

ANCIENT STUDIES

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Founded by the Department of Classics in 1971, ancient studies is one of St. Olaf's oldest interdisciplinary programs. In scope it spans the more than two millennia between Greece's Bronze Age and the fall of the Roman Empire. Combining art, history, language, literature, philosophy, religion, and theater, it encourages students to take a broad look at ancient Western culture, examining it from multiple perspectives.

The ancient studies program has no courses of its own; instead, it relies on courses offered by individual departments. Students who major in ancient studies choose electives from the various departmental courses that deal primarily or entirely with the world of ancient Greece and Rome. Many of these courses also satisfy OLE Core curriculum requirements. The required courses in Greek or Latin can simultaneously fulfill the OLE Core curriculum's World Languages and Cultures requirement.

It is common for St. Olaf students to combine an ancient studies major with a B.A. major like art history, English, history, philosophy, political science, or religion. Even mathematics or natural science majors often complete a second major in ancient studies. The major provides a useful background in the humanities for students interested in virtually any career.

Overview of the Major

The objectives of the major are competence in ancient Greek or Latin at the intermediate level, familiarity with ancient Greek and Roman civilization, and in-depth knowledge of one subject area within the major.

Any student interested in an ancient studies 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.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major Distinction

To attain distinction in ancient studies, a student must demonstrate talent with ancient Greek or Latin, skill in conducting research on an ancient topic, and broad knowledge of ancient Western civilization. Specific guidelines are available from the director of ancient studies. Ancient studies majors who wish to pursue distinction should notify the director of the program no later than January 1 of their senior year.

Requirements

Requirements for the Major

| Code | Title | Credits |
|------|---|---------|
| | Fourth semester (or higher) of ancient Greek or Latin | 1.00 |
| | One ancient history course | 1.00 |
| | One classics course | 1.00 |
| | Four electives chosen from various departments | 4.00 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------|
| CLASS 370 or ANCST 398 | Topics in Classical Studies Independent Research | 1.00 |
| Total Credits | | 8 |

Courses

The following courses have been approved for the major (seminars and topics courses are acceptable only when they focus on the ancient world):

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| ARTH 275 Topics in Art History |
| CLASS 239 Classics and Race: From Antiquity to America |
| CLASS 240 Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World |
| CLASS 243 The World of the Ancient Greeks |
| CLASS 244 The World of the Ancient Romans |
| CLASS 260 Sports and Recreation in the Ancient World |
| CLASS 370 Topics in Classical Studies |
| GREEK 253 New Testament Greek (or any other Greek course beyond 231) |
| HIST 101 Ancient Warfare |
| HIST 190 The Roots of Our Modern World: Middle East and Europe to 1500 |
| HIST 201 Methods Seminar: Ancient History |
| HIST 203 Ancient Greek History |
| HIST 204 Ancient: Rome |
| HIST 299 Topics in History |
| HIST 303 Research Sem: Roman History |
| LATIN 252 Vergil and Latin Epic (or any other Latin course beyond 231) |
| LATIN 370 Topics in Latin Literature |
| LATIN 373 Lucretius and Latin Poetry |
| PHIL 117 Confucius, Buddha, and Socrates |
| PHIL 140 Myth, Reason, and the Death of the Gods |
| PHIL 235 Ancient Greek Philosophy |
| PHIL 374 Seminar in the History of Philosophy |
| PSCI 299 Topics in Political Science |
| QUEST 113 Heroes, Gods, and Monsters |
| REL 122 The Hebrew Bible: A Historical and Literary Approach |
| REL 125 Ancient Texts, Modern Challenges: Engaging the Bible Today |
| REL 127 The Bible and Ecological Desire |
| REL 220 Reading Our Origins: Genesis, God, and Human Nature |
| REL 221 Jesus in Scripture and Tradition |

REL 227 Moses and Jesus: Jews and Christians in Dialogue

REL 276 The Ethics of Jesus

REL 302 History of Christian Thought I

REL 320 Interpreting Sacred Texts

REL 390 History of Religions Seminar

THEAT 270 History of Theater up to 1700

ANCST 298: Independent Study

ANCST 398: Independent Research

Students who fulfill the major's language requirement with Latin may use one Greek course as an elective; students who fulfill the major's language requirement with Greek may use one Latin course as an elective.

January term or summer term courses such as the following:

CLASS 120 Greek and Roman Myth

CLASS 124 The Many Faces of Homer

CLASS 125 Dawn of Democracy

CLASS 126 Ancient Comedy: A Funny Thing Happened

CLASS 251 Classical Studies in Greece (study abroad)

CLASS 253 Classical Studies in Italy (study abroad)

QUEST 115 Emperors, Orators, Disciples

REL 271 Bible in Context:Hist/Geography/Culture in Israel & Palestine (abroad)

REL 275 Religion and Empire in Greece and Turkey (study abroad)

and other courses offered occasionally or only once (including courses at Carleton College) may also be used as electives.

See the director for information on courses offered in a particular year.

Plan of Study

Ancient Studies 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.

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Please click [here](#) for an up-to-date list with courses that can be used as electives for Ancient Studies and Medieval Studies.

| Course | Title | Credits |
|------------------------|--|---------|
| First Year | | |
| Fall Semester | | |
| FYS 120 or WRIT 120 | First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric | 1.00 |

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|---|--|-----------|
| 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 | | |
| Classics Elective Course | | 1.00 |
| Ancient Studies Elective Course (from list) | | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 2 |
| Spring Semester | | |
| Ancient Studies Elective Course (from list) | | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 1 |
| Junior Year | | |
| Fall Semester | | |
| Ancient History Elective Course | | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 1 |
| Spring Semester | | |
| CLASS 370 | Topics in Classical Studies | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 1 |
| Senior Year | | |
| Fall Semester | | |
| Ancient Studies Elective Course (from list) | | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 1 |
| Spring Semester | | |
| CLASS 370 | Topics in Classical Studies (if not already taken in junior year) | 1.00 |
| Ancient Studies Elective Course (from list) | | 1.00 |
| Credits | | 2 |
| Total Credits | | 12 |

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 Ancient Studies webpage for more information.

Faculty

Director, 2025-2026

Anne H. Groton

Professor of Classics

Greek and Roman drama; classical languages and literature
A list of the Ancient and Medieval Studies Steering Committee members can be found [here](#).