

CLASSICS (CLAS)

CLAS 2450 Classical Mythology — 4 credits

An introduction to the major myths of the gods and heroes of ancient Greece, along with their origins and interpretations. Because classical mythology played such an important role in the development of the arts in Western civilization, this course has a strong visual component, and every lecture is accompanied by slides. Also offered as INDI 2450 and LATN 2450. Fulfills the fine arts requirement. Offered in the College for Women and the College for Adults.

CLAS 2460 Ancient Greece — 4 credits

The Ancient Greeks present an intriguing paradox for our modern sensibilities. They invented democracy, but envisioned it as a system in which only elite male members of society were permitted to participate. The Greeks saw themselves as the champions of “freedom,” but their prosperity was built on the labor of slaves, most women were strictly confined to their homes, and it was permissible to kill girl babies or female members of the household for any reason. The Greeks believed themselves to be the upholders of civilization against the “Barbarians,” but the Persian “barbarians” they opposed were an elegant and sophisticated people who upheld religious freedom for all and prohibited slavery within their borders. Yet the Greeks also produced some of the most superb art and the finest achievements of literature that the world has ever seen. This course explores the history of ancient Greece from the Paleolithic through the onset of the Hellenistic era, with emphasis on art, literature and material culture, to try to form a coherent vision of this remarkable and self-contradictory people. Also offered as HIST 2460.

CLAS 2470 Ancient Rome — 4 credits

This course follows the history of Rome from prehistoric times through the rise and struggles of the Republic and into the early Empire up to the death of Marcus Aurelius, last of the “Five Good Emperors,” in 180 CE. The two largest areas of focus will be on daily life in the Roman Republic (for which you will read one or more comic plays by the playwright Plautus) and the gripping saga of the five Julio-Claudian emperors (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero), whose reigns we will explore through readings from the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, as well as viewings of the BBC’s masterful “I, Claudius” series. Also offered as HIST.

CLAS 2994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses. Offered in the College for Women.

CLAS 3460W Women in Greece and Rome — 4 credits

This course examines the evidence we have regarding the lives and societal position of women in the classical world from the Homeric epics through the Roman Empire. Students will read a variety of texts, including law cases, short stories, love letters, medical writings and manuals on estate management, as well as several Athenian plays. The course also deals with the visual arts and archeological evidence from the time period in order to convey as complete as possible a picture of women’s lives during these times. Writing and reflection on texts and images composes a substantial portion of each class period, as does reading these reflections aloud to one another, and critiquing the style and content of one another’s writing. During the semester students will also write a substantial research paper on the topic of their choice and deliver it as a class presentation. Departmental Statement on Writing for History Courses: The ability to absorb information and turn it into clear and thoughtful prose is the most important skill required to succeed in a History class. History is a nuanced and complex subject, and we therefore stress the importance of incorporating the writing process into the learning process. Students must develop the habit of articulating their understanding of the material in a clear and straightforward manner that simultaneously conveys information and interprets the relevance and importance of that information for the reader. Producing both long and short papers is an important part of our pedagogy, as are tests that require a large amount of writing. Also offered as HIST 3460W and WOST 3460W.