

CLASSICS at CC

2026 Department Newsletter
May, 2026

What's inside?

- | | |
|---|------------|
| A Note from our Chair | P.2 |
| Congrats to Graduates, Thesis Presentations | P.3 |
| Faculty Updates & Reflections | P.4 |
| Odyssey-related summer reads | P.7 |
| Department Events & Study Abroad | P.8 |





A Note from our Chair

May, 2026

It has been an eventful and fast-moving year. We are overjoyed to celebrate not only Marcia Dobson's fiftieth year at the college, but also Owen Cramer's sixtieth. *Mirabile dictu!* Inside, both offer reflections on their early days at CC. Eileen Broderick, our department's secret weapon, was promoted to a Lead Academic Administrative Assistant at the college. Meanwhile, three students completed theses in Classics: seniors Mariah Dominguez and Alex Hooper, and junior Zib Lindholm, who had been planning to graduate early but will now be back for a final year of coursework outside the department. In addition, Andrew Schreiner submitted a thesis in Classics History and Politics. Alex, for his part, took part in a winter excavation at Aixonidai Halai, a coastal site just outside of Athens (see the back page for his excavation work last summer in Cyprus). Meanwhile, rising Classics senior Calla Merrill is off to Turkey this summer to do independent research as part of a Venture grant, further supported by our department's Hartwell fund.

We have been very lucky to have Isaac Hoffman as our CLCAC (language fellow), who offered students a host of original activities, including Latin karaoke at our annual recitation (see his faculty update). The recitation also featured Zib and Calla putting on a scene from Aristophanes' *Frogs* set in the underworld, complete with costumes, where Dionysus, dressed up as Heracles, meets up with the actual Heracles (see the photos from the event). Isaac then arranged a visit from Cornell postdoc Mary Danisi, who sat in on Marcia's course *Myth and Meaning* and gave a well-attended lecture on her research involving the complex ways that ritual headbands (fillets) in Greek culture let women assert authority in public spaces. Sanjaya Thakur continued offering both his summer course in Italy and the first block of Elementary Greek in Greece during winter. Hellenistic historian Jenna Rice, from our neighbor the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, guest taught in my *Warfare in Greece and Rome* course about her fascinating research into whether dogs were used as combat animals in Greek warfare. Finally, a group of students (pictured above) went with me, Owen and Isaac (who graciously drove the van!) to see a performance of Euripides' *Medea* at the University of Denver, which was hammy, vampy and intense in all the right ways.

-Richard

Congratulations to our 2026 Graduates!



Mariah Dominguez
Classics & Political
Science



Alex Hooper
Classics



Andrew Schreiner
Classics-History-Politics

Congratulations to our
Graduating Classics Minors:

Torah Delaney
Cassidy Schnauer

Thesis Presentations



Zib Lindholm, Alex Hooper, Mariah Dominguez (left to right)

Zib delivered her thesis called
“Translating Arisophanes’ Clouds.”

Alex shared his thesis, “Beer and
Brewing in Antiquity: The Social
and Economic Influences of Beer
in Antiquity.”

Mariah’s thesis was titled “Power
Without Office: Women, Law,
and Political Influence from
Ancient Rome to Modern
Leadership.”

Faculty Updates & Reflections



Sanjaya Thakur, Professor

This year has been a "little" calmer than in the recent past—notably I was able to teach a history course on Caesar Augustus for the first time in several years, one of my favorites, bringing together the study of literature, history and archaeology to learn about Rome's first emperor, whose shadow looms large in the modern political world today. I offered the second iteration of "Greek in Greece," which went well and continues to build momentum. Personally, I traveled for short trips to Puglia (first time!), far Western Crete (first time!), central Portugal (first time!), and returned to Sicily for the first time since COVID and Rhodes, which I hadn't visited in 25 years. Alas, it was only for a day! Things continue to go well in the department and I want to thank all of you who continue to support our students and their efforts with your donations. Please do not hesitate to reach out, I'd love to hear from you!

Isaac Hoffman, CLCAC

In my first year as the Classical Languages and Cultural Activities Coordinator, it has been my greatest joy to teach Latin and Ancient Greek adjuncts, advise seniors completing their thesis projects, and host activities and events in the Classics Department. In blocks 1-4, we showed the Gladiator films, played Dungeons & Dragons as Argonauts on an epic quest, and translated Madonna into Latin for ancient karaoke during our recitation event. In blocks 5-8, we enjoyed a production of Euripides' Medea at DU, invited Mary Danisi to give an amazing talk on fillets in Greek religion, and cheered on our seniors as they presented their thesis projects. In Greek and Latin adjuncts, this year's excellent group of students have tackled Pliny the Younger, Ovid, Senecan tragedy, Xenophon of Ephesus, and Aristophanes, on top of their other courses, and it has been my pleasure to guide them through reading such a wide range of authors.

In my own time, I have been working on a number of research projects, including an article on Philostratus' Imagines, a series of descriptions of paintings in an imaginary Neapolitan gallery, which I hope to send for publication this summer. I have also been translating songs into Greek, such as Johnny Cash's rendition of "Hurt," which I performed at our recitation event, and several others for which I do not have the voice, but the Muse takes me where she will!

This year has been a joy, and I look forward to another year as CLCAC!



Faculty Updates & Reflections



Richard Fernando Buxton, Associate Professor, Chair

This summer, while visiting my parents in Spain, an old friend and I made a daytrip to Medinaceli, outside of Soria, where, right at the edge of the hilltop on which the town sits, is the country's only surviving triple Roman arch. I'll confess that my other reason for going was because Sergio Leone used the plaza mayor as the town square of the fictive Mesa Verda, Mexico, whose bank the main characters hold up in *Duck, You Sucker!* (aka *A Fistful of Dynamite*). The academic year's highlight was getting to teach two of my favorite classes again, the Ancient Economy and a Latin course on Terence's *Adelphoe*, both of which, when I taught them last, was online during the pandemic. For Ancient Economy, I lucked into a classroom inside one of the turrets flanking Palmer's entrance, whose large windows offered a beautiful view of the quad but let in a lot of cold during the December weeks of fourth block. More recently, my chapter "What's Funny about Pheraulas?" appeared in the collection *Debating Cyrus* (De Gruyter), about a very odd supporting character in Xenophon's sprawling *Cyropaedia*. It's a short piece that I wrote five years ago now, but one I'm really fond of for marking a moment where I felt like I started getting more adventurous as a writer.



Owen Cramer, Moses Clement Gile Professor of Classics

Reflecting on 60 years at Colorado College: I came with my little family in a Studebaker over Raton Pass from Texas in 1965. I'd gone to LBJ's election-eve rally on the state capitol grounds in Austin in 1964 and I'd believed his peaceful message and voted for him (by striking out Barry Goldwater on my ballot in 1964). He betrayed me. I found a college longing for ways to live a good American life—that year's seniors included Donna Haraway of the Anthropocene and the cyborg and Terry Winograd of "convivial computing"—and we who didn't graduate went on to make the Block Plan (as an alternative to just shutting down the college in protest). Much of what I know and am I learned from my early colleagues: Glenn Gray and Jane Cauvel (Philosophy), Glenn Brooks (Pol. Sci.), Joe Pickle (Religion), Will Wright (Physics), Doug Freed (Psych.). I also learned from the peace movement here: Vic Dyer (a hereditary WWI activist) and Margaret Parker—also CC faculty Carlton Gamer and Herving Madruga. I developed a Classics program while acting in Horst Richardson's German plays (I also played the Pope in a Drama Dept. production of "Luther" in 1967), and (led by my wife Becky) organizing a quarter of El Paso County against the war and LBJ in 1968. In 1968 we met as a faculty to think about what we wanted CC to be in its centennial year of 1974, and that led to the Block Plan. In 1975 I worked up the biggest teaching load in the college and applied for a second tenure line. I interviewed everyone who was anyone in the rising cohort of Classicists in 1975, we hired Marcia, and the rest is history.

Faculty Updates & Reflections

Marcia Dobson, Professor

Reflecting on 50 years at Colorado College:

Putting a life of 50 years at CC into 250 words is not so easy, so I'm taking about 750 to talk just about the early times. There are so many memories, so much fun and delight mixed with intense work, constant change, and sometimes deep sorrow. But that's what life itself is. What's different about CC is time. Starting a block is always a nerve-wracking experience, sometimes attended by peculiar dreams. On first Mondays, one descends into a dark tunnel, with a faint light at the end of it that glows brighter during the third week, and at the block's end it feels like one has crossed another Rubicon. Owen told me that if I came to CC, it would be a 24 hour a day job. "That's just I want," I remember saying. And so it has been. Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote a sonnet that begins with the verse: "I will put chaos into 14 lines and keep it there." The block plan feels that way too—a bold attempt at containing chaos.



It may sound strange to you, after having said this, that my favorite time of being a Classicist here was when we taught nine blocks a year – NINE BLOCKS! Does anyone remember that? When Owen Cramer hired me to create a Classics Department of two (the only department on campus with absolute gender equality!), his magnanimous nature and Odyssean mind swept me up into whirlpools, eddies, and storms while sailing wine dark seas to meet adventure after adventure. It was never a question of what we had to teach to make an organized, proper and acceptable Classics Department. It was always "what do you want to teach next year?" and Owen's endless support. That was before the computer, when getting an electric typewriter was thrillingly advanced. It was a cut and paste world, a time when one walked around campus greeting and talking and sharing with one's colleagues in person. It was a time when we had parties with students at faculty homes. We cooked together, drank together, sang together and danced together. It was a time when the entire campus, it seemed to me, was not felt as being broken into specialized departments, but as being interdisciplinary, inter-departmental, interdivisional, and interruptible. We sailed from island to island of adventure, learning challenging and exciting new ways of thinking. There was plenty of time to teach with others—Owen, Harvey Rabbin in Philosophy, Marcelle Rabbin in French, Herving Madruga in Spanish and George Butte in English all joined together in forming Comparative Literature. And so, it came into being, first as a minor, and later, because of student requests, a major. Timothy Fuller, Mark Stavig, and Michael Grace, in Political Science, English and Music respectively, joined together to teach a triple block in Renaissance Culture. I joined both groups. Owen and I even taught together in a class we simply called "Delphi." It was teaching with Margie Duncombe in Sociology that brought me into what was to become a new field called Women's Studies and, with Doug Freed in the Psychology Dept., I began to learn about clinical psychology and, since I took it as a "student," to know how it feels to have an exam on the last day of class!



I first came here because I wanted to teach a very particular course: Greek History and Philosophy, taught by Owen Cramer and John Riker. Owen lured me here by ceding his place to me. With John, I learned not only about Aristotle, Plato, and Nietzsche, but gained a husband as well. John and I taught the course for many years together and will do so for the last time next fall. Despite the dark time tunnels of the blocks, my life here has been remarkably filled with Colorado sunlight, teaching with people who have become familiar and beloved to me, and many students whom I remember and miss: the ballroom dancers, Homeric poets, Sappho and ancient music lovers, the devotees of Greek tragedy, comedy and especially Dionysos, and finally the crazies like me who are simply smitten by the ancient Greek language for its own sake.



As you continue to live all your own adventures, remember that your home is always the "Ithaca" of Colorado College—where Odysseus found Penelope after so many years—and remember that one post of your bed, like theirs, is the tree of the cosmos—and finally, that the gods, nymphs and satyrs are always playing and hovering about you closer than even you can imagine!

In anticipation of the new Christopher Nolan film, *The Odyssey*, here are some Odyssey-related recommendations from the Classics Faculty:

Check out Javier Marías's *Berta Isla* (2017), more an exploration of the Ulysses theme than a retelling of the *Odyssey*. In late-'70s Madrid, the titular Berta starts a family with Tomás Nevinson, a charming but remote half-British language savant who soon begins working for the UK foreign office, growing increasingly withdrawn and tormented whenever he returns from assignments abroad. Eventually, Berta pieces together that Tomás is a British spy, only for him to vanish without a trace for twelve years before reappearing, completely unannounced. Like my favorite Marías book, *The Infatuations*, *Berta Isla* is a meditation about what we owe the past, the unknowability of others, and how our habits may be all that we really are—all of it this time explored both directly and metaphorically through the prism of the spy genre.

-Richard

What to think about to prepare for the release (finally!) of Christopher Nolan's "Odyssey?" The old Greek *Odyssey* is a folk epic, evolved in song and story in elite households (and maybe shepherd camps) between the Bronze Age and the rise of the polis. Can this movie outdo "Sinners" (an evocation of blues culture in the Mississippi Delta in the '30s as it was moving to Chicago, with monsters in the form of vampires)? Can it outdo "O Brother, Where Art Thou" (an evocation of the same Mississippi Delta with more white mythology and roots music, and monsters as cyclops-bible-salesman, or sirens-women washing clothes)? The basic story is about nostos ("going home") and we think about home and homelessness all the time. For an orientation, try Princeton (soon ASU) Classicist Dan-el Padilla Peralta's lecture for Austin Community College: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7db_H3DS41Q.

-Owen

During my time in Greece this winter I had the opportunity to visit Corfu for the very first time. In Antiquity the island was known as Corcyra, and played a central role in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. But the island is also identified with Scheria, home of the Phaeacians who transported Odysseus to Ithaca on the final stage of his journey. On the western portion of the island is a rock which looks like a ship, recalling Poseidon's punishment for the Phaeacians' transport of Odysseus. Alas, I did not visit that part of the island, but I did visit its incredible archaeological museum, and this piece (right) made me think of Odysseus. As many of you know, I read the *Odyssey* with students in several of my courses (Greek Sport; Gender and Sexuality) and I like to say it's my "only book I'd be happy to have on a desert island" because it is, to me, the ultimate epic. To put that on film in two hours? Impossible, I think. So pick up any translation (or even a few different ones) and reread it yourself. I am partial to Fagles, as I find it most easily readable for students (and myself!).

-Sanjaya

Based on the trailers and released stills of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*, the film will feature Nolan's characteristic muted color palette, which he uses to ground the fantastical elements of his films in grittier, almost documentarian worlds. Though this effect serves Nolan well, and I suspect the contrast will give audiences a new and interesting *Odyssey* to experience, I recommend new and returning enthusiasts inject a little color into their Homeric worlds with William Brockliss' *Homeric Imagery and the Natural Environment* (2019). Brockliss analyzes how the lived experience of the Greek springtime, with thousands of unique plant species in bloom, affected Homeric descriptions of the natural environment and the ideas Homeric poetry explores in natural and floral language, such as the deceptiveness of appearances, the "flower of youth," and even the monstrosity of death. Nolan's is a powerful visual language, but we should give Homer's colorful language its flowers too!

-Isaac

I recommend Emily Wilson's recent translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—phenomenal, juicy and gorgeous. I liked the 2024 *Odysseus* film, *The Return* (with Juliette Binoche and Ralph Fiennes), although I missed the presence of the Gods in it, and I am looking forward to the new IMAX *Odyssey* this summer. I read my first *Odyssey* in the sixth grade, and it sold me on the Classics. It was even better than *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, great for reading to children and for children to read. "Ithaca," the George Seferis poem, is one of the most beautiful ever written, as is Wallace Stevens's "The World as Meditation." There are also so many paintings of Odysseus around the world!

-Marcia



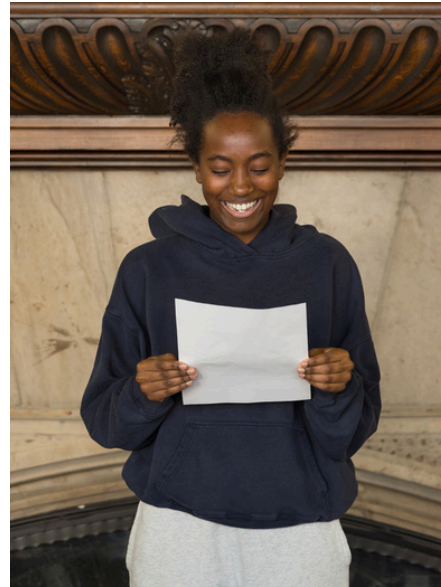
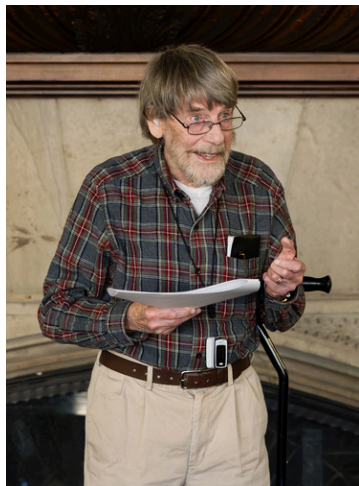
A FILM BY CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

THE ODYSSEY

07.17.26

Annual Recitation Event

Always a great time watching our students & faculty recite Greek and Latin passages!



Photos from Sanjaya's Courses Abroad and Guest Lectures



Summer '25 Art of Greece & Rome students on the Amalfi coast.



Blockk 5 Greek students in the Lion's Gate at Mycenae.



Students and faculty enjoyed Mary Danisi's lecture "Charicleia's *Tainia* and the Classical Tradition." (above)



Jenna Rice, historian at UCCS, spoke to Richard's class *Warfare in Greece and Rome* about the role of animals in ancient combat. (left)

A special experience for Classics senior, Alex Hooper:



“Over June 29th to July 25th of 2025, I attended the Kissonerga-Skalia Excavation Fieldschool organized by Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice Ltd, and directed by Dr. Lindy Crewe and Director Ian Hill on the Southwestern side of Cyprus. The site, Skalia, consisted of a settlement that had been continuously occupied from at least the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (ca. 2500 BC) into the start of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600 BC). The archaeological remains consist primarily of multiple super-imposed phases of rectilinear architecture, with a pre-Bronze Age component, and a final phase of large-scale architecture, at the transition to the Late Bronze Age. During this final phase, a significant building complex with evidence for domestic and industrial activities, including beer production, was constructed. The team's objective was to continue to expose this complex and understand the nature of the final occupation before the site was abandoned. Utilizing the single context recording system, I excavated within the site's industrial complex, with evidence of large pithoi set into the ground and clusters of postholes and storage pits, led by Dr Rafael Laoutari.

This excavation was particularly important to me due to its influence on my thesis research on the social and economic impact of beer consumption and brewing across ancient civilizations, but also for its development of my archaeological skills such as zooarchaeology, ceramic analysis, and site sketching. During the excavation we uncovered a plethora of artifacts, such as sherds of a large pithos, a set of mini juglets, and a fishhook in an incredibly unique style for Cyprus. I was lucky enough to discover a clay spindle whorl, which absolutely made my week, maybe month, perhaps my entire year! Overall the preservation and continued excavation of this architectural phase offers valuable insight into the organization of production and the social significance of communal or large-scale craft activities in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean.” - Alex



If you would like to support our students, donations can be made to the Classics general fund or the Hartwell fund; both help fund research and related travel, like Alex's time in Cyprus. To make a targeted donation for a specific purpose, please do not hesitate to contact the department directly. We would like to thank all of our donors for their generous contributions; your gifts are very appreciated. You can use the QR code to donate from your phone. To indicate that you want your gift to go to the Classics Department, select 'Classics Department Discretionary Fund' under designations.

