

UCSB CLASSICS MISSION STATEMENT

OUR DISCIPLINE

Classics is the study of ancient Greece and Rome – not in isolation, but in their Mediterranean, global, and transhistorical contexts – and of our relationships to it. Classicists are linguists, literary critics, historians, archaeologists, philosophers, data scientists, public intellectuals, and more. Our work is interdisciplinary and interdependent. By approaching antiquity from a vast array of perspectives, we collectively pose questions about the Greek and Roman past that are profoundly relevant to the 21st century: how and why do people tell stories? why do republics collapse? what does it mean to be queer? how is race constructed? what does a posthuman world look like? In our research and in our classrooms, we carefully analyze ancient texts and artefacts to gain insight into these problems, at the same time as we strive to open the field to new voices and new methodologies.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to foster a better understanding of Greek and Roman culture, to elucidate its place in global antiquity, and to explore its complex afterlives across space and time. Our work embraces a range of interdisciplinary, comparative, and critical methodologies. Through research, teaching, and community engagement, we endeavor to build and communicate an expansive and inclusive approach to Classics that showcases the discipline's relevance to a wide range of contemporary concerns.

OUR VISION

We envision the Department as a vibrant community of scholars – faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates – dedicated staff, alumni, donors, campus affiliates, and members of the public who are invested in the study of Greek and Roman antiquity. This community is greater than the sum of its parts. It provides space where everyone has the support to flourish, where individual strengths and perspectives are valued, and where academic excellence is achieved through diversity, equity, and inclusion.

OUR VALUES

Inquiry

We are united by our commitment to the pursuit of knowledge. We value intellectual curiosity, precision, independence of thought, critical reasoning, and creativity. Our methods evolve in step with technology, and we draw inspiration from theoretical frameworks developed in other fields, including political science, psychoanalysis, queer theory, critical race theory, ecocriticism, and the social sciences.

Inclusion

Greece and Rome were highly diverse, but also deeply stratified, societies; these facts in turn have determined the shape of the archives available to us. We affirm that the Greek and Roman past does not belong exclusively to “the West,” or, for that matter, to anyone. Instead, we view the “classical tradition” as a site of negotiation, reinvention, and criticism. We seek to

make our department and the discipline of Classics more accessible to people from all backgrounds by engaging with and elevating voices from underrepresented communities. We aim to enrich the discipline by joining the University in broadening and deepening the educational experience that we offer to students as they prepare to participate in a global future.

Engagement

Our work thrives on sustained engagement with the broader community through public-facing scholarship, teaching, outreach, and cultural events. We encourage and reward contributions to the Public Humanities. We are enriched by the synergy between research and teaching, from lower-division GE courses to sharply focused graduate seminars. We seek to create opportunities for students to contribute to original research, participate in interdisciplinary degree programs and initiatives, and expand their intellectual horizons through international fellowships and study abroad.

This version of the UCSB Classics Mission Statement pertains to the 2024-2025 academic year.