



Ancient Classics – Subject Introductory Information

Introduction

Welcome to Classics!

Ancient Classics is the study of the origins of European civilisation, focusing particularly on the cultures of ancient Greek and Rome.

The study of Ancient Classics—including authors such as Homer, Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid—has been a central part of humanities education and a shaping influence on Western culture since the Middle Ages, through the Renaissance and down to modern times.

Our First Arts course offers a general introduction for students who have no prior background in the discipline and is equally suitable for students who wish to take the subject on to degree level and those who wish simply to gain an introduction to the subject in First Year.



The Parthenon, Athens. c.447-432 BC.

Ancient Classics as discipline is highly complementary with all of the other subjects in the Arts programme, and especially English and Creative Writing, History, Philosophy, Archaeology, Celtic Civilisation, and modern languages. This is for the following reasons:

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1) The long view

Most Arts disciplines are focused primarily on the modern period, and even those that study recent centuries only skim the surface of human history. Ancient Classics will give you a broader perspective on human culture, creativity and intellectual life, going back to the beginnings of writing in Europe, a story spanning at least three millennia. You will learn about the origins of European literature, art, theatre, mythology, philosophy, science and political thought, and about the influence of Graeco-Roman culture down to modern times.

2) Geographical breadth

Ancient Classics is concerned with not only Greeks and Romans, but with all the peoples they interacted with: Egyptians, Persians, Hebrews, Etruscans, Celts, Germans and many more. This was a multi-ethnic, globalised world, stretching from Britain to India, including much of not only modern Europe but also of North Africa and the Middle East. You will learn how the Western tradition was shaped by this diversity of peoples and civilisations.

3) Variety of perspectives

Ancient Classics exposes you to an extraordinarily rich variety of approaches and methods, combining the study of literature and mythology; theatre; art and archaeology; political, social and cultural history; philosophy; and languages and linguistics. You will develop the skill of analysing many different kinds of evidence in order to form a coherent perspective on a culture.

Read what our students say about us:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/why-classics/testimonials>

Find out about careers with Classics:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/why-classics/careers>

Structure of the Programme

Ancient Classics is available as a subject in the BA (Joint-Honours) and also on range of denominated degrees at NUI Galway, either for first year only or continuing as one of your two main subjects in second and final year, depending on the requirements of your programme.

Classics is distinct from most other subjects in First Year Arts by offering students a range of choices, depending on their interests. First Years take either three or four modules, depending on their programme of study.

In semester one, most students will take CC1101 Mythology and the City in Ancient Greece, which involves two lectures per week: one on the history, society and art of the ancient city; the other on Greek mythology and the origins of literature.

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Black-figure hydria from Caere showing one of the Herakles with Kerberos. c. 530 BC. Louvre Museum, Paris.

Students also take either or both of the following year-long modules:

CC1100 Classics in Twenty Objects: Exploring Antiquity through objects.

CC114 Written Words & Spoken Languages: The origins of languages and literary traditions.

In semester two, CC1101 is replaced by CC1102 Empire and Literature in Ancient Rome, studying the origins of the Roman Empire through its history and archaeology, and exploring what Romans thought about it in the poetry of Virgil.



A page from the *Vatican Virgil* showing Aeneas leaving Dido. c.400 AD. Vatican Museums.

Special language options: Beginners' Greek and Latin are available in semester one in each year of your studies. You do not have to study Greek or Latin at all, but we recommend that every Classics student at least considers taking a beginners' language module at some stage during their studies. Studying an ancient

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language is very different from studying a modern one, and is an excellent way to learn about the history of English and to improve your linguistic and communication skills generally.

Find out more in our [Ancient](#) Classics Student Handbook, available here:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/undergrad/>

Online Learning and Teaching

First Year students of Ancient Classics have either three or four lectures per week, depending on your programme of study. Additionally, you will have one small-group tutorial, starting around week 4 of term.

As of August 2020, we expect that we will have either one in two or one in three lectures face-to-face on campus, depending on the module. Other lectures will be delivered online. All lecture content will be available online for students who, for health reasons, are unable to attend on campus. We also expect that tutorials will be delivered face-to-face.

Assessments

The major assessment (70%) in each module is either a formal exam or an end-of-semester essay, depending on the module. Other types of assessment (30% in each module) include short essays, oral presentation and multiple-choice tests.

Live Introductory Question and Answer Session

The Ancient Classics Live Introduction and Question and Answer Sessions are scheduled at **10:00am** on both **Wednesday 23 September 2020** and **Friday 25 September 2020**. At each session, members of the Academic Staff of Ancient Classics will give a short talk introducing the subject and outlining some of the content of what is taught in Semester I. They will also be available to answer any questions that you might have. If you are interested in finding out more about Ancient Classics, please tune in for one of the sessions.

Important Links

- Discipline web page:
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics>
- Ancient Classics Student Handbook and timetable:
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/undergrad/>
- Student testimonials:
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/why-classics/testimonials>
- Careers with Ancient Classics:
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/why-classics/careers>
- Student Classics Society:
<https://www.facebook.com/classicsocnuig/>