

First Year Seminar

FYSM 1106A: Issues in Classics – Travel and Sightseeing in the Ancient World

Instructor: Prof. Marianne Goodfellow

Course description for 2019 - 2020

Travel and Sightseeing in the Ancient World

As armchair travelers, the students will be introduced through literary, historical, and archaeological evidence to the realm of travel in Antiquity. With maps and guides, both ancient and modern, and with first-hand accounts, the students will retrace the journeys of emperors and poets, explorers and traders, military commanders and pilgrims, and ordinary tourists as they travelled the roads and seaways of the Mediterranean world from the Pillars of Hercules in the west to the city of Constantinople in the east. Stops along the way will include the Pyramids and monuments of Egypt where the earliest traces of tourism are found, the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, the site of the games at Olympia, the Acropolis in Athens, the ruins of “windy Troy”, resort towns along the Bay of Naples as they were before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, and Rome itself. All roads do lead to Rome! The students will meet travelers both famous and somewhat obscure including Odysseus and Aeneas, Wenamon, Herodotus, Alexander the Great, Pytheas, Horace, the emperor Hadrian, and the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, to name a few.

Why did people travel such distances? Was it for trade or war, to seek a cure from the god of healing at Epidauros or perhaps a desire to see the Colossus of Rhodes or the Pyramids in Egypt? How did people get from place to place and what of the accommodations along the way? Could they buy a road map or a guidebook, or even souvenirs as we do today? Finally, how do we know about all this? Thus, among the issues to be considered is the survival of both written and archaeological material from Antiquity, material that provides evidence for our knowledge and understanding of the Graeco – Roman world.

There is no prerequisite for this course and students do not need to have any knowledge of or background whatsoever in the Ancient World.

Assignments are designed to develop the students' writing skills and their familiarity with reference and research materials in the Library.