

# Classics



## LENGTH OF COURSE

4 years

## MINIMUM A-LEVEL GRADE REQUIREMENTS

AAA

## A-LEVELS REQUIRED

Latin and/or Greek (for Course I only)

2 pieces of written work to be submitted

## ADMISSIONS TEST

CAT – paper-based test, divided into three sections (each 1hr): Latin Translation Test, Greek Translation Test and Classics Language Aptitude Test. Which of the sections you take depends on whether you are applying for Classics I or Classics II.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Classics (Literae Humaniores) is a wide-ranging, holistic degree devoted to the study of the literature, history, philosophy, languages and archaeology of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. It is one of the most interdisciplinary of all degrees, and offers the opportunity to study these two foundational ancient civilisations and their reception in modern times. The degree also permits students to take extensive options in modern philosophy, a flexibility which makes Oxford's Literae Humaniores different from most other Classics courses.

## COURSE OPTIONS

Course I includes the study of 2 ancient languages for students who have a background in one or more of the languages.

IA: students with Latin and Greek A-Level or equivalent continue Latin and Greek

IB: students with Latin A-Level or equivalent continue Latin and begin Greek

IC: students with Greek A-Level or equivalent continue Greek and begin Latin

Course II includes the study of 1 ancient language for students who do not have a background in one or more of the languages

IIA: students have the option to begin Latin with no Latin or Greek A-Level or equivalent

IIB: students have the option to begin Greek with no Latin or Greek A-Level or equivalent

## APPROXIMATE NO. OF CONTACT HOURS PER WEEK

**Tutorials:** 2-3 hours

**Lectures:** 4 hours

**Classes:** 5 hours

## CLASS/TUTORIAL TESTIMONIAL

Classes/Tutorials are a discussion based method of learning and is the primary teaching style at Oxford. My Classics tutorials include the other Classics students as well as joint honours and Classical Archeology and Ancient History students, because of this my classes are usually made up of seven students from my college. Philosophy classes are smaller with five students due to Philosophy not being a compulsory module in other degrees. Latin language classes are intense for beginners hence why they're every week day. Language classes are approximately made up of ten students from a range of different colleges and on both Classics and joint honours courses. As a result of this they usually take place in other colleges or in university buildings.

## CAREER PROSPECTS

Possible career options:

- Academia & Further Education
- Teaching & Education
- Government and Public Services & The Civil Service
- The Legal System & Law
- Banking & Investment
- Media & Film production
- Publishing
- Journalism

## PERSONAL STATEMENT TIPS

- Classics is so broad! You are not expected to have 'expert' knowledge on the subject at all. Have a good understanding of the basics (see Recommended Reading) and explore your specific interest. Greek tragedy? Ancient Philosophy? Greek vases?
- Do not lie! Make sure you actually read whatever you say you did.
- Do not underestimate yourself or how much or less you have to write about. Be true to your potential.
- Do not spend too long on one thing – personal statements are short and you want to get as much across as possible within the word count.
- Plan, draft and proof-read until you have your final piece.
- Get a fresh pair of eyes to go

## INTERVIEW TIPS

- Be yourself. Do not attempt to respond bearing in mind what your teacher or the interviewer wants you to say. Speak your thought process out loud and talk them through your ideas.
- Note any initial thoughts down about the reading/source given to you pre-interview. These will give you a starting point on what to elaborate on further when prompted.
- Review your personal statement and be prepared to discuss whatever you stated to have read/attended/watched etc.
- It is okay to ask the interviewer to repeat, rephrase or re-explain the question. Better to answer confidently than to respond half-heartedly.
- The interviewer(s) does not care how you look! Wear whatever makes you comfortable – within reason. There is no formal dress-code but it may not be a bad idea to look presentable.

## CAT TIPS

- The Classics webpage on the Oxford website have a set of past papers on the CAT page.
- It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with the structure and content of the test.
- The CAT (Classics Admissions Test) is for those with an Ancient Language A-Level. Unseen translations and reviewing vocabulary can help for preparation.
- Complete beginners will take the CLAT (Classics Language Aptitude Test) which requires no existing knowledge of any particular language but tests candidates on their aptitude for learning a new language rapidly.
- Reviewing past papers can help to get an idea of what the test will consist of.

## WHY CLASSICS AT OXFORD?

I personally chose to undertake a degree in Classics as I love studying History, English and Politics and Classics gives you the chance to study all of these subjects in depth. As Classics focus on the evolution of Greek and Roman culture and society you can examine different areas of life in detail and gain an intimate understanding of how it was like to live in Greco/Roman society during this period. Classics (especially at Oxford) also has a key focus on language which allows students to read surviving texts in their original format which leads to you developing your own unique understanding to these ancient texts. The impact Classical civilisation has had on civilisation is still evident in numerous sectors of modern society and personally I find it very interesting to draw these links and comparisons.

## Recommended Reading/Viewing

### Primary Texts

These are original pieces of literature created at the time under study and so authors are writing from a contemporary perspective:

- **Epic Poems** – Classic Classics Must-Reads!
- **Homer's Iliad**: you will encounter the Iliad if not in your first term, then your first year of study and are expected to have read it before your study. Other than that, it is an exciting read and definitely a good introduction to the Ancient World and one of the most influential pieces of literature.
- **Homer's Odyssey**: a worthwhile companion to the Iliad and a thrilling insight into travels within literature from antiquity. Odysseus from the Iliad is the protagonist in this epic. You will come across the same characters but across different texts in Classical literature and so this will provide a better understanding of this concept.
- **Virgil's Aeneid**: the Roman equivalent to the Greek Iliad. See how Virgil has taken the iconic work of Homer and made it his own. At some point of your degree you will be asked to choose a 'Special Subject' and so it may be a good idea to consider whether you prefer Greek or Roman (also because it's fun to choose a side to compare with your fellow Classicists!)

Greek Tragedy - Read what makes Greek tragedy inspirational and where famous myths emerge from:

- [Aristophanes' The Frogs](#)
- [Euripides' Medea](#)
- [Sophocles' Oedipus Rex](#)

Ancient Philosophy - Early Philosophy and the works of the 'fathers of Philosophy' in their original text:

- [Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics](#)
- [Plato's Republic](#)

### Secondary Texts

These are the works of someone else commenting on primary texts and so are generally scholarly books and articles.

This will give an insight into criticisms, summaries and a more modern perspective of the original text:

Classical Literature:

- Stephen Harrison, [A Companion to Latin Literature](#) (Malden MA, 2005)
- Tim Whitmarsh, [Ancient Greek Literature](#) (London 2004)

Ancient History:

- Robin Osborne, [Greek History: The basics](#) (Oxford 2014)
- Mary Beard, [SPQR](#) (London 2015)

### Podcasts & Videos

- [Let's talk about myths baby](#) (Spotify).
- Ryan Stitt - [The history of Ancient Greece](#) (Youtube).
- [The great Greek myths](#) (Prime Video).
- [Viola Helen](#) (YouTube) - Oxford Classicist.
- [Gresham College](#) website: They have a multitude of free classics lectures available.

### Modern Day Retellings

- [Song of Achilles](#) - Madeline Miller
- [Mythos](#) - Stephen Fry
- [Silence of the girls](#) - Pat Baker
- [Penelopiad](#) - Margaret Atwood

## Example Timetable

### TYPICAL WEEK FOR A CLASSICS IIA STUDENT:

#### Monday:

7am: Wake up.  
9am: Latin language [class](#) (1hr).  
10am-12pm: Latin homework/  
Vocabulary revision.  
12pm-1pm: Lunch.  
1pm-4pm: Primary reading for the  
week's essay.  
5pm-7pm: Dinner.  
7pm-9pm: Social time.  
9pm-10pm: Extra subject reading.

#### Tuesday:

7am: Wake up.  
9am: Latin language [class](#) (1hr).  
10am-12pm: Latin homework/  
Vocabulary revision.  
12pm-1pm: Lunch.  
1pm-4pm: Finish primary reading for  
the week's essay.  
5pm-7pm: Dinner.  
7pm-9pm: Social time.  
9pm-10pm: Extra subject reading.

#### Wednesday:

7am: Wake up.  
9am: Latin language [class](#) (1hr).  
10am-12pm: Latin homework/  
Vocabulary revision.  
12pm-1pm: Lunch.  
1pm-5pm: Secondary reading for the  
week's essay.  
5pm-7pm: Dinner.  
7pm-9pm: Plan the essay.  
9pm-10pm: Philosophy reading.

#### Thursday:

7am: Wake up.  
9am: Latin language [class](#) (1hr)  
10am-12pm: Start the essay.  
12pm-1pm: Lunch.  
1pm-3pm: Work on presentation for  
the week.  
3pm-5:30pm: Classics [class/tutorial](#).  
6pm-8pm: Dinner.  
8pm-10pm: Latin Homework/revision.

#### Friday:

7am: Wake up.  
9am: Latin language [class](#) (1hr).  
10am-12pm: Finish essay.  
12pm-1pm: Lunch.  
1pm-2pm: Go over notes from  
Philosophy reading.  
2pm-4pm: Philosophy lesson.  
4pm-6pm: Final edits on essay and  
submission.  
6pm-8pm: Dinner.  
8pm-10pm: Social time.

At the weekends I'll do some more  
reading, some latin homework and  
revision and consolidate the notes  
made throughout the week.