



CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Course: OCR Classical Civilisation A-Level



INTRODUCTION

We study 3 components:

1) *The World of the Hero* (40% of A-level)

Analysis and comparison of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. What did it mean to be a hero in the ancient world?

2) *Love and Relationships* (30% of A-level)

Analysis and comparison of the ideas presented on love, sex, desire and marriage in the philosophical works of Plato and Seneca, as well as the literature of Ovid and Sappho. What were real and idealised love and relationships like in the ancient world?

3) *Invention of the Barbarian* (30% of A-level)

Analysis of the portrayal of Greeks, Persians and other non-Greeks in art and literature. Euripides' *Medea* and Aeschylus' *Persians* are the set texts for this module. How did the Greeks perceive and represent themselves and others?

PREPARATION TASKS

(Required)

Below you will find a wide variety of resources.

Read one text from the reading list for each component (one for *World of the Hero*, one for *Love & Relationships* and one for *Invention of the Barbarian*).

For each text, complete the following tasks:

- Create a summary mind-map of the key points and ideas raised.
- Write a short review of the resource. What did you find most interesting / surprising / useful? Did you enjoy it and why (not)? What questions did it raise for you and what would you want to research next?
- Create a short glossary of key terms, figures, places and events.

Bonus task (optional): Write an essay about one of your chosen texts! Choose a title from the suggested essay titles listed at the end.



WHAT TO READ

You can read the works of the ancient writers (such as Homer, Euripides, Sappho) online for free. Feel free to read more than one of the recommended sources below!

World of the Hero

Required - choose one!



- Graziosi, B. (2019) *Homer: A Very Short Introduction*
- Homer, *The Iliad*
- Homer, *The Odyssey*
- Virgil, *The Aeneid*

Love and Relationships

Required -choose one!

- Annas, J. (2003) *Plato: A Very Short Introduction*
- Ovid *Ars Amatoria*
- Plato, *Symposium*
- Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*

Invention of the Barbarian

Required - choose one!



- Aeschylus, *Persians*
- Euripides, *Medea*
- Holland, T. (2006) *Persian Fire: The First World Empire, Battle for the West*
- Freeman, P. (2017) *Searching for Sappho*

General background

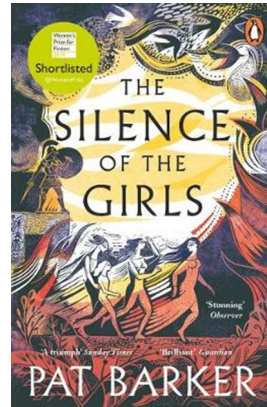
Optional but recommended!



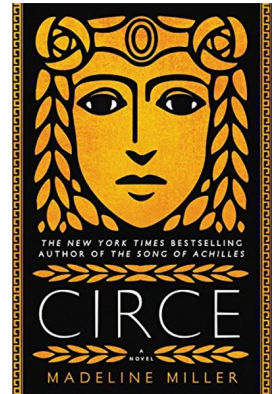
- Beard, M. (2015) *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*
- Beard, M., Henderson, J. et al (2000) *Classics: A Very Short Introduction*
- Fox, R.L. (2006) *The Ancient World: an epic history of Greece and Rome*
- Fry, S. (2018) *Mythos: The Greek myths retold*
- Fry, S. (2019) *Heroes: The myths of the Ancient Greek heroes retold*
- Renshaw, J. (2015) *In Search of the Greeks*
- Renshaw, J. (2019) *In Search of the Romans*

Lighter Reads and Fiction about Classics

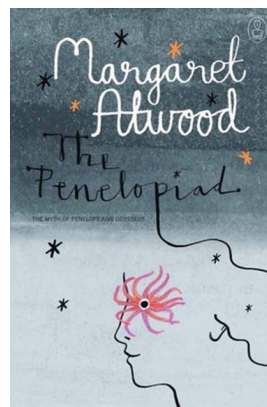
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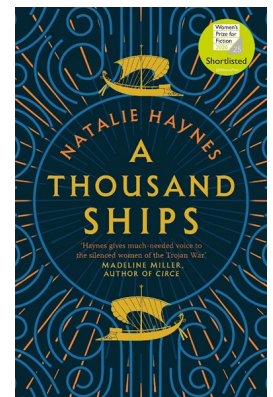
Pat Barker
The Silence of the Girls



Madeline Miller
Circe



Margaret Atwood
The Penelopiad



Natalie Haynes
A Thousand Ships

ONLINE COURSES

Optional



Register on MASSOLIT with your school email address. It has many lecture series relevant to the A-level course, such as:

- Greek Theatre <https://www.massolit.io/courses/greek-tragedy-and-comedy-an-introduction>
- Homer: Odyssey <https://www.massolit.io/courses/homer-odyssey-c90966dc-e0f2-46de-8881-1aff821ede2f>
- Plato: Symposium <https://www.massolit.io/courses/plato-symposium>
- Sappho <https://www.massolit.io/courses/the-poetry-of-sappho>
- Virgil: Aeneid <https://www.massolit.io/courses/virgil-aeneid-sharon-marshall>



The Open University

The Open University has several relevant short courses, including:

- **Introducing the Classical World** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/classical-studies/introducing-the-classical-world/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- **Introducing Virgil's Aeneid** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/introducing-virgils-aeneid/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- **Introducing Homer's Iliad** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/introducing-homers-iliad/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- **The Roman Empire** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/the-roman-empire-introducing-some-key-terms/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- **The Ancient Olympics** <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/the-ancient-olympics-bridging-past-and-present/content-section-2>

WHAT TO LISTEN TO

Optional

BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time* has many episodes relevant to Classics. Some of those most useful for the A-level course are:



The Odyssey <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y297>

The Aeneid <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9c1>

Plato's Symposium <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03mhyzk>

Persepolis <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b4z075>

Seneca the Younger <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08fh0bh>

Sappho <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05pqsk4>

Tragedy <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005464v>

WHAT TO WATCH

Optional

Ultimate Rome with Professor Mary Beard

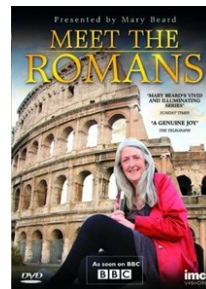
Episode 1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LL_acQHNS-o

Episode 2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urJbSdvjKU>

Episode 3 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5alrhQKGOjg>

Episode 4 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvBghnYyiR4>

Meet the Romans with Professor Mary Beard



Episode 1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rggk_H3jEgw

Episode 2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JFw8M4PBUl>

Building the Ancient City with Andrew Wallace-Hadrill

Athens - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VelFkGje-Tw>

Rome - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6BnHkciV_Y

SUGGESTED ESSAY TITLES

for the optional bonus task!

What were the main achievements of the ancient Greeks and Romans?

Which classical site would you most like to visit and why?

What do the ancient myths tell us about ancient society?

Why is ancient mythology still so captivating for us today?

What lessons can we learn from [insert Greek/Roman philosopher or writer]?

How has democracy developed since its birth in ancient Athens?

How do Homeric heroes and Hollywood heroes compare?

What similarities and differences exist between the experiences of women in the ancient and modern worlds?

What influences from the Classical world do we see in our everyday lives?

Why should we study Classics?

QUERIES?

Please contact the Head of Classics, Ms Marquis

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