

Teaching Philosophy

As a graduate student and primary instructor, I have taught a wide variety of courses, including numerous semesters of introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses in ancient languages. Currently, I am employed as a Latin teacher at a small school in Tucson, Arizona. In this position I lead classes through both introductory courses in Latin as well as upper-level seminars. I am an experienced and thoughtful language teacher, and I try to incorporate multiple learning styles into my classroom. I have taught courses in both hybrid and wholly online formats, and I am comfortable leading such courses again. Indeed, the nature of language classes can benefit greatly from the online format given the demands that such courses place on students' time otherwise. In addition, I have lead a study abroad program in Portugal since 2010, and I am comfortable bringing Valdosta's students on this or another foreign program.

My own work combines close reading of literary and historical sources, ancient art, archaeological excavations, computer modeling, and postcolonial theory to examine the architecture of Roman watchtowers in western Iberia. Such a combination of approaches represents only one of the many possible avenues opened by interdisciplinary dialogue, and I am keenly interested in fostering similar approaches with undergraduate teaching. As an archaeologist, I have been responsible for the creation of a summer field school curriculum which has so far attracted over two hundred students from around the world. This curriculum guides students through the methods utilized in the interpretation of ancient sites and artifacts. Students are engaged in both hands-on and traditional classroom learning. This experience – as well as my experience as a secondary school teacher – have given me the skills and insights necessary to be a successful language teacher.

Over the last nine years I have been responsible for the instruction, mentoring, and evaluation of almost 3,000 undergraduates, and my teaching evaluations consistently speak to my ability to connect with students. My courses emphasize the relevance of a liberal arts education for the modern world and try to instill values that elevate language, heritage, and cultures beyond the current, fashionable, and familiar. The utility of such an education is that it reaffirms the need for learning *εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον*, “unto the whole person,” rather than merely in a single, narrowly defined field of study. Interdisciplinary knowledge has always been the goal of a liberal arts curriculum, and I believe that undergraduate education should broaden students' horizons by introducing them to the conversations possible between the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

An education in the cultures, histories, and arts of the ancient Mediterranean provides students with the opportunity to thoughtfully, rigorously, and creatively engage the human past, the nature of civilization, and the critical exploration of contemporary ideas. I believe that my role is to encourage students to better their knowledge, facilitate their asking of important questions, and challenge them to find their own intellectual voice. I have found that students appreciate a learning environment where their opinions are valued – even when they are tested – and one in which their skills are honed through reinforcement, feedback, and encouragement. This type of environment is especially essential in an introductory language class where students should be both held accountable and encouraged to experiment, practice, and grow their proficiency in the language through its use.

My primary goal in teaching is to empower students with the tools and techniques that make their own critical examination of the past and present possible. Indeed, the lessons gained through a liberal arts education have application throughout students' lives. It provides students with a thorough education in deep, critical reading of texts as well as well-honed writing abilities. It encourages students to seek out the connections between disciplines, and to forge new knowledge through the application of ideas from the humanities as well as the sciences. I am also devoted to the development of students' research skills. Students in my courses learn to engage, question, and synthesize the fragmentary remains of the past, be they textual or material, in order to probe currently relevant topics.

The greatest asset I possess as a teacher is my unflagging excitement for the discipline and my enthusiasm for my students' learning. Classical Studies curricula tend to attract students with curiosity, determination, and intellectual ambition. These students are best served by an education that puts emphasis on gaining not only pertinent academic skills, but also by one that encourages reflection on themselves and their own values. The most valuable lessons from the ancient world lie, in my opinion, not only in the intellectual discipline required in learning a particular discipline, but also in the questions that the connections between disciplines pose for us. In particular, the connections made within an academic program focused on the study of the past allow us to examine ourselves, and in doing so confront questions of virtue, justice, and our places within our society.