

**CLAS 489 (F06):
JR./SR. SEMINAR IN CLASSICAL CIVILIZATION**

Professor Joseph L. Rife

Office:

M/W 3:30-4:30, and by appt.
Old Main 314
x 6254 or rife@macalester.edu

Class:

M 7:00-10.00
436 Ashland Avenue #1

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an advanced topical exploration of ancient Mediterranean culture and society. The level of study and discussion is gauged for upper-level majors in Classics; the class serves to fulfill the capstone requirement for a Classics major. We will investigate different perspectives on otherness, or alterity, in Greek and Roman antiquity. During the 1980s and 1990s, classical scholars with an interest particularly in cultural history began to revolt against what might be called the tyranny of classical idealism. This concept of classical antiquity, rooted in the thinking of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, fixated on certain idealized, highly evolved figures in ancient society: the virtuous, athletic Greek male embodied in Classical figural sculpture and the composed, conservative Roman male represented in Late Republican oratory. Classicists in the late twentieth century, informed by developments in anthropological and literary theory, began to investigate “other” members of ancient society. They studied people and experiences playing a secondary or suppressed role in the art and writing produced by the wealthy, literate elite of the Greek and Roman worlds: barbarians, women, slaves, the handicapped, the poor, the very old and the very young. Furthermore, recent scholars have also recognized that the ancient ideology of self-identity was essentially oppositional. Ancient people imagined and presented themselves as members of dichotomous groups in hierarchical arrangement: divine and mortal; man and woman; Greek (or Roman) and barbarian; free and slave. Thus, through the exploration of such alterities, we will investigate the nature of diversity and the construction of identity in antiquity while engaging current scholarly discourse.

This course is designed to draw upon the strengths of other versions of junior/senior seminars. In order to generate a productive dialogue that is sustained throughout the semester, we will examine one broad and complex theme: ancient otherness. While you will be expected to build upon your knowledge accumulated as a Classics major, you will also broaden it by reading and examining primary sources both material, visual and textual that you have not previously encountered. Through the reading of secondary sources alongside a selection of ancient evidence, you will develop an understanding of the prevailing critical discourses in classical studies, and you will evaluate and respond to them. At this advanced level, you will also be expected not to do more work of the kind you have done in other classes, but rather to engage in high-level source criticism, to recognize intellectual trends in modern scholarship, and to critique abstract interpretive concepts and models. In addition, this seminar introduces you to the craft of the professional classicist through involvement as writers and reviewers in the preparation of an undergraduate Classics journal.

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

I expect everyone to complete the readings carefully and thoughtfully, so that you can come to class with an ability and willingness to discuss them. I also expect everyone to show initiative and creativity in preparing assignments and leading discussions. Assignments must be completed on time; otherwise, I will assess a 10% deduction in the grade. If you foresee any absence or lateness for valid reasons, let me know well beforehand. Generally speaking, I expect everyone to attend every meeting: this is a short class, and its success depends on your active presence.

Assignments will consist of readings, discussion questions, response papers, a book review, and an activity in peer review. Each week, one of you will master a topic, for which I will choose pertinent readings in primary and secondary sources. Everyone must do the readings that week and write a response paper (one to three pages long, double-spaced). Response papers are due on the day of the class, preferably delivered to me in clean, typed form in hard copy (I will accept e-mailed papers in a pinch). The person assigned the week's topic must gain a detailed understanding of the assigned readings and prepare study questions for the class (at least five). These questions should be distributed by e-mail on the Friday before our meeting. Then everyone must prepare a book review (six to ten pages long, double-spaced) on the modern scholarship you read for your topic. All book reviews are due November 22. Finally, we will serve as a review committee for papers submitted to an undergraduate journal by other upper-level classes in the department, especially Imperial Women.

These separate graded components will contribute to your overall grade for the course as follows:

Preparation and participation	25%
Discussion leadership	25%
Response papers	20%
Book review	20%
Peer review activity	10%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; NC = 0-59.

SCHEDULE

Mon 9/11 7:00-8:30	Introduction: formats, themes, assignments
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Mon 9/18 7:30-9:00	Classical scholarship and the Other (Joe) <i>Read:</i> Cohen; Osbourne
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Mon 10/2 7:30-10:30	Cultural geography and the boundaries of the world in ancient thought (Maggie) <i>Read:</i> Lucian, <i>A True Story</i> ; Antonius Diogenes, <i>The Wonders beyond Thule</i> ; Romm
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Mon 10/16 7:30-10:30	Beauty and deformity in Greek and Roman art and thought (Katrina) <i>Read:</i> selection of sculpture and iconography; Phlegon of Tralles, <i>Marvels</i> ; Garland
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Thurs 11/2 7:30-10:30	Greek tragedy invents the barbarian (Mike) <i>Read:</i> Aeschylus, <i>Persians</i> ; Hall
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Mon 11/13 7:30-10:30	Exoticism, ethnicity and race in the Roman Empire (Robert) <i>Read:</i> Heliodorus, <i>An Ethiopian Story</i> ; Bowersock
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Wed 11/22	<i>Due:</i> Book reviews
Th-Sun 11/23-26	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
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Thurs 11/30 7:30-10:30	<i>Due:</i> Reading and evaluation of papers for peer review exercise
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Mon 12/4 7:30-10:30	Literacy and illiteracy in Classical Antiquity (Meghan) <i>Read:</i> selection of epigraphy and papyri; Bowman and Woolf <i>Due:</i> Typed results of peer review to other class(es)
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Mon 12/11 7:30-9:00	Conclusion; final work on undergraduate Classics journal (TBA) <i>Due:</i> Final version of book review, after responses from reviewers

READINGS

A. Primary Sources

- Aeschylus, *The Persians*, trans. A. J. Podlecki (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall 1970)
- Antonius Diogenes, *The Wonders beyond Thule*, trans. G. N. Sandy, in B. P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1989), pp. 775-782
- Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story*, trans. J. R. Morgan, in B. P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1989), pp. 349-588
- Lucian, *A True Story*, trans. B. P. Reardon, in *idem* (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1989), pp. 619-649
- Phlegon of Tralles, *The Book of Marvels*, trans. W. Hansen (Exeter: University Press 1996)
- Selection of sculpture and iconography
- Selection of epigraphy and papyri

B. Secondary Sources

- Bowersock, G. W., *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1994)
- Bowman, A. K., and G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994)
- Cohen, B., "Introduction," in B. Cohen (ed.), *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (Leiden: Brill 2000), pp. 1-20
- Garland, R., *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Duckworth 1995)
- Hall, E., *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press 1991)
- Hunter, R. (ed.), *Studies in Heliodorus* (Cambridge: Philological Society 1998), excerpt
- Osbourne, R., "An other view: an essay in political history," in B. Cohen (ed.), *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art* (Leiden: Brill 2000), pp. 23-42
- Romm, J., *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992)