

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD5922S

Date of Senate Approval 4/28/2022

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 54 (CLAS): **Change the name of the Department of Classics to the
Department of Ancient Mediterranean Studies**

Effective Date: Fall 2022

1. **Delete:** On page 103 the following entry for Classics:

CLASSICS (CLAS)

The department offers three concentrations: Classical Languages & Literatures; Classical Civilization; and Latin with Teacher Licensure. All programs draw on a common core of material, but their emphases are different, and all aim to give the student as complete a background in Greco-Roman culture as possible. Strong emphasis is placed both on acquiring the linguistic skills necessary to be able to read the ancient texts in their original languages and on gaining an understanding of the cultures in which Western culture is firmly rooted. A Classics degree is inherently interdisciplinary, provides excellent general intellectual training, and does not limit the student to any one future career.

Add: On page 103, in place of deleted entry:

ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES (AMS)

The Ancient Mediterranean Studies major will give the student as complete a background as possible in the Greco-Roman cultural spheres of the ancient Mediterranean, with a strong emphasis on their modern contextualization. Ancient Mediterranean Studies majors can acquire the linguistic skills necessary to read original Greek and Latin texts as well as competence in topics that range from ancient history, daily life, and art and archaeology, to religion, sexuality, social issues, identities (including race, gender, and social class), and the modern reception of the ancient world. Interested students may also pursue teacher licensure in Latin. The Ancient Mediterranean Studies major is inherently interdisciplinary, provides excellent general intellectual training, and does not limit the student to any one future career.

2. Replace: Throughout the catalog:

All occurrences of “Classics” and “CLAS” with “Ancient Mediterranean Studies” and “AMS”

Impact Statement: The new name will reflect how we wish the department to be perceived within the university and the outside world, and is a more accurate description of what we do in our teaching and scholarship.

Rationale: This request is motivated by positive developments in our discipline in recent decades that have widened its scope and made it more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We are also prompted to act because Classics departments in the U.S. and elsewhere have been buffeted on at least two fronts during those same decades: by white supremacist groups and “red pill” communities who attempt to appropriate classical texts to further their racist and sexist agendas, and by pundits and influential educators who are unaware of changes in our discipline and continue to view the ancient Greco-Roman world as elitist and non-inclusive. This has had a very negative impact on public perceptions of our discipline. To counter those perceptions, we believe a change of name is in order. We propose to change our department’s name to Ancient Mediterranean Studies (AMS), which will clearly communicate that at UNC Asheville we teach the Greco-Roman world and its environs broadly and inclusively. AMS also more accurately describes what we in fact already teach; for example, over the past twenty years we regularly have offered and will continue to offer courses on many topics in the wider Mediterranean world, such as on ancient Persia, Egypt, Etruria, the Hebrew language and culture, and early Christianity, and some of us have published on similar topics as well. Many other departments nationwide, including Emory University, Rhodes College, the University of Missouri, and Trinity University of San Antonio, have also moved away from the name Classics or Classical Studies to a more accurate designation, and we wish to align in that direction as an indication that we, too, believe that our discipline is dynamic and important in our modern world. The entire faculty of the department has voted unanimously to request this change, and our Dean has indicated support.