Curriculum in Classics

In addition to completing the general requirements of the University, majors in Classical Languages complete at least 36 s.h. of coursework, including either (a) three years of Latin and two of ancient Greek (or vice versa) and a composition course in one language, or (b) four years of one of the languages, a composition course, and 2-3 other relevant courses. Ancient Civilization majors complete 30 s.h. of coursework, including courses in ancient art, archaeology, history, philosophy, religion, science, and ancient languages or literature.

Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experience treacherous, and decision difficult. The physician must do not only what is necessary himself, but also make the patient, attendants, and external factors cooperate.

From Hippocrates’ Aphorisms
(Greece, 425 BCE)
Section 1
A medical professional who interacts with the public must be able to understand patients’ experience of their own bodily health from the patients’ perspective. She or he must be skilled in both medical knowledge and personal caregiving. A broad humanities education—language, history, philosophy, religion—complements scientific training and makes a medical professional more responsive to patients’ experiences of illness.

Did you know that, starting in 2015, the MCAT will include a new section testing knowledge and comprehension from humanities and the social sciences?

Classics was the core discipline of the humanities for hundreds of years and is still today. It is an ideal major for developing traditional skills of the humanities: problem solving, critical reading, general research, and persuasive writing and speaking.

Success in Critical Thinking and Vocabulary

Courses in Latin and ancient Greek are particularly successful at training students in analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, and the close reading of complex textual material. After only a year of Latin or ancient Greek, students regularly report a significantly greater understanding of English language usage.

Physicians’ attendants reset slipped vertebrae with a mechanical bench. From an illustrated manuscript of Apollonius of Citium’s Treatise on Hippocrates’ On Joints codex Laurentianus XXIV.7, c.1200 CE Constantinople.

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Medicine and Ancient Languages and Culture

Pre-medicine students familiar with Latin and ancient Greek will readily understand the meaning and origin of the detailed terms of skeletal and muscular structures such as xiphoid process and pericardium, and diagnostic terms such as subluxation and metastasis, among many others.

Pre-medicine students will also gain historical perspective from Ancient Medicine, a popular Classics course on the history of medicine in Greco-Roman antiquity.

If you are interested in Classics for pre-med students, please contact the Department of Classics for more information:

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