also counts toward ancient studies major and applied linguistics concentration.

Prerequisite: GREEK 231 or equivalent.

GREEK 294: Academic Internship

GREEK 298: Independent Study

GREEK 370: Topics in Greek Literature

Students translate selections from one or more genres of ancient Greek literature while exploring a specific topic or theme chosen by the instructor. Close study of the text is combined with discussion of broader literary, historical, and cultural questions. Sample topics: "Tales of Odysseus," "Hellenistic Greek," "Famous Speeches in Ancient Greek Texts." Offered periodically.

Prerequisite: GREEK 231 or equivalent.

GREEK 372: Greek Philosophers

It has been said that all philosophy is a mere footnote to Plato and Aristotle. In this course students translate selected works by the two renowned philosophers and their predecessors, examining the forces that influenced them and the impact that Greek philosophy had on subsequent ages. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite: GREEK 231 or equivalent.

GREEK 373: Greek Historians

Readings in Greek from the works of Herodotus, the "Father of History," and Thucydides, the first "scientific" historian, provide the backdrop for studying the development of Greek historiography. Students analyze the historians' distinctive methods and writing styles and compare them with those of modern historians. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite: GREEK 231 or equivalent.

GREEK 375: Homer and Greek Epic

The primary texts for this course are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the earliest recorded literature of Western civilization. Besides translating lengthy passages from one or both of these remarkable poems, students probe the characteristics of epic poetry and investigate current topics in Homeric scholarship. Offered alternate years. Also counts toward applied linguistics concentration.

Prerequisite: GREEK 231 or equivalent.

GREEK 394: Academic Internship

GREEK 396: Directed Undergraduate Research

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course. **Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

Classics

GREEK 398: Independent Research

Latin Courses

LATIN 111: Beginning Latin I

In this two-course sequence students learn the basics of classical Latin. By studying the language's vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, they not only gain appreciation for its intricacies and nuances but also learn more about their own language and about language in general. Completion of both LATIN 111 and LATIN 112 equips students to translate almost any classical Latin text with the aid of a dictionary. Offered annually in the fall semester.

LATIN 112: Beginning Latin II

In this two-course sequence students learn the basics of classical Latin. By studying the language's vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, they not only gain appreciation for its intricacies and nuances but also learn more about their own language and about language in general. Completion of both LATIN 111 and LATIN 112 equips students to translate almost any classical Latin text with the aid of a dictionary. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisite: LATIN 111 or equivalent.

LATIN 231: Intermediate Latin

Third-semester Latin students translate large portions of two orations (*First Catilinarian, Pro Caelio*) by Cicero and selections from Catullus' poetry while reviewing vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Topics for class discussion include life in late Republican Rome and the stylistic features of the literature. Offered annually in the fall semester. Also counts toward applied linguistics concentration.

Prerequisite: LATIN 112 or equivalent.

LATIN 235: Medieval Latin

Students expand their knowledge of Latin by exploring the diverse and creative literature of the Middle Ages, ca. 300-1500 CE. This course emphasizes the role of Latin as the language of religious life in Medieval Europe. Topics encountered typically include scripture, pilgrims, relics, miracles, saints, crusaders, monastics, and the black death. Offered annually in the spring semester. Also counts toward ancient studies, and medieval studies majors, and concentrations in applied linguistics and international relations.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 252: Vergil and Latin Epic

Lord Tennyson called Vergil the "wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man." Students encounter that stately measure when they translate selections from Vergil's three major poems (Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid). Through discussion and readings, students also explore the development of Latin epic and Vergil's reception in later literature, art, and music. Depending on the instructor, students engage in at least one significant writing project, e.g., on poetic interpretation or literary translation. Offered alternate years in the spring semester. Also counts toward classics, ancient studies, and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 294: Academic Internship

LATIN 298: Independent Study

LATIN 370: Topics in Latin Literature

Students translate selections from one or more genres of ancient Latin literature while exploring a specific topic or theme chosen by the instructor. Close study of the text is combined with discussion of broader literary, historical, and cultural questions. Sample topics: "Ovid," "Latin Epistolography," "Augustan Elegy." Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 371: Latin Lyric

Lyric poems -- short, occasional pieces composed in various meters, often concerned with love and longing -- are the focus of this Latin course. Students translate the vivacious verse of Catullus, Horace, Tibullus, and Ovid and learn to recognize the features that make lyric a distinctive genre of Latin poetry. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 372: Latin Historians

The writings of Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus provide breathtaking views of ancient Rome and memorable vignettes from the city's colorful history. Extended passages from the historians' works, read in Latin, form the basis for a survey of Roman historiography and of historical writing in general. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 373: Lucretius and Latin Poetry

Lucretius might best be described as a philosophical poet. His *De Rerum Natura* ("On the Nature of the Universe") presents the theories and teachings of Greek philosophers like Democritus and Epicurus, but with a Roman flavor. Students translate substantial sections of this fascinating poem. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 375: Latin Drama

Strange things happened on the ancient Roman stage; this course gives students firsthand proof of that. The comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca make entertaining reading. Students translate selected plays and discuss the evolution of the Roman theater, staging, and modern interpretations. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 377: Latin Satire

The Romans claimed that satire was a literary genre of their own creation. Students are able to weigh the merits of that claim as they translate selections from the wry and witty texts of prominent Roman satirists such as Horace, Petronius, Martial, and Juvenal. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: LATIN 231 or equivalent.

LATIN 394: Academic Internship

LATIN 396: Directed Undergraduate Research

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course. **Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

LATIN 398: Independent Research

Classics Courses Requiring No Knowledge of Greek or Latin

CLASS 120: Greek and Roman Myth

With their tales of shape-shifting, vengeance, heroic quests, and tragic turns of fortune, the myths of the ancient Greeks and Romans have long inspired artists, poets, and philosophers. Even today, they continue to influence how human beings view the world and interact with one another. In this course students read thought-provoking stories about gods, heroes, and mortals, explore them in their original contexts, and investigate their connections with modern times and with students' own experiences. Offered annually. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 124: The Many Faces of Homer

This course entails a careful reading of the Iliad and Odyssey - two of the earliest and most influential epics of human history - with attention to their Greek historical and cultural contexts. The course then explores some of the many reincarnations of Homer's epics in later generations, from Monteverdi's opera Return of Ulysses to David's painting Anger of Achilles to the Coen brothers' film O Brother, Where Art Thou? Offered periodically during January Term. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 125: Dawn of Democracy

Today, countries from Uruguay to South Korea to the United States all proudly claim to be "democracies." In this class, students investigate the dawn of democracy in ancient Athens to understand democracy's origins and what "rule of the people" meant to the Greeks--something radically different from modern political systems that claim the same title. Students read and discuss ancient sources (in English translation) and experience Athenian democracy for themselves through a historical role-immersion game. Offered periodically during January Term. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 126: Ancient Comedy: A Funny Thing Happened

This course introduces students to the wild and wacky world of ancient Greek and Roman comedy. It traces the development of the genre with discussion of how the plays were produced in antiquity and what influence they wielded on the drama of later centuries. Students read works by Aristophanes, Menander, Plautus, and Terence and stage selected scenes. Offered periodically during January Term. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 239: Classics and Race: From Antiquity to America

Students in this course develop critical, historically informed, crosscultural perspectives on race in the United States by investigating the roots of racial thought in the world of the Greeks and Romans over two millennia ago. Topics include comparative racial formation; ancient theories of race and their impacts on the modern world; racist structures across time and space; and the contingency of cultural responses to ethnic difference and "otherness." Readings range from antiquity to 21st-century America. Offered periodically in fall and spring semesters. Also counts toward ancient studies, classics, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 240: Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World

This course explores the social construction and function of sex and gender in ancient Greece and Rome. It uses both literature and visual art to analyze the role of sexuality in everyday society and in the lives of several of the more famous figures from antiquity. Readings also include modern histories and theories of sexuality, especially those that investigate the influence of the Greeks and Romans on modern conceptions of sexuality. Offered in alternate years. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, Latin, and gender and sexuality studies majors and gender and sexuality studies concentration.

CLASS 243: The World of the Ancient Greeks

This course takes students on an exciting journey back to the world of the ancient Greeks, a land of democracy and tyranny, comedy and tragedy, myth and mystery - and much more. Students explore ancient Greek society from an interdisciplinary perspective, analyzing its literature, art, and ideas in the light of their historical and cultural contexts. The course ranges far, both chronologically and geographically, from the palaces of the Bronze Age to the Library of Alexandria. Offered every other year. Also counts toward majors in ancient studies, Greek, and Latin.

CLASS 244: The World of the Ancient Romans

This course takes students on an exciting journey back to the world of the ancient Romans, a land of republic and empire, oratory and elegy, brick and marble--and much more. Students explore ancient Roman society from an interdisciplinary perspective, analyzing its literature, art, and ideas in the light of their historical and cultural contexts. The course ranges far, both chronologically and geographically, from the Tiber River to the shores of Carthage to Hadrian's Wall. Offered alternate years. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 251: Classical Studies in Greece (study abroad)

This course introduces students to the history and art of ancient Greece. It covers more than 2000 years of Greek civilization, from the Bronze Age through the archaic, classical, and Hellenistic periods. The itinerary takes students all over Greece, with extended stays in Athens and Attica, Crete, the Peloponnese, and Thessaloniki. When not visiting museums and archaeological sites, students have the opportunity to experience modern Greek culture as well. Offered during January Term in alternate years. Apply through Smith Center for Global Engagement. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 253: Classical Studies in Italy (study abroad)

This course introduces students to the history and art of ancient Italy, focusing on the city of Rome and the Bay of Naples area. It covers more than 1000 years of civilization, beginning with the Etruscans and ending with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The itinerary includes extended stays in Civitavecchia, Rome, and Pompeii. When not visiting museums and archaeological sites, students have the opportunity to experience modern Italian culture as well. Offered during January Term in alternate years. Apply through Smith Center for Global Engagement. Also counts toward ancient studies, Greek, and Latin majors.

CLASS 260: Sports and Recreation in the Ancient World

This course explores life, death, and entertainment in the ancient world, particularly Rome. Students focus especially on how and why people take part in sporting events and on how sport intersected with gender, social class, and economics. Topics include the history of sport, slavery and marginal groups, demography, gladiatorial events, and entertainment and politics. The primary focus of the course is the interpretation of ancient sources, but students also evaluate modern views of ancient entertainment. Also counts toward ancient studies major.

CLASS 294: Academic Internship

CLASS 298: Independent Study

CLASS 370: Topics in Classical Studies

This course combines close study of ancient texts (in English translation) with wide-ranging discussions of literary, historical, and cultural questions. Students have the opportunity to read selections from one or more genres of Greek and/or Latin literature while exploring a topic chosen by the instructor. Analytical writing assignments lead to a deeper understanding of the creative process and encourage thoughtful reflection on the re-creating and repurposing of the original texts by later authors and artists. Offered annually. Counts as an elective and satisfies WIM for Classics, Greek, Latin, and ancient studies majors.

Prerequisite: WAC (any course satisfying Writing Across the Curriculum) or permission of instructor.

CLASS 394: Academic Internship

CLASS 396: Directed Undergraduate Research

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course. **Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

CLASS 398: Independent Research

Classics Plan of Study Classics Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for this major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Any student interested in a classics major should draw up a contract with the program's director. The contract may be changed at any time up to second semester of the senior year.

Please click here for an up-to-date list with courses that can be used as electives for the Classics major.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
GREEK 111 or LATIN 111	Beginning Greek I or Beginning Latin I	1.00
	Credits	2
Spring Semester		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
GREEK 112 or LATIN 112	Beginning Greek II or Beginning Latin II	1.00
	Credits	2
Sophomore Year		
Fall Semester		
GREEK 231 or LATIN 231	Intermediate Greek or Intermediate Latin	1.00
	Credits	1
Junior Year		
Spring Semester		
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
	Credits	1
	Total Credits	6

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the classics webpage for more information.

Greek Plan of Study Greek Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for this major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Any student interested in a Greek major should draw up a contract with the program's director. The contract may be changed at any time up to second semester of the senior year.

Please click here for an up-to-date list with courses that can be used as electives for the Greek major.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
GREEK 111	Beginning Greek I	1.00
	Credits	2
Spring Semester		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
GREEK 112	Beginning Greek II	1.00
	Credits	2
Sophomore Year		
Fall Semester		
GREEK 231	Intermediate Greek	1.00
	Credits	1

Junior Year		
Spring Semester		
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
	Credits	1
	Total Credits	6

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the Greek major department webpage for more information.

Latin Plan of Study Latin Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for this major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Any student interested in a Latin major should draw up a contract with the program's director. The contract may be changed at any time up to second semester of the senior year.

Please click here for an up-to-date list with courses that can be used as electives for the Latin major.

Course	Title	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
LATIN 111	Beginning Latin I	1.00
	Credits	2
Spring Semester		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
LATIN 112	Beginning Latin II	1.00
	Credits	2
Sophomore Year		
Fall Semester		
LATIN 231	Intermediate Latin	1.00
	Credits	1
Junior Year		
Spring Semester		
CLASS 370	Topics in Classical Studies	1.00
	Credits	1
	Total Credits	6

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the Latin major department webpage for more information.

Faculty

Department Chair, 2024-2025 Anne H. Groton

Professor of Classics

Greek and Roman drama; classical languages and literature

Hilary Bouxsein

Assistant Professor of Classics

Kyle Helms (on sabbatical 2024-25) Associate Professor of Classics Latin prose; classical languages and literature

Peter Moench

Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics

Kathryn Steed

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Classics