CLASICAL CIVILIZATION (CLCV)

* CLCV 022a / HSAR 022a, Imagining the Invisible in the Roman World  Alexander Ekserdjian
Ancient Mediterranean people were surrounded by images of ‘invisible’ things—the gods, the dead, and even a few ghosts. Seeing the gods themselves ‘in the flesh’ happened only rarely for the Romans, but images of those same divinities were everywhere—at home, in the marketplace, and at colossal scale in temples and sanctuaries. This course analyzes the ways in which Romans imagined these ‘invisible’ beings, excavating their imaginings through texts and objects. The material covered traces ancient imagination of invisible beings from Celtic cauldrons to Roman poets, and marble statues to painted synagogues. By looking at how the ‘invisible’ was represented we may discover much about how these unseen beings were understood, but also something about how Roman art worked as a representational system. Enrollment limited to first-year students. WR, HU

* CLCV 031a / HIST 024a, The Age of Cleopatra  Joseph Manning
This course introduces students to historical method using a pivotal and fascinating period in Mediterranean history. This course goes far beyond the typical framework, mainly from Roman sources, to examine Egypt in the age of Cleopatra, 50-30 BCE and the much wider world. We examine the reception of Cleopatra through the lens of women’s history. Enrollment is limited to first-year students. WR, HU

* CLCV 076b / ENGL 076b, Edward Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire  Staff
This course, a discussion-oriented first-year seminar, explores through close readings the 18th-century British historian Edward Gibbon’s magnum opus, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, with two main sets of questions in mind: Firstly, what is Gibbon’s picture of the world of the Roman Empire and the processes of historical change, how do account for it, and how accurate is it? And secondly, what is interesting and important about Gibbon’s methodology, language, and rhetoric, how do we understand these elements of his work in his own intellectual and historical context, and what is the influence of his work upon the course of historical writing? Enrollment limited to first-year students. No knowledge of Roman history is required. WR, HU

* CLCV 121a / EALL 150a / EAST 307a / PHIL 100a, Writing Philosophy: Weakness of Will in Ancient China, Greece, and Today  James Brown-Kinsella
“Grant me chastity and strength of will—but not yet!” In this infamous prayer, Augustine wrestles with a perennial problem for human agency: the apparent gap between knowing that we should do something and actually wanting to do it. How wide is the gap? How can we bridge it? How pervasive is the problem? This course introduces first-year students to writing in the discipline of philosophy by tracing the contours of these questions and exploring their answers in ancient China, ancient Greece, and modern analytic philosophy. We begin by considering the traditional account of weakness of will as akrasia (i.e., doing what one knows one shouldn’t do) and explaining how such a gap in our agency is or isn’t possible. Next, we consider an alternative account, that of acedia (i.e., not doing what one knows one should do), and assess strategies for helping an agent bridge this kind of gap. Finally, we reassess
the phenomenon of weakness of will in light of arguments that position it in a broader context, approach it from a new perspective, or try to rewrite our understanding of the phenomenon altogether. WR, HU

CLCV 125a / PHIL 125a, Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  Staff
An introduction to ancient philosophy, beginning with the earliest pre-Socratics, concentrating on Plato and Aristotle, and including a brief foray into Hellenistic philosophy. Intended to be taken in conjunction with PHIL 126. WR, HU 0 Course cr

CLCV 129a / HIST 159a / HUMS 129a / NELC 158a / RLST 158a, Jesus to Muhammad: Ancient Christianity to the Rise of Islam  Staff
The history of Christianity and the development of Western culture from Jesus to the early Middle Ages. The creation of orthodoxy and heresy; Christian religious practice; philosophy and theology; politics and society; gender; Christian literature in its various forms, up to and including the early Islamic period. HU 0 Course cr

CLCV 161a / ARCG 161a / HSAR 247a, Art and Myth in Greek Antiquity  Staff
Visual exploration of Greek mythology through the study of ancient Greek art and architecture. Greek gods, heroes, and mythological scenes foundational to Western culture; the complex nature of Greek mythology; how art and architecture rendered myths ever present in ancient Greek daily experience; ways in which visual representations can articulate stories. Use of collections in the Yale University Art Gallery. HU 0 Course cr

* CLCV 216a / LITR 239a / MGRK 216a / WGSS 209a, Dionysus in Modernity  George Syrimis
Modernity’s fascination with the myth of Dionysus. Questions of agency, identity and community, and psychological integrity and the modern constitution of the self. Manifestations of Dionysus in literature, anthropology, and music; the Apollonian-Dionysiac dichotomy; twentieth-century variations of these themes in psychoanalysis, surrealism, and magical realism. HU TR

* CLCV 260a / NELC 169a, Visible Language: The Origins of Writing in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt  Klaus Wagensonner
Exploration of writing in the ancient Near East and the profound effects this new method of communication had on human society. Focus on Egypt and Mesopotamia, where advanced writing systems first developed and were used for millennia, with consideration of Chinese, Mayan, and Indus Valley writing systems as well. Previously NELC 168. HU

* CLCV 305b / GMAN 489b / HSAR 489b, Pathos-Figures: Affection-Images in the Visual Arts  Nicola Suthor
Images with high pathos inform our perception of human life and define our stance in the world. The seminar wants to foster a critical awareness of the formative power that pathos figures exert on our moral beliefs concerning human behavior. The course covers the timespan from Antiquity to Modernity in Western culture and deals with historical moments that reflect different attempts to cultivate and temper strong emotions. We discuss the transfer of pathos and how the dissemination of eminent pathos figures of antiquity have shaped the imagery of the Western canon; we tackle with one of the most far-reaching concepts of art history, Aby Warburg’s Pathos formula that encourages us to draw in broad strokes connecting lines of affection over
centuries and different cultures; we look into the discourse on human suffering in Medieval times and how it has defined the Christian doctrine of the affective image; we have a close look at treatises of the 17th century that worked on theorizing human passions and discuss the Enlightenment perspective that aimed at interiorizing pathos by dint of the discourse of beauty; we discuss the Modern "close-up" and how it unfolds the moment of pure bodily presence as highly affective entity. We ask if we are in need of new pathos images that reflect our current emotional stakes, and how they might look.  

* CLCV 351a / PHIL 351a, Ancient Philosophy of Language  Verity Harte and Zoltan Szabo
A seminar on central texts on topics in philosophy of language in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition. The seminar does not attempt a full survey of the tradition on these topics, but select texts and topics of special interest, including exploring points of comparison and contrast with contemporary discussions in philosophy of language. Topics to be covered include: linguistic categories, the nature of grammar, origins of language, naming, and meaning. 1 prior course in the history of ancient Greco-Roman philosophy and at least 1 additional prior course in philosophy.  

* CLCV 494a, Independent Tutorial in Classical Civilization  Andrew Johnston
For students who wish to pursue a specialized subject in classical civilization not otherwise covered in courses. Students are expected to provide a detailed reading list and a clear outline of their project early in the term. The work should result in a term paper or examination. A limited number of these courses may be offered toward the major. Readings in translation. Offered subject to faculty availability.  

* CLCV 498a, Senior Tutorial in Classical Civilization  Jessica Lamont
Tutorial for seniors in Classical Civilization. As a culminating experience in the major, the student completes under the supervision of a faculty member an original research project, intensive language and literature study, or a creative endeavor. To register, the student must submit a written plan of study for approval by the director of undergraduate studies and the faculty instructor. Fulfills the senior requirement for the B.A. degree. Enrollment limited to senior students majoring in Classical Civilization.