

# CLASSICS at CC

2025 Department Newsletter

May, 2025

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# A Note from our Chair

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The sesquicentennial of Colorado College has been a year made up of equal parts uncertainty and expectation, with an interim college administration and a higher education landscape rapidly evolving in terms of regulation, demographics and new technologies. Undaunted, the Classics Department has been a restless hub of activity, with three majors (including one in Classics-History-Politics) and four Ancient World minors graduating.

Sanjaya continues to build a robust selection of study abroad opportunities, piloting a program to teach the first block of Ancient Greek in Athens, which has helped attract a whole new audience to the language. He also found time in fall to co-teach the Rocks and Ruins course in Greece with Henry Fricke of Geology. Meanwhile, Eta Sigma Phi, the Classics Honors Society, with the tireless support of our CLCAC (language tutor) Rachel Dubit, organized an innovative and engaging slate of events, which included throwing Greek-style pots in fall and a mock Olympics in spring (see the photos inside). Rachel also arranged and oversaw a visit by Annie Lamar of UC Santa Barbara, who gave a fascinating talk to a packed house in February on the various ways that computational methods, not least artificial intelligence, can be used to understand the structure and meaning of Greek epic.

Students flocked to courses with Owen, on the cusp of his sixtieth year at the college, and with our visiting instructor Cait Mongrain, who introduced an exciting new class on Roman gastronomic culture (including, of course, having her students prepare a *cena*, or “banquet”—albeit without that ancient favorite eels!). Marcia, meanwhile, returned recharged from a productive sabbatical in fall that let her build on the momentum of her recent book.

Finally, rising senior Alex Hooper is heading to Cyprus this summer to take part in the Kissonerga-Skalia excavation run by HARP Archaeology and the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute. Our John Bryant and Miriam Gile Hartwell Fund is helping pay for Alex’s participation thanks to Hartwell heir Tim Boddington (’72), who has generously let us expand the fund’s remit to better meet the changing needs of our students. τοῖς εὐεργέταις μέγιστην χάριν ἀποδίδομεν!

-Richard



# **Congratulations to our 2025 Graduates!**



Grace Baer  
Classics-History-  
Politics



Gracie Carello  
Classics



Kiernan Nessler  
Classics

## **Congratulations to our Graduating Ancient World Minors:**

**James Lammert  
Aiden Little  
Megan O'Brien  
Jason Smith**

# Faculty Updates



Sanjaya Thakur, Professor

It's been another great year, and one I won't forget for a while. The summer course in Italy continues to draw students and we had a fantastic group in '24. In the fall, after a long delay, I taught a course with Henry Fricke (Geology) on Minoan and Mycenaean Archaeology and the impact of catastrophic environmental events on Greek cultures past and present. We started in Athens, went to Santorini and Crete, and finished up in the Argolid. The course was fantastic and truly interdisciplinary, made even better by the awesome students we had with us. I returned to campus to teach some of my regular rotation (Greek Sport, Gender and Sexuality in Antiquity), then in the winter taught ancient Greek abroad in Athens for the first time. The students were wonderful, and we mixed intensive language study with a trip to the Argolid and Archaeological museums in Athens, and a wonderful day at the American School of Classical Studies in the science lab and rare books collection. Students got to handle first editions of Aristotle and Plato! The course was so successful, we'll run it again in 2026. I spent most of the spring working on several scholarly projects and am finishing up the year with a course on Latin epigraphy. And, of course, getting ready to head to Italy for the summer '25 class. Alums, please reach out to join groups on Facebook and LinkedIn, and if you are in the Boston or NY areas, I am there quite frequently. Reach out, I'd love to catch up!

Rachel Dubit, CLCAC

As this year's Classical Languages and Cultural Activities Coordinator, I have enjoyed eight blocks full of fun activities, educational events, and Latin & Greek classes. Activities have included 'paint your own Classical Greek vase night,' Classical Valentines, mock Olympics on Tava Quad, and the end-of-year Roman dinner party (featuring recipes modified from Apicius and Cato). We also hosted a wonderful talk on Computational Classics by the head of the Low-Resource Language Lab at UC Santa Barbara. In adjunct classes, I have challenged my students to read authors from Tacitus to Catullus and Euripides to Apollonius of Rhodes (whose *Argonautica* has been a true labor of love for the current advanced Greek class!). I enjoyed cheering on those who participated in the fall recitation event and look forward to seeing what creative final projects my students come up with this semester.

In between teaching and event planning, I completed my PhD at Stanford in December and worked on a number of research projects. While I am sad to leave CC, its wonderful students, and such a collegial department, I look forward to my next adventure as a Lecturer in the Classics department at Dartmouth. I hope my students and colleagues will stay in touch!





# Faculty Updates



Richard Fernando Buxton, Associate Professor, Chair

In fall I was able to return to Buenos Aires to give a paper at the International Xenophon Society's triennial conference. The organizers managed to snag tickets for a few of us to a Boca Juniors soccer match, where I was equal parts thrilled and terrified to feel the stadium's concrete stands undulating as the rabid fans jumped up and down singing football chants. Back in Colorado Springs, I managed to catch up with several departmental alumni: Avivah Polmer ('85), for whose Just World Award from the college see last year's newsletter; Bloomberg reporter Heather Perlberg ('05), back on campus to teach part of a journalism course; Kate Gustilo ('17), on rotation as part of medical school at CU Anschutz; and Peter Chapman ('20), who works for the state's parks and wildlife department. Last year in Brooklyn, meanwhile, I had the pleasure of grabbing drinks with Helen Donovan ('20) and James Franklin ('20). Summer will see me returning with a new research assistant (Classics major Zib Lindholm) to cataloging work at the American Numismatic Association's Money Museum next door to CC, where one of Zib's predecessors, Finlay Roberts ('22), continues to work as a Museum Technician. On the horizon for the end of summer is the publication of my chapter on alarmist rhetorical tactics in Xenophon as part of the wonderfully titled collection *Fearmongering in Greek and Roman Literature and Beyond* (Routledge). But most important of all, after horribly mangling my passage at last year's recitation event, I managed to make it through this fall's without incident!



Cait Mongrain, Visiting Instructor

This year has flown by, taking my students and me across the length and breadth of the Mediterranean through the writings, art, and coinage of ancient Greece and Rome. From language courses to topics seminars, I have gladly taken advantage of the numerous resources available to faculty and students at CC. In Block 2, the students of "History of the Roman Empire" learned how to use coins as sources of historical evidence during a visit to the American Numismatic Association's Money Museum. In intermediate Latin, we discussed modern film adaptations of ancient Rome with an outing to see *Gladiator II*. Finally, I'm wrapping up the year with a course of my own design, "Food and Dining in the Roman World," a Creative Process course in which the students have taken a more hands-on approach to learning history, including two sessions at Bemis Art School, learning different techniques for producing food-safe pottery, and a banquet featuring ancient Roman recipes cooked by the students themselves.

It has been a privilege and a delight to learn from my colleagues and students this year at CC. This summer, I will defend my dissertation from Princeton University, then I'm off to Virginia to take up a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Richmond.

# Faculty Updates



Marcia Dobson, Professor

I was on sabbatical for the fall of this year. During that time, I presented two papers on Zoom, one to TRISP (Training in Intersubjective Self Psychology), in New York, and the second to "The Human Spirit Program" in Israel, on the work of their Buddhist Psychoanalyst Director, Raanan Kulka, discussing his ideas of 'inter-being' and its relation to empathy and war. I also presented two papers to the International Association for Psychoanalytic Self Psychology, which met in Rome, Italy, in October. Both of these papers had, as their subjects, the concept of Tragic Man, which the founder of self psychology, Heinz Kohut, uses to describe the self of a human being when they have reached the acme of fulfillment in later age. To have a self, Kohut theorizes, a person must develop empathy, humor, creativity, wisdom, and the acceptance of transience (which arouses "a certain degree of melancholy"). This contrasts with Freud's understanding of the human being as Guilty Man. Whereas Freud focuses on Oedipus, Kohut

focuses on all three of the Oedipus plays to develop his idea of the tragic, and ultimately finds his Greek Hero in Odysseus, rather than Oedipus.

In addition, I am still co-Editor in Chief of the Self Psychology journal *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context*, which takes up a lot of my time.

When I was not working, I was enjoying our wonderful family of Shetland Sheepdogs. We lost Lady Gwendolyn in November, but now have a 6-month-old female, whose name is Princess Lilibet – "Lili" for short, the nickname of Queen Elizabeth, which Prince Harry and Megan adopted for their own baby's name.

John Riker and I are still enjoying ballroom dancing!

When I returned in the Spring, I chose to teach "Discovering the Unconscious," the first course in the Psychoanalysis Minor; "Myth and Meaning," my favorite course in the Classics, and a text course on C.G. Jung. It has been tiring to return to teaching, but my wonderful CC students continue to give so much energy, spirit and thoughtfulness to the subject matter that it seems just about impossible to retire, even after 49 years! I am happy to communicate with all the alumnae and alumni I have taught (or not). I would love to hear from you about what you are doing. Write to me!



Owen Cramer, Professor,  
Moses Clement Gile Professor of Classics

With four grandchildren now in college, Owen finds himself identifying with students in new ways. Rubrics for grading may be adjusted to be more encouraging, a little more digging into students' research for signs of what's interesting in 2025 that wasn't so interesting in 1975 or 1955. There are joys in a long life.

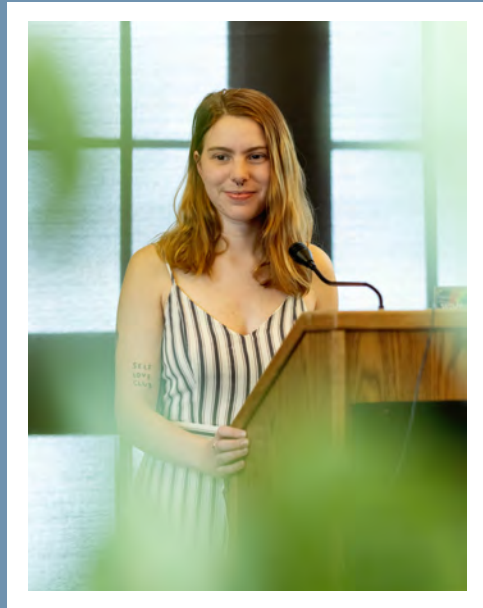
Block 8 found him back with Invention of History, a course developed by Marcia long ago and more recently traded off with Richard: historiography is contested these days, but Herodotus and Thucydides set the terms. And next year, back to beginning Latin. It's been a long time since Julius Caesar broke through to Owen, a few floors above Michigan Avenue in Chicago, and just talked through the prose in a textbook, but that sense of communication is still going strong.



## Senior Thesis Presentations



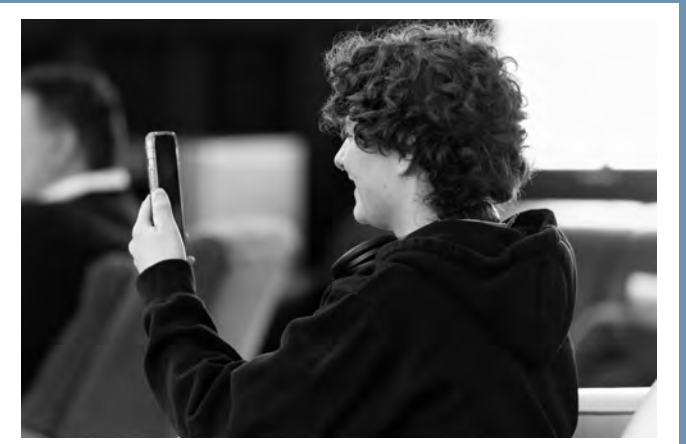
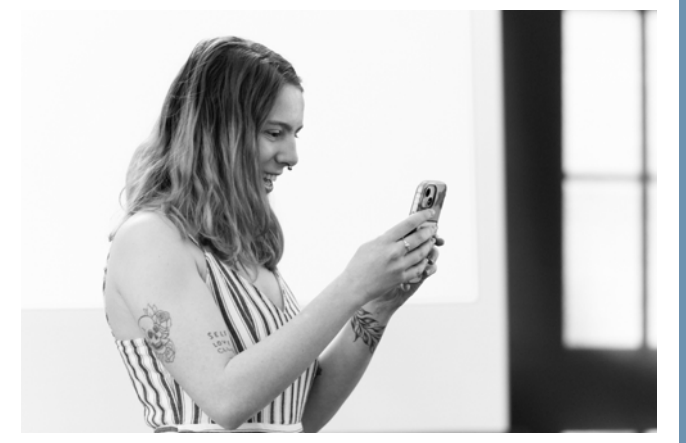
Grace shared her thesis, "Shaping the Fascist Future: Italian Fascism, the Memory of Rome, and the Colonization of Libya."



Gracie delivered her thesis called, "Death, Devotion, and the Audience: Understanding Sibling Relationships in Sophokles' *Antigone*."



Kiernan's thesis was titled, "The Metrical and Semantic Impacts of the Digamma in Homer's *Iliad*."

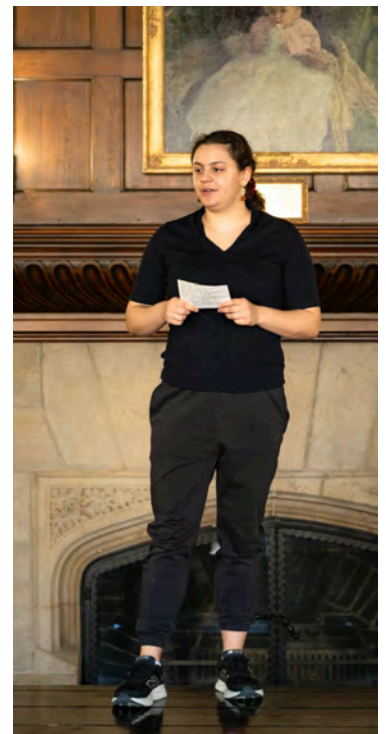
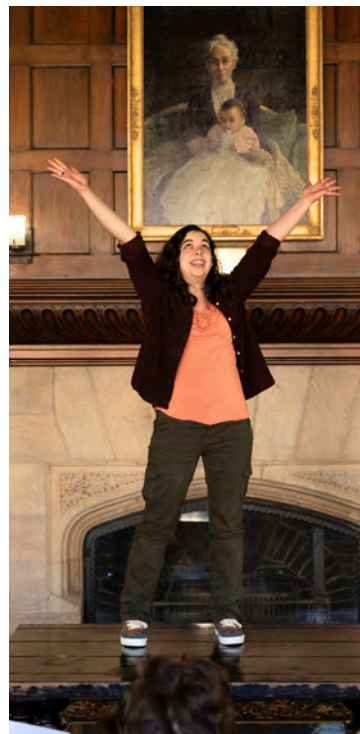
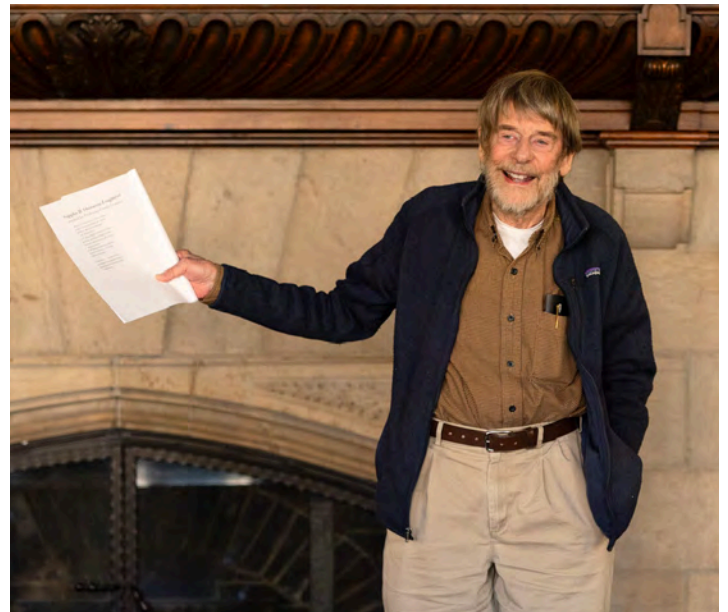
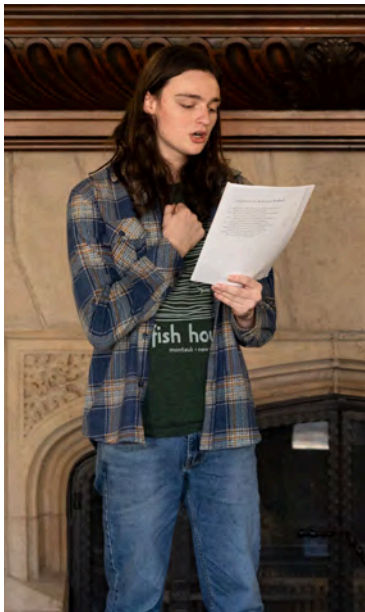
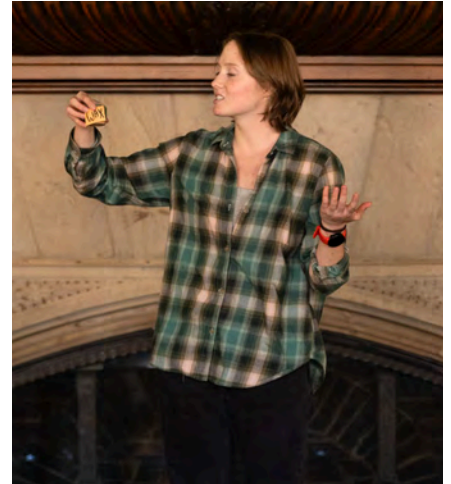


Gracie's family was able to watch her presentation via FaceTime. What a treat!



# Annual Recitation Event

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





# Photos from Sanjaya's Courses Abroad



Students from Block 2's archaeology course taught with Henry Fricke at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.



Block 2 class on the Areopagus in front of the Athenian Acropolis.



Summer '24 Art of Greece & Rome students inside the Colosseum in Rome.



Summer '24 students on the streets of Rome.

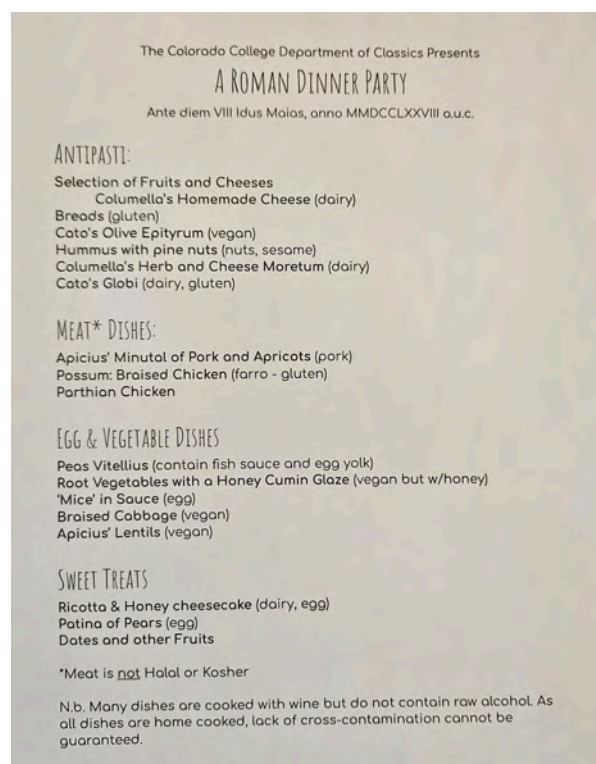


Block 5 Intro to Greek class on the Athenian Acropolis.



Block 5 students at the Temple of Apollo in Corinth.





Cait Mongrain and Rachel Dubit wrapped up block 8 by hosting a traditional Roman dinner party. Students from Cait's class *Food and Dining in the Roman World* cooked in kitchens on campus and they dined as a group in Cossitt's lounge.

## Parting Thoughts from Seniors:

### Grace Baer

The Classics department has such a developed community, and I really feel that I was able to get to know everyone in the department. My favorite class (not just in Classics but at Colorado College) has been "Art of Greece and Rome" with Richard Fernando Buxton and Sanjaya Thakur. I know choosing a block abroad may be cheating, but the opportunity to see so many iconic sites was incredible.

### Gracie Carrello

I chose to go into Classics because I love learning about humanity, from how different we used to live to how similar we are today. The ideas that connect us across time are so fascinating to me.

Following graduation, I will be doing a Classical bioarchaeology field school in Astypalaia, Greece!



# MOCK OLYMPICS ON TAVA QUAD



Swordfighting!



More swordfighting!



Boxing!



Javelin!



Victors! Ben Hansen-Kaplan, Nicholas Gordon & Maram Mohamed



## From Cait Mongrain's class, *Food and Dining in the Roman World*:



### Donations

If you would like to help support our students, donations can be made to the Classics general fund or the Hartwell fund; both fund research and related travel. 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.

[Click here](#) to visit CC's gifting page. To indicate that you want your gift to go to the Classics Dept. select 'Classics Department Discretionary Fund under designations'. Alternatively, use the QR code to donate from your phone.

