

20 April 2014

Dear UCUE Colleagues:

A request to extend the moratorium on the BA in Classical Studies will be discussed and acted on Thursday. I expect to propose a rider to our motion, so I am providing an explanation and evidence here. The rider would be something like the following:

The committee requests Provostial attention to a situation that has eroded programs across the University at both the undergraduate and graduate levels: the steep decline in the availability of ancient language instruction. The current situation is untenable in a research university and unknown at our peer institutions. The impact of the problem goes beyond the Department of Romance and Classical Studies, or even the College of Arts and Letters, and has negatively affected the work of students and faculty across at least four colleges. Thus it would be unfair to expect one department and one college to effect a solution for the University.

*Explanation.* Earlier this semester, when a proposal for the elimination of the BA in Classical Studies appeared on the UCUE agenda, a number of faculty protested and the proposal was wisely withdrawn, giving faculty time to consider the issue. To that end, I circulated a two-part question that was further circulated: "Are there courses you teach wherein the original texts are primarily in Greek or Latin—courses where an undergraduate student's *interest* in graduate-level work in the area would be hampered by a lack of language training? Would language training be required for such an undergraduate to be competitive for top graduate programs in the area?" Because we are UCUE, I did not ask about language-acquisition difficulties for graduate students, but some faculty nevertheless address it.

Below I include the responses received to the query.

### **College of Social Sciences, History**

HST 205A (Greek and Latin), HST 205B (Latin), HST 330 (Greek), HST 331 (Latin and Greek), HST 332A (Latin), HST 332B (Latin), HST 333 (Latin), HST 334A (Latin), HST 334B (Latin— somewhat), HST 340 (Latin), HST 337 (Latin—somewhat), HST 419 (Greek and Latin), HST 481 (Greek and Latin), and HST 482 (Latin). I hope this helps.

Emily [Tabuteau]

[Apart from Emily's list] I have had students take, for credit, classes in Greek and Latin at U. Michigan to make up for the fact that the ancient languages are not taught at MSU and have myself taught a GRK course out of RCS to prepare students who did end up going to graduate school in Classics.

For me, the problem is not just that the ancient languages won't be offered anymore, although that is a big problem. It is also that students who are interested in the ancient or medieval European worlds won't be able to study those cultures in any meaningful way in their undergraduate careers, if they want to. And why shouldn't they? Anyway, for me this poses a real problem, and I wish that the university would not discontinue degrees in Classical Studies at all, when in fact those courses could have (and have had) high enrollments.

Denise [Demetriou]

**Greek and Latin Instruction in the CIC +**

	Latin	Greek	faculty	undergraduate degrees	graduate degrees
Indiana University, Department of Classical Studies <a href="http://www.indiana.edu/~classics">http://www.indiana.edu/~classics</a>	✓	✓	9 t-s, 5 lecturers	3 majors, 4 minors	MA, PhD, MAT in Latin
Michigan State University, Department of Romance and Classical Studies <a href="http://www.rcs.msu.edu/students/classics1/">http://www.rcs.msu.edu/students/classics1/</a>	✓	—	1 t-s, 1 t-s joint, 1 fixed-term	— <sup>1</sup>	—
Northwestern University, Department of Classics <a href="http://www.classics.northwestern.edu/index.html">http://www.classics.northwestern.edu/index.html</a>	✓	✓	9 t-s, 6 t-s joint, 3 t-s affiliates, 3 lecturers	3 majors, 3 minors, Latin teacher certification	PhD in “classics cluster fields” with 3 classics certifications
Ohio State University, Department of Greek and Latin <a href="http://greekandlatin.osu.edu/">http://greekandlatin.osu.edu/</a>	✓	✓	18 t-s, 13 t-s joint + 6 lecturers	3 majors, 5 minors	MA, PhD
Purdue University, Program in Classical Studies <a href="https://www.cla.purdue.edu/slc/classics/">https://www.cla.purdue.edu/slc/classics/</a>	✓	✓	5 t-s	3 major tracks, 3 minor tracks	—
University of Chicago, Department of Classics <a href="http://classics.uchicago.edu/">http://classics.uchicago.edu/</a>	✓	✓	16 t-s, 26 t-s associates, 2 t-s affiliates	major (3 variants), minor (3 variants)	MA Humanities, 3 PhD, 1 joint PhD with Social Thought
University of Illinois, Chicago, Department of Classics & Mediterranean Studies <a href="http://lcsl.uic.edu/classics-mediterranean">http://lcsl.uic.edu/classics-mediterranean</a>	✓	✓	10 t-s, 1 lecturer	major, minor	—
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Department of the Classics <a href="http://www.classics.uiuc.edu/">http://www.classics.uiuc.edu/</a>	✓	✓	12 t-s, 1 lecturer	major (5 concentrations)	2 MAs, MAT, PhD
University of Maryland <a href="http://classics.umd.edu/about/whyclassics">http://classics.umd.edu/about/whyclassics</a>	✓	✓	18 t-s, 30 t-s joint, 2 lecturers	3 majors, 3 minors	MA
University of Michigan, Department of Classical Studies <a href="http://www.lsa.umich.edu/classics/">http://www.lsa.umich.edu/classics/</a>	✓	✓	27 t-s, 5 t-s affiliates, 7 t-s adjuncts	3 majors, 5 minors (incl. major & minor in Latin teaching)	MA, PhD & 3 joint PhDs: history, archaeology, philosophy
University of Minnesota, Department of Classical & Near Eastern Studies <a href="http://cnes.cla.umn.edu/">http://cnes.cla.umn.edu/</a>	✓	✓	13 t-s, 7 t-s associates	major, 4 minors	MA, PhD (3 tracks in each)
University of Nebraska, Lincoln <a href="http://www.unl.edu/classics/home">http://www.unl.edu/classics/home</a>	✓	✓	9 t-s, 3 t-s associates, 2 lecturers	2 majors	joint PhDs
University of Wisconsin, Madison Department of Classics <a href="http://classics.lss.wisc.edu/">http://classics.lss.wisc.edu/</a>	✓	✓	8 t-s, 6 t-s associates	3 majors, certificate	MA, PhD
Pennsylvania State University, Department of Classics & Mediterranean Studies <a href="http://www.cams.psu.edu/">http://www.cams.psu.edu/</a>	✓	✓	2 t-s, 11 t-s joint, 10 lecturers	major, 3 minors	PhD joint with ancient history
University of Iowa, Department of Classics <a href="http://www.uiowa.edu/~classics/">http://www.uiowa.edu/~classics/</a>	✓	✓	12 t-s, 1 joint, 2 lecturers	2 majors, 4 minors	postbac, 3 MAs, PhD

<sup>1</sup> A Latin teacher certification was approved in 2009—but the courses listed are not available.

[Apart from Emily's list] Latin is absolutely essential for any topic in medieval Europe, that is until 1500, and for lots of topics much later as Liam Brockey could confirm. Greek comes back as a field of study in western Europe in the 14th century, and is important for a lot of varieties of renaissance humanism. The expense of maintaining these fields indefinitely is minimal, compared (for example) to start-up costs of assistant professors in psychology or any of the sciences, since professors in Classics always taught enough students in non-language courses to cover their salaries. So it really was always a fake economy that was really meant to leave no doubt what the university wasn't interested in.

Charles [Radding]

For my area, early modern European history, Latin would be useful. Indeed, it would be essential for anyone wanting to study the Renaissance seriously. Greek not so much, but I know that it is crucial for my colleague, Denise Demetriou, who teaches ancient history (esp. Greece). Of course, we should teach both languages. This is a university, correct?

Liam [Brockey]

### **College of Social Sciences, Political Science**

As PhD Director in Political Science, I worked to fund students in our political philosophy program to pursue intensive Latin studies in the summer. At least one student also did an intensive Greek program in recent years. But that is at the PhD level. We don't get many students with preparation in Greek or Latin when they come to our graduate program, unfortunately.

Steve [Kautz]

In my own experience, I have not found the problem to concern undergrads of my acquaintance, but our grad students. Many of them have learned Greek or Latin and they have all had to make arrangements to do it elsewhere. That is a depressing, not to say, shameful state of affairs. So I am definitely in favor of preserving as much of the classics program as can reasonably be saved.

Arthur [Melzer]

### **Lyman Briggs College**

Anyone who wants to study the history of science or medicine before 1700, or the history of ideas more broadly, will need to know Latin, without question. Greek wouldn't hurt, too, but Latin is essential. I would have serious reservations about working with a graduate student who didn't already have a strong foundation in Latin, and I suspect the same is true of others in my field as well.

I remember when Classical Studies was placed on moratorium; it was upsetting even for an outsider (and relative newcomer) like myself. I hope that we can retain the language instruction, at the very least, though I would love to see the entire program revitalized.

Mark [Waddell]

### **James Madison College**

For many years, James Madison College's Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy (PTCD) program fed a small but steady stream of students into classics. A majority took two years of Greek (sometimes more). A minority took two years of Latin (sometimes more). Another group of students regularly took

other classics courses, especially those treating the classics in translation.

The Madison PTC D faculty strongly recommended that its best students take a classical language to fulfill the language requirement or begin a classical language as a second language.

Also, the Madison PTC D requirements allow students to fulfill their related-area requirement by completing what is called a “historical polity option.” This requires students to take at least four courses on a polity of special historical significance. At one time, a number of students fulfilled this requirement by taking courses about ancient Athens or Sparta or ancient Rome. Most took courses in art, classics, history, literature, philosophy, and political science.

While I don’t want to claim that Madison sent large numbers to classics, I do want emphasize that being able to take courses in classics, and especially the classical languages, was extremely important to a small but special minority of our students.

Speaking for myself, I think it is absurd that a university that claims to be among the nation’s and the world’s “first-rate research institutions” doesn’t teach the classical languages.

The university should be ashamed of itself. It is disheartening that so few faculty care about such matters.

Dick [Zinman]

### **College of Arts and Letters, English**

I know of no English courses where the majority of original texts are in Greek or Latin; however, many of our Medieval and Early Modern courses include *some* materials of that sort, where source texts or precursors would be in a classical language (esp. Latin). Others actually include classical texts in translation. Some of those are: English 318: Readings in Shakespeare, English 324: Readings in Epic, English 329: Readings in Poetry, English 368: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Literature, English 422: Seminar in Genre and Form, English 454: Seminar in Medieval Literature and Culture, English 455: Seminar in Early Modern Literature, English 473A: Topics in Literature and Medicine, and English 473B: Topics in Law and Literature. Depending on Professor and Content: English 320A; 320H: Methodologies of Literary History: Genre, English 326: Readings in Drama and Performance Studies, English 469: Topics in Comparative Literature, and English 480: History of Western Literary Criticism.

The larger problem for us in English early period studies is that none of our grad students come to us with exposure to Latin, but many of them need the opportunity to study it—especially in the summer—and that has become impossible. We have at least 4 students in this situation at the moment, and we have had several in the past. And, Early Modern grad courses frequently use materials translated from the Latin, especially, so some knowledge of the primary language can be useful in those contexts.

Sandra [Logan]

Thanks so much for asking about this important dimension of any serious study of the ancient, medieval, and early modern world. Coco knows the specific current English courses and student needs better than I do, now that I’m more than a year into retirement, and haven’t taught ENG classes since 2010 as the result of my seconding to Lyman Briggs for a year and consultancy agreement. But I absolutely agree with her point about our own early-modern grad students who need the language skills for their research, to whom I would add the occasional bright undergrad who wants to go on to graduate work in earlier European history, literature, philosophy, religious studies, and so on.

My own work on medieval and C16 vernacular medical writing would be impossible if I couldn’t read potential learned source texts (in Latin, of course), many of which have not been edited or published

in modern editions (and sometimes not at all, remaining accessible \*only\* in MS). I'm presently engaged in a project with a colleague at Berkeley on chronicles of the Wars of the Roses—he's the principal investigator/specialist, but I'm serving as a second pair of interested eyes—and again, we are using primary sources in Middle English, Latin, Italian, and French. Any graduate student who was interested in working on similar materials—early modern as well as medieval—would have trouble establishing scholarly credibility if she or he could not handle texts in Latin (at least) as well as English. If I were still teaching and had graduate students interested in working with me (perhaps on Tudor/Elizabethan-era medicine), I would press them hard to gain that linguistic skill, even if they had to go elsewhere than MSU to do so, as it sounds like your Greek students need to do.

Last fall, there were some email conversations between Steve Rachman (the ENG graduate chair), myself, and Tamar Boyadjian (Coco, weren't you in that loop too?) about the desirability of having someone teach reading knowledge of Latin to ENG grad students in early modern literature, and I strongly urged Steve to take advantage—but with remuneration—of Anna Graham's expertise and experience in teaching Latin for medieval grad students at U of Toronto, where she took her own degree. It sounds like that idea has not reached fruition, though perhaps it's still under discussion. I do think it's important to respect the pedagogical and disciplinary expertise of the Classics/Classical Studies faculty here, both tenured and adjunct, ....

Tess [Tavormina]

I, too, for the commanding and highly significant reasons provided by my colleagues—as well as someone who has a deep love and passion for classical languages (particularly Latin)—strongly advocate for the instruction of classical languages for our students.

Along with the necessity of Latin for our medieval and early modern grad students in terms of their research and academic development, I also think it important they have Latin under their belt to be able to compete with others in the field for scholarships, and especially for the academic market.

Tamar [Boyadjian]

Our graduate program has a real (and crying) need for Latin and possibly Greek. Medieval and Early Modern English students need it and at present cannot get it with any regularity. As for undergrads, I cannot address the question with certainty but it seems obvious that Early Modern undergrads would be well-served by the opportunity to study classical languages.

Steve [Rachman]

I have nothing to add to what Coco and Tess have already said. I think Latin is an essential curriculum to have, especially for those interested in grad school, but really for anyone who would like a strong basis in romance languages. I generally don't teach texts translated from Latin in my undergrad courses (though I do often read from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), but I do recommend that anyone who would like to do graduate work in early modern (and of course medieval) should have some exposure to Latin.

Steve [Deng]

Grad students in English really suffer not having Latin offerings regularly. If it is done away with, that is a great loss.

Jyotsna [Singh]

## **College of Arts and Letters, Art History**

Yes, if they intend to study ancient, medieval and (sometimes Renaissance art) we note that they will be required to know at least 2 languages, one of them Latin and or Greek (for ancient) but Latin is important. For Renaissance it's a bit complicated. Once in graduate school they often have to take it based on the area of their research work. Hope that's helpful!

[Phylis Floyd]

Let me get the specific details out of the way. The following classes have in the past encouraged students to think about careers in classics and classical archaeology, which, of course requires graduate study to achieve any degree of career stability: HA 209: Ancient Art, HA 401: Greek Art and Archaeology, HA 402: Roman Art and Archaeology, CLA 140: Classical Mythology (no longer offered), and CLA 190: Introduction to Classics (no longer offered).

I also teach an IAH 221a, which I've designed in order to encourage students to think about the continuing importance of classical mythology as a source of inspiration in modern literature and cinema. On one level, it's what I had to do in order to still teach something approximating classical myth without a CLA course code, since the college shifted all CLA content over to CISAH. But I've tried to think of it as an opportunity to use teaching as a way to educate a future generation about the importance of classics so that what's happening at MSU doesn't happen everywhere, but who knows about its overall effect.

I'm not sure of the degree to which it applies, but my summer study abroad to Greece, typically taught as HA 491 and AL 400 (there used to be CLA 491 credit in there, but no more), inevitably results in one or two students (typically out of 6-10 students) asking serious questions about a career in classical archaeology.

Like you, when I have a student come to me with an interest in classical studies, I try to steer them in the right direction (summer language study at Berkeley or U of M). I don't feel comfortable telling them bluntly to go to another school, so we talk about options and other routes of entry into classical archaeology (becoming a specialist in GIS, heritage management, digital archiving, geology, etc.). But at the same time, I am also clear with them that it will take a great deal of effort to overcome the challenges of studying classics here at MSU to the point that they would be competitive at the national level for graduate school admission. It's depressing to have to break the "bad news" to these kids, but I'm also not about to lie to them either, especially with the cost of education these days.

Jon [Frey]

## **College of Arts and Letters, Philosophy**

I teach two courses in ancient Greek philosophy. The lower-level course (PHL 210) covers ancient Greek philosophy from Thales to Aristotle, and the upper-level course (PHL 411) focuses on Aristotle. All original primary texts for both courses are in classical Greek. Many important interpretive issues cannot be seen in translation, and so I frequently provide and explain key Greek terms, and offer my own translations of key passages. Students cannot help but pick up on the fact that the language makes a great deal of difference, and that it is simply not possible to do advanced work in the area of ancient Greek philosophy without reading knowledge of classical Greek. Several bright and interested students have been frustrated that MSU does not provide opportunities for students to learn Greek. This pedagogical hole most definitely discourages such otherwise engaged and capable students from pursuing graduate-level work in

this area. Students who do not have reading knowledge of classical Greek would not be competitive for top graduate programs in the area. For my part, I could not in good faith encourage any student to pursue graduate work in this area if the student did not have the language skills that are absolutely necessary for graduate-level work in ancient Greek philosophy.

I have seen firsthand, in our own graduate program, that it is just not possible for students who come to the program without these skills to produce graduate-level work.

Emily [Katz]

Let me add for my own part in this:

In the Philosophy Department, the affected undergraduate courses are PHL 210 Ancient Greek Philosophy, PHL 211 Modern Philosophy (Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Spinoza, Leibniz et al.), PHL 350 Introduction to Ethics, PHL 410 Plato, PHL 411 Aristotle, PHL 413 Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, and some versions of PHL 419 Topics in the History of Philosophy—roughly the first 2500 years of the subject or, to put it differently, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Students taking any of these courses would need Greek or Latin to prepare them for advanced work in the area, including graduate school. At MSU Greek has disappeared; Latin is not supported beyond the elementary level.

I currently have one student who has been studying philosophical Latin (Spinoza, Abelard, Lucretius) with an unremunerated GVSU professor for over a year because she hopes to go to graduate school; another is studying medieval Latin here with an unremunerated adjunct because courses required for his major conflicted with the one rigidly fixed Latin course. One of my graduate students is, at great expense, taking the U. Michigan summer program in intensive Greek, and he is the second who has had to do so since the moratorium was declared. Emily and I must take our graduate students to U. Michigan for classical Greek reading groups monthly because there is nothing supportive of the ancient languages at MSU.

When the moratorium was instituted, the Dean of Arts & Letters expressed her intention to give priority to language instruction, but 3.34 faculty has become 1.34 and the unintended consequence of the moratorium for the University is that MSU is negatively unique among CIC universities.

Debra Nails  
UCUE member