Classics and Ancient History
Undergraduate study
Courses

Single Honours
BA Ancient History
three years V110
BA Classics
three years Q800
BA Classical Studies
three years Q810

Joint Honours
BA English and Classical Studies
three years QQ38

Why study classics and ancient history at Bristol?

Classics and ancient history involve the study of ancient Greece, Rome, and their reception by later cultures.

At Bristol, not only do we offer the full range of traditional subjects, but we also challenge our students to decide for themselves what the classics mean for them in this culture and at this time. Topics therefore range from language units at all levels (such as Introductory Latin or Euripides’ Alcestis) to historical and cultural surveys (such as Classical Greece or Art in the Ancient World) and highly specialised seminar subjects (such as Cinematic Antiquity).

Moreover, all of our courses give you the opportunity to choose from an array of optional units, some of which may be taken outside the department. For example, you may choose to study post-classical art history or politics, Sanskrit or Italian, or dozens of other topics across the University.

Whatever you choose, our strong staff-student ratio means that you will receive plenty of help in developing your own well-informed and sophisticated ideas. Many units involve small-group work, and all our third-year units are taught in small-group seminars.

Become an arts student at Bristol and you will be joining a diverse group of staff, students and subjects united by a fascination in exploring how humans express their experiences. From 2018 we are offering you even greater opportunities to explore subjects beyond your core studies and an average of ten or more contact hours per week. Through our innovative curriculum we ensure you develop the key skills and attributes employers seek while receiving a first-class education.
What will you study?

Whichever course you choose you will take four core units and two optional units for each of your first two years. One of the optional units must be taken somewhere in the department, while the other may be taken anywhere in the University.

In Classical Studies you focus on Greek and Roman art, myth, literature, and the history of their reception. This course aims to help you develop sophisticated new ways of interpreting and enjoying both ancient and modern culture. A typical core unit is Approaches to Myth, in which you learn a variety of theories for discovering the deep meanings of a mythical text like the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. You also study core topics like Greek and Roman Drama, and may choose to learn an ancient language.

In Classics you concentrate on Greek and Latin texts. You will be allocated to appropriate Greek and Latin classes on the basis of your previous experience, but no previous knowledge is required (however, students without experience of Greek or Latin should be able to demonstrate an aptitude for other foreign languages). With the exception of introductory units, all students combine language acquisition with literary, historical, or philosophical interpretation. A typical core unit is Catullus and Horace, in which you read selected poems by the two Roman authors, study their poetic techniques, learn how they adapted previous Greek and Latin literary traditions, and on this basis develop your own interpretations.

In Ancient History you explore the Greek and Roman world, the sources of information available, and the different interpretive approaches employed by ancient and modern historians. Some units, such as Approaches to Ancient History or Literary Sources for Greek and Roman History teach you how to find and interpret evidence. Others teach core periods in Greek and Roman political and cultural history, such as Hellenistic Greece or Late Antiquity. You may also choose to learn an ancient language.

In the third year of all courses, students take seminar units on special topics related to staff research interests. With the aid of a staff supervisor you will research and write a dissertation on a subject of your choice. Those studying ancient languages may continue them during the third year; students on the classics degree courses must continue with at least one language.

Teaching methods for all courses vary by unit, but most students will encounter a combination of small discussion seminars (ten to twenty students), language instruction (10 to 30 students), and large lectures (40 to 100 students). We will encourage you to attend regular one-on-one tutorials for essay feedback and discussion of your overall progress. Assessment is primarily by portfolios, essays and exams. You will also have the opportunity to give and receive feedback on oral presentations.

‘Three years at Bristol developed my leadership skills in various ways – showing me the importance of analytical thinking, and having the confidence to take and commit to decisions. It also encouraged openness to new ideas, the ability to formulate arguments and build consensus, as well as identifying clear steps to reach your goals. It helped me to develop the ability to work with others, think clearly and communicate effectively.’

Christopher (BA Classics)
Careers and graduate destinations

The skills that arts students traditionally bring to the workplace are valued in every part of the employment market. Arts students go on to succeed in careers as diverse as the subjects they study here – commerce, tech start-ups, law, accountancy, theatre, museums, publishing, the charity sector, journalism, politics, education and international relations, as well as sectors not immediately associated with arts disciplines, such as engineering and IT.

Graduates from the Department of Classics and Ancient History go on to careers in law, finance and commerce, management, journalism, the civil service, teaching, the media, and many other areas.

All of our courses aim to teach a wide variety of analytical and communicative skills, which are valued by employers in many fields. For example, you will learn to write correctly and develop your sense of style; you will improve your ability to synthesise complex sources of information, draw judicious conclusions, and present those conclusions clearly; and you will expand your capacity to construct sophisticated and persuasive arguments both in writing and in conversation. We have close contact with the Careers Service so that you benefit from further training and advice.

The Bristol Skills Framework enables our students to recognise their development in academic writing, problem solving, group work and individual and group presenting. We will equip you with the tools to market your skills, your achievement and your potential in whatever career path you choose to pursue after you graduate.

Making your application

Typical offer for BA Classics*
Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-classics for Joint Honours and other qualifications.
A-levels AAA (contextual ABB†).
IB Diploma 36 overall (contextual 32†) to include 18 points at Higher Level (contextual 16†).
English Language profile A††
GCSEs No specific subjects required.

Typical offer for BA Ancient History and BA Classical Studies*
Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-ancienthistory and bristol.ac.uk/ug18-classicalstudies for Joint honours and other qualifications.
A-levels AAB (contextual BBB†).
IB Diploma 34 overall (contextual 31†) to include 17 points at Higher Level (contextual 15†).
English Language profile B††
GCSEs No specific subjects required.

*The typical offer is indicative only and the University accepts a wide range of qualifications. The information is correct at the time of printing (June 2017); however, we recommend you check the University’s website for the most up-to-date information: bristol.ac.uk/ug-study.

We assess applications according to the following categories:
• academic potential;
• enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject;
• self-motivation and management;
• communication skills;
• responses to challenges faced.

The most important part of the UCAS application is your personal statement where you should try to communicate why you have chosen this course. Applicants without a formal qualification in a subject related to the ancient world should be able to demonstrate their interest in the subject through other means, such as independent reading, museum visits, etc. It is equally important for candidates who are taking A-levels in classical subjects to demonstrate they have followed their interest beyond the classroom.

Further information
Find out more about the Department of Classics and Ancient History: bristol.ac.uk/classics.

The University of Bristol has one of the best employment records in the UK. We are rated sixth in the UK in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2016/17 and are the third most targeted university by top UK employers (High Fliers Research, 2017).

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Contact us

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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol
bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

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