

May 7, 2020

Dear world travelers and majors in Classical Mediterranean and Middle East,

I hope that this message finds you well and that this challenging spring semester is coming to a smooth conclusion! As you may already have read from the Provost's Office, the decision has been made that Macalester cannot safely support study away in the fall 2020 semester. As majors in our department, I know that you value and seek out opportunities to study abroad and explore the world. Although this choice is a necessary and responsible one for the College, it is nevertheless a painful one for us, who wish to see and experience other places first-hand. I acknowledge your disappointment and frustration in this challenging time, and I want you to know that the faculty of our department feel just as you do right now.

I also want you to know that we are behind you, we support you, and we will guide you through this interruption in Macalester's valuable study away programs. We honor your passion and commitment to exploring the world, and even if our options are limited in the coming semester, we will guarantee two things for our students and advisees: You will receive a meaningful academic experience with us that opens other times and places to you, and your progress toward meeting your major requirements will not be impeded. As you know, we look after and advise our students as a department, and our goal is to help you as individuals design a major plan that specifically fits you. We will continue to do this, and to help you work through this tough time and to pursue a rich academic experience with us, regardless of the challenges that we face right now.

For the time being, I encourage you to reach out to any (or even all!) of the faculty in our department, particularly if you were planning to study away in the fall. The College has encouraged everyone to register for classes in the fall semester, but if you need help getting into classes in the major, we will help you and support you in that too.

You are the reason that we are faculty members at Macalester, and your well-being and success are our first priority. We will get through this together, and the department will support you if this sudden change in study away opportunities has interrupted your academic plans for next year. Take care, and we wish you good luck with final projects and exams this week!

Brian

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