The Greek and Roman classics have always been a vital part of Bowdoin’s liberal arts tradition. Bowdoin’s classics department offers three majors, providing the opportunity for students to focus their program on language and literature, on classical archaeology, or on the classical civilizations from a historical and cultural perspective.

Since the nature of all three majors is interdisciplinary, all students are encouraged to include courses on literature, religion, history, philosophy, art, architecture, science, politics, and daily life in the ancient world in their programs of study.

The classics program is designed to accommodate both students who have not studied classical languages and those who have had extensive training in Latin or Greek. The goal of the classics major is the study of ancient languages and literatures in the original, involving students in the politics, history, and philosophies of antiquity. Advanced language courses focus on the analysis of textual material and on literary criticism.

Greek classes are designed to teach students the forms and structure of the Greek language, including the essentials of Greek grammar and syntax, and to develop their translation skills in preparation for reading Plato and Homer in their second year. Advanced students read from a variety of authors, including Herodotus, Sophocles, Thucydides, Euripides, and the lyric poets.

Introductory Latin courses emphasize basic grammar and syntax, as well as the clarity and logic of the language’s structure. Intermediate courses introduce students to major themes in Latin literature, such as legends about the founding of Rome, Roman philosophy and science, and Roman attitudes toward love. Advanced students examine the form and language of major Latin writers, with close reading of authors including Catullus, Cicero, Livy, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid.

Within the broader context of classical studies, the classical archaeology program pays special attention to the physical remains of classical antiquity, and particularly to the unique balance of written and physical sources that makes archaeology a central part of classical studies. Students develop an understanding of how archaeological evidence contributes to our knowledge of the past, and how archaeological study interacts with such related disciplines as philology, history, and art history. Topics at the advanced level include the Greek bronze age, Etruscan art and archaeology, Greek and Roman numismatics, Pompeii and the cities of Vesuvius, and cult and religion in the Roman world.

The classical studies major provides a useful foundation for students who seek a multidisciplinary view of the ancient world. This major combines coursework in an ancient language with courses that explore the culture, history, and traditions of the ancient Mediterranean.

Major and Minor Programs

The department offers three major programs, five minors, and participates in an interdisciplinary major in archaeology and art history.

The major in classics consists of ten courses, at least six of which must be in Greek or Latin, with two at the advanced level, and at least one from each of the following three pairs: Introduction to Greek Archaeology or Introduction to Roman Archaeology; Classical Mythology or Introduction to Ancient Greek Culture; and History of Ancient Greece: Bronze Age to the Death of Alexander, or Ancient Rome. At least one of the advanced courses must be a designated research seminar. Students concentrating in one language are encouraged to take at least two courses in the other.

Students majoring in classical archaeology must also take ten courses, at least five of which are archaeology classes, including Introduction to Greek Archaeology, Introduction to Roman

Facilities and Resources

The Department of Classics, located in Sills Hall, is supported by the abundant resources of the Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, including online access to indexes of more than two hundred journals, yearbooks, and museum bulletins in the fields of archaeology, architecture, art, and art history, as well as online access to L’Année Philologique—an annual bibliography of scholarly work published about Greek and Latin language and linguistics, history, literature, philosophy, numismatics, papyrology, and epigraphy.

Archaeology classes regularly use the outstanding collection of ancient art in Bowdoin’s Museum of Art. Of special note are the exceptionally fine holdings in Greek painted pottery and the very full and continuous survey of Greek and Roman coins.

Opportunities are available for students in the department to study abroad. Bowdoin is a participating member of the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, where students in all major programs can apply to study in the junior year. It is also possible to receive course credit for field experience on excavations.

The department regularly sponsors lectures by distinguished visiting scholars on classical subjects.
Archaeology, and at least one course at the advanced level. At least one advanced course must be a designated research seminar. Three of the remaining four courses are to be chosen from offerings in Greek or Latin.

The classical studies major consists of ten courses, at least nine of which must be selected from within the department. At least three classes should be in either Greek or Latin. Classes must include two introductory and two intermediate courses, at least one course in classical archaeology; at least two advanced/level courses (one of which must be a designated research seminar); one of the intermediate courses may be taken from a selection in anthropology, art history, government, philosophy, religion, or English/theater.

The interdisciplinary program leading to a major in archaeology and art history requires a combination of at least thirteen archaeology, art history, and classics courses, including Introduction to Western Art, Art of the Italian Renaissance, Introduction to Greek Archaeology, and Introduction to Roman Archaeology; four more intermediate or advanced art history courses; three additional archaeology courses (at least one of which must be an advanced-level course); one course from a selection in classics, philosophy, or religion; and an advanced independent study in either art history or archaeology.

The minor in either Greek or Latin requires five departmental courses, at least four of which must be in the chosen language. The minor in classics, incorporating both languages, also requires five courses, four of which must be in the classical languages; of these four, one should be either Greek 2204 (204), Homer, or a Latin course at the advanced level (numbered 3300–3969 (300–399)).

The minor in archaeology requires six courses, including Introduction to Greek Archaeology or Introduction to Roman Archaeology, and at least three other archaeology courses (one of which must be at the advanced level numbered 3300–3969 (300–399)). The minor in classical studies can focus on either Greek or Roman studies, and requires two courses in the chosen language, the relevant introductory archaeology course, an appropriate first-year seminar or introductory classics course, and two intermediate or advanced courses from selections in archaeology, classics, philosophy, and government focusing primarily on the appropriate Greek or Roman material.

**Independent Study and Honors Projects**

Independent study gives qualified students an opportunity to pursue specific research interests in a less structured environment—working closely with a faculty advisor to learn about both the joys and occasional frustrations of research in the field. Students may elect to complete a honors project by taking two semesters of independent study, culminating in a major paper.

**Faculty**

**Barbara Weiden Boyd**, Henry Winkleby Professor of Latin and Greek, B.A. (Manhattanville), M.A., Ph.D. (Michigan–Ann Arbor), specializes in Latin language and literature and Roman culture. Her interests include Augustan poetry (especially the works of Virgil and Ovid), the city of Rome and its monuments, and classical mythology.

**Jennifer Clarke Kosak**, associate professor of classics, A.B. (Harvard–Radcliffe), Ph.D. (Michigan–Ann Arbor), specializes in Greek language and literature; her particular interests include Greek tragedy, Greek and Roman medicine, Greek intellectual history, and gender studies.

**Michael Nerdahl**, lecturer in classics, B.S., M.A., Ph.D. (Wisconsin–Madison), specializes in Greco-Roman historiography, with a particular focus on literary and ideological filtering in the historians of the Roman empire.

**Robert Sobak**, associate professor of classics, A.B. (Franklin & Marshall), M.A., (Georgia), Ph.D. (Princeton), specializes in Greek history, especially the cultural dynamics of Athenian democracy, and concepts of geography in the ancient world.

**After Bowdoin**

Classics majors have a variety of career choices after graduation. A few proceed directly to graduate study; some teach at the secondary-school level; and others pursue careers in a range of fields, including government, law, academic administration, and archaeological research. Recently, classics majors have gone on to pursue graduate studies in classics, classical archaeology, and related fields at Brown, Harvard, Stanford, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Cincinnati, and New York University.

**For more information, go to:** bowdoin.edu/classics/