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Contact: Bonnie Gordon (505-661-4691)

bjgordon@unm.edu

Explore classical languages and culture at UNM-LA this fall

Discover the classical world at UNM-Los Alamos this fall. UNM-LA will offer three classes in classical languages as well as Roman Civilization. Dr. Hans Hanson will teach the four classes. Dr. Hanson recently received a doctorate in Classics from the University of Washington.

Two Latin classes, Elementary Latin (LATN 101, MW 2:30-3:45 p.m.), Intermediate Latin (LATN 201, TTh 4-5:15 p.m.) and Beginning New Testament Greek (GREK 104, MW 4-5:15 p.m.) will offer students the opportunity to read the classics in the original.

“Reading texts in the original language takes classical literature to a whole new level,” said Hanson. “Translation flattens the meaning of a text. You can’t really understand these important works unless you can read them in the original.”

Students can gain cultural fluency more quickly with classical languages than they could in a modern language, Hanson said. “Students can engage with the classics in two years,” he said.

Other benefits provided by the study of classical languages include a better understanding of scientific vocabulary, a deeper understanding of grammatical structure and according to a number of studies, higher scores on standardized tests, Hanson noted. But for Hanson, the main benefits are intrinsic.

Reading the classics as they were written, without the filter of a translator, allows students to hear the voices of Cicero and Homer, complete with alliteration, double meanings and individual

style that are literally “lost in translation”. Students can decide for themselves what Matthew, Luke and John really meant by a certain turn of phrase.

Few people would deny the importance of classical works in shaping the modern world. World leaders like Thomas Jefferson and Winston Churchill have stressed, not just the benefits, but the pleasures to be gained in the study of classic languages, said Hanson. Whatever one’s religious beliefs, the impact of the New Testament and of liturgical literature in Latin is likewise obvious. Access to the original texts offers a window into the minds of some of the most profound writers the world has known.

Americans have always been fascinated by ancient Rome. In the modern era, we identify with Rome as a super power and look on its ultimate demise with trepidation. What are the true parallels between Rome and the U.S.? Find out in Roman Civilization (CSLT 205) offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4-5:15 p.m.

Hanson will take a multi-disciplinary approach to Roman culture. “Students will get a real appreciation of who the Romans were,” Hanson said.

Unlike many ancient cultures, the Romans left a lot of material behind them to study. Through its philosophy, history and politics and art, students can learn how Roman society functioned and see how Rome continues to influence the modern world.

Fall classes begin the week of August 23. To see the full class schedule or to register, visit www.la.unm.edu . For help with registration, call 662-0332. Credit classes may be taken on a credit/no credit basis for personal enrichment.