Some Results from the Alumni Survey

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Survey version of the competencies (short-hand in capitals)

1. A systematic knowledge of Latin and Greek grammar and syntax. (LANGUAGES: FORM)

2. A systematic knowledge of English grammar and syntax. (ENGLISH GRAMMAR)

3. The ability to read and produce Greek and/or Latin. (LANGUAGES: READING)

4. A basic knowledge of cultural products and practices within a geographical and chronological framework. (ANCIENT CULTURES)

5. The ability to read and interpret a broad variety of ancient texts (in the original and in translation) including the text’s rhetorical features (such as subject, purpose, argument, genre, and bias). (INTERPRETING TEXTS)

6. The ability to examine, contextualize, and interpret ancient material culture (as primary texts). (INTERPRETING MATERIAL CULTURE)

7. The ability to extrapolate meaningful information from fragmentary and limited evidence. (FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE: EXTRAPOLATION)

8. The ability to construct, situate, or position one’s own argument within a larger discourse. (CONSTRUCT ARGUMENTS)

9. The ability to understand and evaluate arguments and secondary sources. (SECONDARY SOURCES)

10. An awareness of and ability to communicate one’s own intellectual process, strengths, and weaknesses in analyzing ancient sources of evidence. (METACOGNITIVE)

11. The ability to critique and revise one’s own ideas in light of new evidence. (REVISION WITH NEW EVIDENCE)

12. The ability to use interdisciplinary approaches to connect texts and artifacts to their cultural contexts. (INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES)

13. The ability to recognize the complexities and limitations of available evidence and methodologies in order to recognize which are best suited for a particular question. (CHOOSING APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE/METHOD)

14. The ability to use more than one kind of evidence, body of knowledge, and/or mode of thinking to answer questions. (COMBINING METHODS)

15. The ability to integrate and contextualize fragmentary evidence. (FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE: CONTEXTUALIZATION)

16. The ability to recognize modes of thinking that still inform today’s discourse, including an awareness of the resonances between the ancient world and subsequent cultural productions. (EFFECT OF ANTIQUITY ON LATER TIMES)

17. The ability to investigate how various historical moments, including our own, affect the reception and understanding of the past. (EFFECT OF LATER TIMES ON VIEWS OF ANTIQUITY)

18. The understanding of the use of the past in imagining the future. (EFFECT OF ANTIQUITY ON VIEWS OF FUTURE)

19. The ability to perceive and organize patterns of evidence across history, across subdisciplines, and between methodologies. (PATTERNS OF EVIDENCE)

20. The ability to imagine different quotidian experiences and different social norms and to think from the perspective of a different value system. (IMAGINING OTHER PERSPECTIVES)

21. The ability to recognize privileged and non-privileged ideologies.(RECOGNIZING IDEOLOGIES)

22. The ability to negotiate complex issues and ambiguity. (NEGOTIATING COMPLEXITY)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | LEGAL | NON-PROFIT | MEDICINE | COMPUTER SCIENCE/IT |
| 1st place | 2. English grammar9. Secondary sources | 2. English grammar | 14. Combining methods | 14. Combining methods |
| 2nd place | 8. Construct arguments | 14. Combining methods 22. Negotiating complexity | 7. Fragmentary evidence: extrapolation | 2. English grammar |
| 3rd place | 11. Revision with new evidence | 7. Fragmentary evidence: extrapolation9. Secondary sources11. Revision with new evidence | 22. Negotiating complexity | 7. Fragmentary evidence:extrapolation |
| 4th place | 14. Combining methods | 12. Interdisciplinary approaches13. Choosing appropriate evidence/method | 8. Construct arguments 11. Revision with new evidence | 9. Secondary sources 11. Revision with new evidence |
| 5th place | 7. Fragmentary evidence: extrapolation | 17. Effects of later times on views of antiquity | 15. Fragmentary evidence: contextualization | 15. Fragmentary evidence: contextualization22. Negotiating complexity |

TRANSFER OF COMPETENCIES TO CAREERS (ranked by “strongly agree”)

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| --- | --- |
| THINGS WE LEFT OUT: (NB this is for all respondents, not just non-education) Love of the Ancient World Language/writing/communication skills Thinking/learning skills Mental discipline | MOST USEFUL THINGS: **Knowledge about/appreciation for the ancient world****Language skills** **Communication/Persuasion skills** **Various thinking skills** **Mental Discipline** |

SOME DELIGHTFUL QUOTES FOR YOU:

“My Classics degree was instrumental in allowing me to gain the ability and confidence to think independently. This independence is a result of working closely with source materials in the original language - I am able to see what a text says for myself and develop and support my own thoughts about it. I do not have to rely on how another person has translated a text or what a secondary source says about the text to develop my thoughts. Independent thought is vital in my work, as well as my personal life. By focusing on the basic facts of a situation and supporting my thought with them, I am able to achieve better outcomes than many of my coworkers who are less comfortable leaving the realm of "so-and-so said this, therefore it must be true."

“The awareness of how little we know, and the combination of security in knowing that little bit and agnosticism in thinking that the little that we know actually corresponds to the lived reality of the ancient world. It's been very useful in the skill of making arguments out of very minimal material and in the skill of acknowledging that others may be correct.”

“Like I said above, studying Greek grammar set me up to be a half-decent lawyer. I am comfortable with really complex statutory schemes because, at the end of the day, American law is easier than trying to figure out when the heck you actually are supposed to use the middle and/or optative. More seriously, Greek taught me that complex grammar frameworks can support significant intellectual weight. I still think about my first time reading Plato. I saw so much nuance in the Greek, and I had to really labor intellectually to figure out how to convey that nuance in English. That labor made me a better writer and a better thinker, and I am intensely grateful for that experience.”

“The skill of defending your ideas; I noticed there were a few points about revising and adapting your views, but I didn't see one about defending your positions. There is so much grey area in the study of classics, and while I absolutely learned to adapt my ideas to new information, I also learned to voice strong support for my interpretations. This is an eminently useful skill in life, particularly as a woman in a male-dominated workplace. I got used to defending my ideas in an open dialogue, with supportive classmates and professors - I value and draw on that experience when I need to make myself heard when the audience isn't quite so open and supportive.”

“I gained confidence in my own ability to parse and comprehend texts that initially appeared incomprehensible. Attention to detail, breaking down the text into smaller steps, understanding how the parts fit into the whole, have all been invaluable to me when learning Python, SQL, JavaScript, Java, etc. Studying Classics opened my eyes not only to the ancient world, but through it, other cultures, the modern world, and my own strength and perseverance. I credit my time studying ancient Greek and Latin with forming me into the person I am today – someone with confidence in her own abilities, eagerness to explore the unknown, flexibility in revising my opinions when new data warrants, perseverance to power through difficulties, a wide perspective on life and the human condition, and grace and humor under pressure.”

“The ability to identify and reckon with fragmentary evidence. A degree in classics trains you to think about what evidence we might be missing, and to use logic to test the limits of what might be inferred from the fragments we do have, and also identify the assertions that just cannot be supported through available evidence. I use the skill of spotting evidentiary gaps, and wrestling with their meaning, constantly in my career as a lawyer. I find that my non-classicist peers are more likely to take it for granted that we have a complete body of evidence, and this gives me an analytical and persuasive advantage.”

“The study of the Classics requires a careful, precise approach to dealing with commonly fragmented, ambiguous evidence. That's as good a training for real life that anyone could ask for.”

“Perhaps the ability to solve puzzles/problems, and stay with it. I had one boss call me, "The skeleton key," because I was able to

dig and find the answers we needed. I have done many different things in my adult life, either as a volunteer or as a paid employee. When I left college, people were skeptical of the application of a Classics degree to real life, but I feel that the discipline of learning the language made it easy for me to jump in and learn anything I needed to in order to be successful on the job or as a volunteer.”

“The act of translating taught me discipline, the importance of context and really honed my attention to detail-- all of which have been incredibly important in my business career. Being able to understand and appreciate the big picture while dealing with minutiae is a skill that's called upon constantly, and I credit my Classics education with my ability to do that well.”

“The most useful skill I gained from Classics was to apply my memory, intelligence, imagination and feelings so that I can appreciate and relate to something that was foreign and unknown. Perhaps this is a definition of the ability to learn, which has certainly served me in my professional life, but enriched my personal life even more by opening interests and passion for things I was previously ignorant of.”

“Many of the most useful critical thinking skills I developed are common across the liberal arts. What is special about Classics is the

opportunity to see a common thread of humanity--familiar passions and wit--in a cultural context so distant from what we know today. Studying Classics helped to ground me as a person, and it gave me a perspective to step outside the current moment.”

“Reading classical literature in the original awakened in me an enormous love for that literature. I have never lost that love, and it enriches my life.”

“The most lasting positive impression I have from my Classics degree is of the intense passion of the teachers for their work,

matched by every other fellow Classics major in the program. It is important to love what one does. Everything else flows from that.”