Contents

Why choose Classics in First Arts? ................................................................. 3
Testimonials from Classics students ....................................................... 5
Practicalities ............................................................................................ 7
People in Classics .................................................................................. 10
Choosing your modules ........................................................................ 11
Module descriptions .............................................................................. 13
Suggested general reading ................................................................... 17
Why choose Classics in First Arts?

Classics (or 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.

Classics is available as a subject choice in the BA degree at NUI Galway, and you may choose to study it for one year only or to continue with Classics into second and third year as one of your two degree subjects.

Our First Arts course offers a general introduction for students who have no prior background in the discipline.

Classics as discipline is highly complementary with 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:

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. 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**

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**

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.
Testimonials from Classics students

A selection of comments from second- and final-year students in 2018–19.

Q: Why did you choose to do Classics?

- ‘Interest in mythology and language history’ (Alex)
- ‘I’ve always had an interest in the history of Greece and Rome, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that the Classics department not only covers this, but delves into language, art, architecture and literature.’ (John)
- ‘The course covers a wide range of topics across great time depth, not just Greece and Rome, but diverse places from Mesopotamia to Ireland.’ (Michelle)

Q: What do you think distinguishes Classics from other subjects?

- ‘The professors are more approachable, the subject is extremely varied and there are many choices and directions to pursue within it, and there is a lot of communication between the department and other departments, as well as extracurricular lectures and events.’ (Alex)
- ‘It tackles more then one field, there is a certain amount of archaeology in the form of Greek pottery and architecture, you learn about ancient thought and literature through the study of tragedies and ancient epic and there is a good amount of following the development and spread of language, which I was shocked to find how much I enjoyed learning about.’ (Eamonn)
- ‘Classics is an incredibly diverse subject, encompassing art history, architecture, languages, philosophy, ancient literature, ancient imagination, and much more besides. […] Studying Classics, one quickly comes to realise that what most concerned the ancients (love, justice, politics, identity, virtue, the divine, etc.) are all abiding concerns which might best be described as trans-historical.’ (James)
- ‘The multidisciplinary nature of the subject allows you to cover a lot of material in three years which not only gives a very broad perspective of the field, it’s also like doing several subjects in one. I found this kept things fresh and exciting.’ (John)

Q: What is/are you favourite aspect(s) of the course?

- ‘The open-ended nature of many of the assignments and studies, the connections between languages courses, and the open and encouraged communication between students and professors, and students with other students.’ (Alex)
- ‘It was a great joy to attend lectures and tutorials where we were guided by great specialists, passionate researchers, and talented pedagogues. The enthusiasm of these scholars appeared to be contagious, and contributed immensely to our general studies and independent researches.’ (Alina)
• ‘I really enjoyed the language and linguistics aspect of the course, which is what I thought I’d enjoy the least! Learning Latin has changed the way I look at all modern languages, and it’s something I find myself using a lot since I’ve finished the degree.’ (John)

• ‘My favourite topics dealt with not only culture in the classical world, but how they influence Irish culture. This really captured my imagination and sparked a real interest in this field.’ (John)

Q: What do you feel you have gained from your study of Classics?

• ‘A stronger ability to research (i.e. finding sources both digital and physical), the ability to focus my interests and thoughts when working on open projects, and a clearer view of what I want to do moving forward with my studies and career.’ (Alex)

• ‘I have gained several life skills from studying Classics. Critical thinking would probably be the first that jumps to mind, the ability to read a section of a manuscript written in the first century A.D. and really understand what the person and subsequent translators had as part of their agenda in writing these things down was a major advantage which has helped massively in my other subjects and in my day to day life.’ (Eamonn)

• ‘I have become better at both critical and creative thinking. I can read with greater focus and more easily comprehend complex ideas. I am also far better at making a coherent and compelling written argument. As a creative writer, my time studying Classics has resulted in me being able to apply an increased depth to narratives.’ (James)

• ‘I came away with a much greater understanding of Latin in particular and languages in general. My knowledge of the English language and its structures has increased greatly since my time with the Classics department.’ (John)

• ‘Classics has complemented my study of history very well: having the opportunity to study similar processes happening in different eras is very useful.’ (Michelle)

Q: What would you say if you were recommending Classics to another student?

• ‘The course is fantastic, the staff are always super helpful and approachable and you will never feel like you are bothering them with questions. It’s a really satisfying course and anyone with a modicum of interest in the ancient world should really consider taking this course, you would not regret it.’ (Eamonn)
Practicalities

Where we are

The staff offices are located on the top floor of Tower 2 on the Arts Concourse. To get there, look for the lift or stairs near the Bank of Ireland end of the Concourse and head to the top floor.

We like to meet students! Please feel free to introduce yourself to any member of staff, explain your interests and ask any questions you want.

In particular, the First-Year Co-ordinator Dr Edward Herring (edward.herring@nuigalway.ie; room 504) will be happy to discuss academic queries, while our Classics administrator Ms Margaret Logan (room 508, mornings only) is also available to help you with queries regarding practicalities. (See also ’People in Classics’ below.)

Orientation week

First Year Orientation takes place in the week beginning Monday 2 September. This is an excellent time to come and talk to staff and/or current students at our stands or in our offices.

We give talks on our First Year course several times during the week, so please try to come to one of them. By seeing us in person you will get a much better idea of what the course is about.

Modules and module requirements

All Classics modules count as 5 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits. Most modules involve 24 lectures, delivered either entirely in one semester (two lectures per week for 12 weeks) or spread across both semesters (one lecture per week for 24 weeks).

All BA students take 60 ECTS credits between all their subjects in each academic year. First Year students take either 15 or 20 credits in Classics, depending on their study programme. (See ’Choosing your modules’ below.)

The workload for each module is divided into the following elements (all obligatory):

- Lectures (normally 24 per module): Introducing topics and providing a framework for further study.
- Tutorials (3–4 per module): Working in small groups under the direction of a tutor.
- Independent study: This is an essential part of your learning. You will be expected to schedule at least two to three hours per hour of class time for reading and writing assignments given in lectures and tutorials, and ideally some independent research of your own.
- Mid-term and-end-of-semester assessments.
Exploring Greek and Latin

From this year, Greek and Latin are available to study from beginner’s level in First Year Classics. You are free to try either language for one semester only, and you may start or continue a language in any year of study.

You do not have to study Greek or Latin at all, but we recommend that every Classics student consider taking at least one beginners’ language module at some stage during their studies.

Studying an ancient language is different to studying a modern one, since the focus is almost exclusively on reading comprehension (i.e. not learning to ask for directions or to write a holiday postcard). The benefits of studying an ancient language may be summarised as follows:

- You will have the possibility of reading ancient literature and other writing in the original languages, giving you direct access to the authors’ own words.

- You will develop a deeper understanding of English vocabulary. Perhaps 70% of the total word base of English is Latin-derived (some of it via the influence of French). Much of English technical terminology is Greek in origin. Studying Latin and Greek brings not only a knowledge of the meaning of words, but it will help you to appreciate their histories, nuances and inter-relationships.

- You will develop your linguistic skills generally. The grammar of Greek and Latin is more complex than English, but also much more precise. After studying these ancient language structures, you will write English (and other languages) with more accuracy and greater confidence.

- The beginners’ courses are highly structured, which helps you to manage your time and to develop effective study skills.
**Classics Society**

The Classics Soc is a student-run society whose membership is open to all students who have an interest in Classics. You can join the society at the Societies Day organised early in the year or at any other time.

The Society organises events throughout the year, from the more serious (invited speakers) to the more fun (Classics themed parties, movie nights, etc.). A highlight is the annual trip, which students organise to a place of Classical interest (often in Italy), with financial support from the Students’ Union Societies Office.

The Classics Soc is a great way to meet new people and to get to know other the students in your classes. We also recommend you consider putting yourself forward to serve on the committee: it’s a good way to develop organisational skills and build your CV.

See more at: [https://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/classics-soc/](https://www.nuigalway.ie/classics/classics-soc/)

**An Ghaeilge**


**Student Support**

Student life can be challenging and everyone struggles from time to time. If you have a difficulty —be it educational, emotional, financial, health-related, or something else— that you’re struggling to overcome, then you should explore of the many support services available in the university. For a list, see here: [http://www.nuigalway.ie/student-services/](http://www.nuigalway.ie/student-services/)

Please also feel free to speak with your Classics year co-ordinator or any member of staff at any time. And remember that it is always better to address issues when they’re starting to become a problem rather than later.
People in Classics

Our offices are located on the top floor of Tower 2 in the main Arts & Sciences Building. You can find the lift or stairs near the Bank of Ireland end of the Concourse.

Dr Jacopo Bisagni (jacopo.bisagni@nuigalway.ie)
Lecturer in Classics. Room 505. Final-year BA co-ordinator.
Historical linguistics, medieval Latinity, early Irish monasticism and monastic poetry.

Prof. Michael Clarke (michael.clarke@nuigalway.ie)
Established Professor of Classics. Room 506. Second-year BA co-ordinator.
Ancient and medieval languages, comparative mythology, Classical and medieval heroic literature.

Dr Edward Herring (edward.herring@nuigalway.ie)
Senior Lecturer in Classics. Room 504. First-year BA co-ordinator.
Archaeology of South Italy, ethnicity in Antiquity.

Ms Margaret Logan (margaret.logan@nuigalway.ie)
Classics Administrator. Room 508 (mornings only).

Dr Pádraic Moran (padraic.moran@nuigalway.ie)
Lecturer in Classics. Room 510. Head of Discipline.
Latin literature, scholarship and education in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.
For full staff profiles, see the Classics website: www.nuigalway.ie/classics
Choosing your modules

All Classics modules count for 5 ECTS credits. Depending on your programme, during First Year you will take the following credits in Classics:

- 15 credits (3 modules) in 1BA = three lectures per week each semester:
  Normally students taking BA Connect programmes.

- 20 credits (4 modules) in 1BA = four lectures per week each semester:
  Most other programmes, including the BA Joint Honours (GY101).

The following are guidelines about the module choices that may be available to you. You can read about each module in the descriptions at the end of this document. If still undecided, you are very welcome to attend the first couple of lectures in each module before making up your mind. (All Classics students are welcome to attend all modules, even if not taking them for credit.)

Semester one

Most students will take **CC1101 Mythology and the City in Ancient Greece** (2 lectures per week):

- Dr Edward Herring on the art, archaeology and history of the ancient city.
  3pm Mondays, AC201 (Concourse)

- Prof. Michael Clarke on Greek mythology and the origins of literature.
  12pm Wednesdays, IT125 (IT Building, First Floor)

Students taking 20 ECTS will take both of the following year-long modules. BA Connect students may choose between them:

- CC114 Written Words & Spoken Languages (part 1): Dr Jacopo Bisagni on the roots of European languages.
  12pm Thursdays, Ó Tnúthail Theatre (Arts Millennium Building)

- CC1100 Classics in Twenty Objects (part 1): Exploring Antiquity through objects—and learning how to explain them to others.
  5pm Tuesdays, Ó Tnúthail Theatre (Arts Millennium Building)

Language options: students who are interested in exploring the study of either Latin or Greek may take one of the following modules in place of CC1101:

- CC230 Beginning Latin 1
  1pm Mondays, AC203 and 5pm Wednesdays, AC203 (Concourse)

- CCS205 Ancient Greek for Beginners 1
  4pm Tuesdays, TB305 and 2pm Fridays, TB305 (Tower 2, near Bank of Ireland)
Semester two

Most students will take CC1102 Empire and Literature in Ancient Rome (two lectures per week):

- Dr Edward Herring on the history and archaeology of ancient Rome
  12pm Wednesdays, AC201 (Concourse)
- Dr Pádraic Moran on Latin literature and the poetry of Virgil
  12pm Thursdays, IT125G (IT Building, Ground Floor)

Students who began one or both of the following modules will continue them in semester two:

- CC114 Written Words & Spoken Languages (part 2): An exploration of literature, written culture and education in Antiquity
  5pm Tuesdays, Ó Tnúthail Theatre (Arts Millennium Building)
- CC1100 Classics in Twenty Objects (part 2): Exploring Antiquity through objects—and learning how to explain them to others
  3pm Mondays, AC201 (Concourse)

Language options: students who began the study of Latin or Greek in semester one have the option of continuing with one of the following modules instead of CC1102:

- CC232 Beginning Latin 2
  1pm Mondays, AC203 and 3pm Wednesdays, TB302 (Tower 2, near Bank of Ireland)
- CCS206 Greek for Beginners 2
  4pm Mondays, TB301 and 10am Thursdays, TB302 (to be confirmed)
Module descriptions

CC1101 Mythology and the City in Ancient Greece (Semester One)

Co-ordinator: Michael Clarke. 24 lectures (5 ECTS)

This module provides an introduction to the study of Antiquity by focusing on the mythological discourses of the ancient Near East and Greece, and on the rise of the European city-state in Classical Greece. All texts are studied in translation. The module divides into two complementary streams:

Mythology and the Origins of Western Literature (Clarke)

These lectures are focussed on ancient mythology, especially the concept of the pantheon of gods and the hero as a figure poised between men and gods, concentrating on literary and artistic evidence for the study of ancient society and thought. We will begin with evidence from Egypt, Mesopotamia and other Near Eastern civilisations, leading to an exploration of the earliest known European mythology and poetry written in Greek.

Politics, Culture and Society in the Ancient City (Herring)

These lectures will survey the history and culture of Ancient Greece, in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, a period of dynamic political and cultural innovation. The module will cover topics including the rise (and fall) of Greek democracy, art and architecture in fifth-century Athens, gender and sexuality, Greeks and barbarians, and the spectacular military career of Alexander the Great. Students will be introduced to original sources for Greek history.

Essential textbooks for Clarke’s series:

C. Freeman, Egypt, Greece and Rome (Oxford)
S. Price and P. Thonemann, A History of Classical Europe (Penguin)

Essential textbooks for Herring’s series:

C. Orrieux and P. Schmitt Pantel, A History of Ancient Greece (Blackwell)

Teaching and assessment:

There will be two formal lectures each week, along with a tutorials series beginning in week 3 or 4 of the teaching semester. The main assessment will be by a two-hour written examination at the end of the semester; there will also be a series of smaller assignments organised through the tutorials series, and these will also contribute to your final grade for the module.
CC114 Written Words and Spoken Languages

Co-ordinator: Bisagni (semester 1 only). 1 lecture per week in both semesters.

This module is an introduction to philology, the study of ancient language and literature and the social and material aspects of their transmission. The weekly lecture in the first semester focuses on the rise and development of languages, while in the second semester we explore writing systems and the history of books and texts.

Part 1 (Semester One): The Roots of European Languages (Bisagni)

Where do the languages of Europe come from? How and why do languages change over time? In this part of the module, we will explore ancient, medieval and modern attempts to answer questions such as these.

First, we will focus on ideas and hypotheses formulated in the pre-scientific era: what did the ancient Greeks and Romans think about the nature and origins of their own languages? And how did the rise of European vernaculars in the Middle Ages change scholarly views on such matters?

Next, we shall look at the gradual development of Historical Linguistics as a scientific discipline between the 18th century and the present time. We will pay particular attention to the elaboration of the Indo-European theory, which has allowed modern scholars to rediscover (and even reconstruct!) the lost prehistoric ancestor of a large family of languages including Greek, Latin, Irish, English, Icelandic, Sanskrit and many others.

NB: These lectures provide a general introduction to the development and the key concepts of Historical Linguistics, and no prior knowledge of ancient or foreign languages is required.

Required reading:

Part 2 (Semester Two): Reading and Writing in the Ancient World

Much of what we know about ancient civilisation comes from written texts like the works of Homer and Cicero. But how were their works preserved and passed down through thousands of years? In this module we will address that question and related ones by examining the origins and development of writing and reading, as well as looking at how the texts of antiquity were transmitted to our day through manuscripts.

Required reading:
CC1100 Classics in Twenty Objects

Co-ordinator: Herring. 1 lecture per week in both semesters.

This module will draw together the themes of your other courses and give you an overall guide to Classics. The lectures will introduce you to a series of artefacts – artworks, monuments, written texts – from points in the three thousand years from the beginnings of civilisation, through the heyday of ancient Greece and Rome, all the way to the rise of modern European nations after the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. Each lecture will centre around a particular artefact, beginning with the most ancient art of Greece and continuing through the Classical period and into the reception of ancient art and literature in northern Europe and ultimately in Ireland. You will attend a lecture each week, and assessment will be divided between in-class assessment and project work. Your task will be to plan how to pass on your knowledge to others, moving ‘from learner to teacher’ in your own approach to education. The suggested reading below will serve as a set of reference books which you will find useful for all parts of the Classics course.

Reading:
C. Freeman, Egypt, Greece and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean (Oxford, 2014)

CC1102 Empire and Literature in Ancient Rome

Co-ordinator: Moran. 2 lectures per week in semester 2.

This module provides an introduction to the history and literature of the Roman world.

A History of Rome from Romulus to Constantine (Herring)

This module will examine the rise of Rome from small city-state to global power (eighth to first centuries BC), then two key periods of transformation of Roman society, in the early imperial period (first century BC to first century AD) and the final two centuries of the Western Empire (fourth to the fifth centuries AD). This part of the module will concentrate especially on two key phases of Roman history: first, the political changes that took place under Julius Caesar and then Augustus in the 1st century BC, creating the system that underpinned the Roman Empire; second, the
Christianisation of the Empire, which laid the foundations of European culture into the Medieval period and beyond.

Required reading:

Boatwright, M. T. *et al.*: *The Romans: from Village to Empire*, Oxford: OUP, 2011 (2nd ed.). Other texts will be distributed on Blackboard.

**Virgil and Roman Identity (Moran)**

This module aims to provide an introduction to Latin literature for students with no prior knowledge of the subject. It will begin by exploring Virgil’s celebrated epic poem, the *Aeneid*. We will first look at what an epic poem is, then examine how Virgil’s work not only addressed the literary past by creating a specifically Roman counterpoint to Homer, but also responded to the political and social anarchy of his own lifetime. In doing so, we will examine why this work was regarded as a Classic, almost immediately from its publication.

Required reading:


Other texts will be distributed on Blackboard.

**CC230 & CC232 Beginning Latin 1 & 2**

2BA/Final-Year BA/Postgrad, semesters 1&2. Co-ordinator: Moran.

These modules introduce students to Latin, the language of ancient Rome. You will gradually become acquainted with its grammar and vocabulary, and develop reading skills with the aim of accessing Latin texts in their original form by semester two. The process of learning Latin helps to sharpen your understanding of the grammar of most modern languages, including English. You will also learn about the history of the English language and the origins and relationships of Latinate words in English (perhaps 70% of English vocabulary). Students who have a particular interest in historical linguistics can focus on learning more about the relationships between Latin, Greek, English, Irish and other Indo-European languages (not obligatory). No previous knowledge is expected.

**Reading**

CCS205 & CCS206 Ancient Greek for Beginners 1 & 2

2BA/Final-Year BA/Postgrad, semesters 1 & 2. Co-ordinator: Clarke (sem. 1), Moran (sem. 2).

These modules introduce students to Ancient Greek. You will gradually become acquainted with its alphabet, grammar and vocabulary, and develop reading skills based on texts adapted from Greek drama. The process of learning Greek helps to sharpen your understanding of the grammar of most modern languages, including English. Students who have a particular interest in historical linguistics can focus on learning more about the relationships between Latin, Greek, English, Irish and other Indo-European languages (not obligatory). No previous knowledge is expected.

Reading

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [2 vols: *Text and Vocabulary* and *Grammar and Exercises*]

Suggested general reading

**Ethics and the good life**

Seneca, *On the happy life* (trans. J. Ker; Chicago)

St Augustine, *Confessions* (trans. P. Brown; Oxford World’s Classics)

**Education and our place in it**

V. Woolf, *A room of one’s own* (Penguin Classics)

Petrarch, *The ascent of Mount Ventoux* (http://history.hanover.edu/texts/petrarch/pet17.html)

M. de Montaigne, *On the education of children* (PDF)

P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Penguin)

**Myths and ideas**


**Language**


F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. R. Harris; Bloomsbury)

T. Janson, *The History of Languages: an Introduction* (OUP)


**Historical narratives**


P. Salway, *Roman Britain, A very short introduction* (OUP; 2nd ed)

C. Kelly, *The Roman Empire, A very short introduction* (OUP)

D. H. Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies*  
(https://archive.org/details/HistoriansFallaciesTowardALogicOfHistoricalThought)


C. Freeman, *Egypt, Greece and Rome* (Oxford)

C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome* (Penguin)


E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text* (Berkeley)

**Literature**

Ovid, *Sorrows of an exile* (trans. A. Melville; Oxford)


C. de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (Penguin)

**Archaeology, visual and material culture**

J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin)

P. Barolsky, *Ovid and the Metamorphoses of Western Art* (Yale)

A. Schnapp, *Discovery of the Past* (British Museum Press)