

A-LEVEL / OCR / 2 YEARS

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

ROMAN AND GREEK HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Classics involves the study of the history and literature of the Greek and Roman World. It is an opportunity to explore the ways in which modern Europe was created in the Roman Empire, read literature which has inspired people for over two thousand years and explore the ideologies and propaganda of imperialism and love. Political violence and philosophy, romantic love of all varieties, epics and archaeology, Classics is wide-ranging and inclusive of a tremendous variety of perspectives and content.

The course includes political history in Augustus' creation of the Roman Empire; social history in changing attitudes to love, desire and the status of women in Greece and Rome; Epic poems drawing on mythology by Homer and Virgil, and Ovid's cheeky love poetry; statues, buildings and coins as historical sources; Plato and Seneca as philosophers commenting on their world and offering ideas still applicable today. Classics has world-changing history, mind-blowing art, and literature which has and will endure for millennia; each generation finds new elements in these timeless masterpieces.

TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

The course is based around sources both written and visual and requires time spent engaging with ideas and arguing through rival interpretations. The skills developed in evaluating arguments, presenting coherent cases, and separating objectively true facts from subjective interpretations are always valuable. The department offers voluntary classes in Latin and optional visits to Rome to see the sites, statues and images studied. Small university-style seminar groups reading the philosophical texts or analysing the materials are also planned with input from Durham University.

ASSESSMENT

The course is examined by written examinations at the end of the course. There are three of these: 40% (2hr20m) on Epic (Homer and Virgil), 30% (1hr45m) on the Roman Empire and Augustus, 30% (1hr45m) on Social History and Philosophy (Love, Women and Philosophy). These consist of a wide range of questions and question styles to suit all students.

SUBJECT COMBINATIONS

Classical Civilisation is a particularly good complement for History and English Literature as it shares skills with each of these and our historical and literary content is the starting point of two thousand years of development into theirs. Philosophy too has areas of skills overlap in Plato and Seneca (though to a different degree). More generally Classical Civilisation is an opportunity for students to ensure that interests and skills in History, Literature, Art, independent thought, and essay writing are honed, and many students studying Maths and Sciences also take Classics to develop and evidence a breadth of skills.

CAREERS/HE INFORMATION

Our Classical Civilisation students are studying subjects from Classics to engineering at a wide range of universities. Our students have been accepted to read Classics at Oxford and Durham amongst many others. Universities value the breadth of skills and knowledge students develop. Our students are now teachers and lawyers, engineers and business people, academics and labourers: everyone gains from the study.