

## **Course Assessment Plan for Classics 324, Magic in the Ancient World**

Classics 324 will be assessed in order to determine how well it is meeting the general principles and specific General Learning Objectives of the Arts and Humanities category of the General Education Curriculum as well as objectives within the undergraduate program of the Department of Greek and Latin. Assessment will take place after the next quarter in which the course is taught and thereafter biennially, assuming the course is taught often enough (typically, the course is offered every other Autumn quarter, but on occasion is offered during a Spring quarter instead, in which case it will be assessed at that time).

Classics 324 will be assessed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Chair of the Department of Greek and Latin, unless one of them is the instructor of the course, in which case another faculty member will be substituted. The following procedures and indicators will be used in assessing the course:

- 1) Student evaluations, both the quantitative SEI and discursive statements written by the students (anonymously) at the end of the course
- 2) Written report of class visit by a peer evaluator
- 3) Review of current essay exams and quizzes and of a sampling of answers that students wrote for the essay exams
- 4) Review of course syllabi for each iteration of the course.

Items 3 and 4 will be maintained on file in the Department so that the progress of the course can be monitored and evaluated as the course evolves and to enable the department to address any major concerns or drift from the established goals and standards. These materials will also be valuable should a different instructor from the originating instructor be assigned to teach the course

### **How Classics 324 Meets the Learning Goals and Objectives of the "Arts and Humanities Historical Studies" component of the General Education Program**

Arts and Humanities Historical Studies coursework is intended to "develop students' knowledge of how past events influence today's society and help them understand how humans view themselves." Students are expected to "acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity; display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding; and think, speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts." (Taken from the General Education Program Learning Goals and Objectives, last updated 12/27/2007). Classics 324 does so as follows:

- ...develop students' knowledge of how past events influence today's society and help them understand how humans view themselves:

In Classics 324, we will examine, among other things, how ancient practices of magic or beliefs about magical practices had a long trajectory into the middle ages, the Renaissance (e.g., the philosophy and science of Marsilio Ficino) and from there into certain strands of contemporary Western spirituality. We will also examine how accusations of magic between early Christians and pagans and then amongst Christians themselves led to the definition of what constituted Christian identity. More generally, we will look at the manner in which religious beliefs and practices, by their very nature, provide important sources of identity for worshippers, individually and as groups, and how this potentially leads to either unity or divisiveness between groups (a pattern played out repeatedly in the contemporary world).

- ...acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity;

In Classics 324, we will look closely at the ways in which magic and accusations of magic can cause schism within a group, and at the precise situations in which such accusations arise – which sorts of misfortunes does a group choose to ascribe to magic and which not? How do these choices cause or avoid conflict in other arenas – political, military, familial, etc.?

- ...display knowledge about the origins and nature of contemporary issues and develop a foundation for future comparative understanding

In addition to studying the ways in which accusations of aberrant religious behavior (i.e., "magic") can cause schism within groups – a problem that still resonates in contemporary cultures – students in Classics 324 will be provided with examples of the practice of magic and accusations of magic from cultures from other places and times, which demonstrate collectively how widely definitions of proper and improper religious behavior can vary.

- ....think, speak and write critically about primary and secondary historical sources by examining diverse interpretations of past events and ideas in their historical contexts:.

This will be done largely via the essay exams in the course, although the instructor will also strongly encourage discussion during class.