

## Classics, STEM, and the New Humanities:

### Designing a Classical Curriculum for the Needs of a Science College

Among Classics instructors at higher education institutions, discussions of pedagogy, course and curricular design, and teaching and learning more generally tend to presuppose certain traditional bifurcations: for instance, into graduate vs. undergraduate programs, language vs. culture courses and curricula, Classical Languages majors vs. Classical Civilization majors, or Classics majors and minors vs. non-majors. The broader scholarly discourse on Classics pedagogy tends to be guided by these terms, even as some institutions' recent enrollment trends call into question these prevailing categories. Most notably, at the 2019 meeting of the SCS, one prominent classicist even asked what Classics might become if language study were no longer located at the center of the field. We may also question the value attached to some of these other divisions beyond the one distinguishing language study from cultural studies; though they may continue to define the broad parameters governing students' progress through many Classics courses and curricula, often—and perhaps increasingly—instructors find themselves teaching in institutional situations where none of these conventional categories apply.

This paper argues that Classics as a discipline is well positioned to contribute to STEM and Health Sciences curricula, when it is approached through so called “new humanities” areas (Ferris 2015; Williams 2019) such as the Digital Humanities and the Medical Humanities. Using as a case study a curricular design developed for a science college which emphasizes preparation for the Health Sciences professions, I show how specific assignments and courses can build upon one another in a vertical design or stand alone as terminal courses, and yet still achieve meaningful outcomes for students pursuing the Classics through an undergraduate Medical

Humanities major, a graduate-level Pharmacy professional program, or undergraduate General Education alone.

In each section of my paper, I detail how a student may approach the Classics through these intersecting curricular arrangements and the outcomes expected at each stage. In the 100-level courses students meet the Classics either as Medical Humanities majors through a seminar-style “Humanities Orientation” or as students pursuing any course of study through “Elementary Latin,” which combines traditional and innovative pedagogies, while emphasizing medical and scientific vocabulary and texts. As these students proceed to their second-year courses, a General Education requirement for Multidisciplinary Studies can be met through my “Ancient Science” course, which explores the literature and material remains of scientific culture from cuneiform to Copernicus through a variety of research projects. Prompted by grant opportunities and the possibilities of the content itself, recent semesters have increasingly drawn upon Digital Humanities projects to incorporate experience with the classical languages and undergraduate research into this course. Third-year courses at my University involve a range of different options for Classical Studies, but I focus upon “Ancient Medicine” as a course which brings together Medical Humanities majors with students fulfilling General Education requirements and Pharmacy students pursuing their doctoral work through a Classics course approved by the Pharmacy program as a professional elective. I emphasize particularly how the various concentrations and disciplines which students have chosen enrich the classroom through a cross-disciplinary interrogation of the ancient material. Finally, I explain how graduating seniors in the Medical Humanities major draw upon their experience in these courses to construct original research projects, so that by the time they complete their degrees they are capable of initiating and completing independent research projects. I conclude that these curricular path charted

through Classics, the Medical Humanities, and the Health Sciences and STEM fields generally shows that productive alignments among them can be found, so that the new humanities areas should be regarded as one model for the promotion of Classical Studies, even as they also enrich the field through new questions and new ways of posing questions.

### Bibliography

Ferris, David. 2015. "The New Humanities?" Papers. Humanities Futures. Franklin Humanities Institute. Duke University. <https://humanitiesfutures.org/papers/the-new-humanities/>

Williams, Jeffrey J. 2019. "The New Humanities. Once-robust fields are being broken up and stripped for parts." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 14, 2019. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-new-humanities/>