

## Gateway Classicism: The Classic Problem with the Ancient World

The appeal of Greek and Latin myths and civilizations stands in a paradoxical position with the public as well as for students and instructors of classical studies. On the one hand, sword-and-sand films (*Gladiator* [2000], most notably) and classics-inspired characters (Madeline Miller's Circe [2018] or many of the characters from Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* [1989-2025]) have drawn great viewing and reading interest and have often served as a gateway to appeal to students. Likewise, the reframing of classical studies to engage with contemporary concerns and reception (e.g., racial identity, slavery) pose new issues, especially in the current social climate. These approaches all offer valuable ways of thinking of traditional characters and texts. On the other hand, it is easy for this Gateway Classicism to become a revolving door that might let students in but just as quickly scares them away. How can we sustain interest *and* critical pedagogical involvement through classical studies? In the face of new technologies (e.g., digital humanities and AI) the thread to our relevance renews itself. This paper offers a critical view of the long-term utility of what I have termed Gateway Classicism. While I pose some alternatives or ways to develop current models, I seek primarily to problematize our current positions as pedagogical *praxis* and how we might expand our pedagogical strategies into the future.