

Classics and Ancient Civilizations (research) (MA)

Master



Universiteit
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

Specialisations

- Assyriology (research) (MA)
- Classics (research) (MA)
- Egyptology (research) (MA)
- Hebrew and Aramaic Studies (research) (MA)

The Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) master's at Leiden University covers the entire range of present-day research on the civilisations of Greece and Rome, Egypt and the Ancient Near East.

Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations (research) at Leiden University

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Why study Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) at Leiden University?

Classics and Ancient Civilizations at Leiden University has been ranked [10th in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023](#).

The research master's programme distinguishes itself from other similar master's programmes by consistently integrating Greek and Roman Antiquity, the world of the Hebrew Bible, ancient Judaism,

emerging Christianity, Egypt (ancient, antique and late-antique) and the cuneiform cultures of Ancient Mesopotamia, within their broader context. The number of specialisations offered by the Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) programme is unparalleled.

You will be able to tailor your study programme to your personal interests by creating your own combination of courses within the specialisation of your choice from other research master's programmes within the Faculties of Humanities. The programme makes creative use of a wide range of research methods, all of them well-represented at Leiden University. Traditional philology with its intimate knowledge of languages and texts, while still indispensable, is enriched by literary studies, cultural history, and the analysis of material culture.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

What are your career prospects?

As a graduate of a Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) programme at Leiden University you are qualified to work as a junior academic researcher in an academic environment or carry out further research work on a PhD programme. It is also possible to find employment within the fields of publishing or teaching, at policy-making departments of governmental bodies, within the education sector, or within cultural tourism.

[Find out more about your career prospects](#)

Is Classics and Ancient Civilizations (research) the programme for you?

Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's Programme?

[Check the admission requirements](#)

In which sector do students find jobs?

- 57 Education
- 14 Research
- 10 Government and semi-government
- 5 Publishing
- 5 IT
- 5 Culture, sport and recreation
- 4 Other

The graph above is based on alumni data from the (Research) MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations 2016-2020.



Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) degree

Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) at Leiden University is an accredited degree programme. After successful completion of this programme, you will receive a research master's degree in Classics and Ancient Civilizations and the title Master of Arts (MA).





Greek texts offer fascinating glimpse of multicultural Roman Empire

Casper de Jonge, Professor of Greek Language and Literature, believes that Greek texts from the Roman Empire are more interesting than was first thought. They offer a fascinating glimpse of the polyphonic and multicultural world of the Roman Empire. In his inaugural lecture on 7 October, De Jonge showed how a closer look at various Greek poems and texts reveals that contain critical questions about Roman relations with other peoples, and passages that give a voice to marginal groups in the Roman world. [Read more](#)

Why Leiden University

Leiden University provides ambitious students with the most recent and innovative areas of knowledge, and offers them the freedom to develop their own area of expertise.

World-class education

At Leiden University research and teaching are directly linked to each other and form an inspiring and intense study environment. Classics and Ancient Civilizations has been ranked 10th in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023 and the Research MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations has been awarded the label *Top Programme* by the Dutch National Student Survey.

A unique programme

The Leiden University programme distinguishes itself from other similar research masters by offering expertise in the world of ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia, Egypt (ancient, antique and late-antique), Greco-Roman Antiquity, the Hebrew Bible, ancient Judaism and emerging Christianity. The programme is unique in the Netherlands for its subject matter, the historical periods covered and the multidisciplinary approach of its study. The programme introduces a wide variety of research methods, including discourse analysis, intertextuality, narratology, rhetorical analysis, cognitive studies, etc.

Benefit from our extensive network

In the Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) programme you will learn from Leiden's top scholars, as well as experts from our extensive international network. You have the possibility of studying at institutions and universities abroad and within the Assyriology specialisation you will also be able to study courses at one of our partner universities – including Cambridge, Münster, and Heidelberg.

Diversity and inclusion

We are convinced that our education can only flourish if everyone within the programme feels supported, respected and empowered to do their best work. We find it important to offer a learning environment that allows for different perspectives and points of view that students bring with them, depending on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health, religion, age or socio-economic background. Every new generation sees the world from a new perspective – and our students are the newest generation. [We look forward to hearing more about your perspective.](#) Leiden University has been pursuing diversity policy since 2014, with the aim of creating a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for all staff and students.

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About the programme

The Research Master in Classics and Ancient Civilizations covers two years (120 EC) and provides intensive and comprehensive training across the entire range of present-day research on the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome and the Ancient Near East.

The programme offers four specialisations:

- [Assyriology \(Research\)](#)
- [Classics \(Research\)](#)
- [Egyptology \(Research\)](#)
- [Hebrew and Aramaic Studies \(Research\)](#)

Programme structure

Semester 1

Core Course (10 EC)

[Humanities-Based International Relations](#) (5 EC)

[Thesis and Methods in International Relations Research](#) (5 EC)

Electives (10 EC)

Semester 2

[Regionalism in World Politics](#) (5 EC)

Thesis (15 EC)

Electives (10 EC)

For a detailed programme, please see the [Prospectus](#). Please note that this guide applies to the current academic year, which means that the curriculum for next year may slightly differ.

The Common Course is titled *Libraries in the Ancient World*. All ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern civilizations had their archives and libraries. Kings, priests, philosophers and private persons organized collections of documents, in order to preserve knowledge and to make it available for contemporary or future readers. Famous ancient libraries include the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal, temple libraries in Egypt, the Qumran Library, the library of Alexandria, and the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum. But what were the functions of these libraries? Who founded and who funded them? Who had access to the collections, and how were these buildings organized? In answering these questions we will be comparing the different forms that libraries adopted in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, Greece and Rome.

Tutorial and Elective

Next to the Common Courses, you will follow a tutorial which serves as a first step in the planning of your thesis. Additionally, you take another elective course within your specialisation area.

Thesis and Thesis Seminar

In the fourth semester, you are expected to start writing your thesis. In addition to individual guidance by your supervisor, the *Research Career seminar* will bolster up your work on the thesis by training you in specific writing and presentation skills. You will also learn, based on your thesis preparation, how to write a research proposal on the basis of academic requirements used by the Dutch Research Council

(NWO). Moreover, you will learn how to the process of blind peer-review works and how to write a paper that is admissible to a peer-reviewed journal.

Jürgen Zangenberg

Professor of Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity



"We all think we know how things are, or at least have preconceptions or - for the worse - prejudices. So I just confront students with "the obvious". Is this really what we can find in the sources? How far do they take us? Motivation comes from curiosity. So make students curious, and then you can see how they start thinking."

Preparing students for jobs

"We help our students prepare for the job market by teaching and coaching them. Make every student an expert in their field and coach them how to communicate and organize. If students understand that their field of study is not just an interesting academic discipline, but that they have something to tell which makes a difference in our societies, they will stand their ground."

Extra-curricular

The Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) programme offers many extracurricular opportunities to enrich your study experience.

Pleyte study association

[Pleyte](#) is a study association of the BA in Ancient Near East Studies and the MA in Classics and Ancient Civilizations (specializations Assyriology, Egyptology and Hebrew and Aramaic Studies). Pleyte organizes both informative and social activities, such as monthly drinks with fellow students, film nights, lectures by teachers and students, 'make your own cuneiform tablet' workshops and much more. Pleyte is a great way to get to know your fellow students and teachers outside of the academic setting of classes or the library.

Sophia Aeterna study association

Sophia Aeterna is the study association of the BA in Classics and the (Research) MA in Classics and Ancient Civilizations (specialization Classics). We form the connection between the students, teachers and alumni. Sophia Aeterna organises different activities, both study-related and social. We organise lectures for more knowledge about our discipline. We also organise social activities, like drinks, movie nights, a barbecue at the end of the year and much more, to get to know your fellow students and teachers outside the library and the lectures. When you become a member, you will learn a lot of things and make many new friends!

Research activities

MA students from the Classics and Ancient Civilizations (and research) programme can participate in research activities of the Ancient Worlds Network Leiden, which brings together staff and graduate students in the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and the Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion (LUCSoR) working on the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world. Expertise covers a wide range of areas and disciplines, including the study of Ancient Arabia, Assyriology, Coptic Studies, Egyptology, Hebrew and Aramaic Studies, ancient Iranian Studies, Papyrology, linguistics, the study of religions, and the history of philosophy and science. For more information, please visit the [Ancient Worlds Network](#).

Other extracurricular opportunities

International archaeological field school and excavation

As a Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) student you will be invited to take part in an international archaeological field school and excavation on the [Lake of Galilee](#) co-organised by Leiden University.

Dutch National Museum of Antiquities

Many of our students have done internships at the [Dutch National Museum of Antiquities](#). The museum hosts exhibitions, conferences, and public events on the ancient world, including Mesopotamia and Egypt.

NINO lecture series

The [Netherlands Institute of the Near East](#) organises a lecture series and other events at a regular basis in which you can take part as well.

Ex Oriente Lux lectures and events

[Ex Oriente Lux](#) is an association that promotes the Ancient Near East among a general public. It organises regular lectures and other events in Leiden and many other Dutch and Flemish cities.

Forum Antiquum lecture series

[Forum Antiquum](#) is the lecture series of the Classics department. Lectures are organized every other week during the semester on Thursdays. Every semester, we invite a number of national and international speakers: both well-known experts and promising young researchers.

Uhlenbeck scholarship programme

For research master's students, the Faculty of Humanities has set up the Uhlenbeck scholarship programme. If you would like to spend a period of time abroad for field work, research or a study exchange, you can apply for a (supplementary) scholarship.

Leiden Leadership Programme

Are you interested in developing your leadership potential? The Leiden Leadership Programme (LLP) is an Honours Programme specifically developed for ambitious master's students at Leiden University and the Delft University of Technology who recognise the importance of leadership abilities. The LLP offers in-depth training sessions, assessments, seminars, and the creation of a Personal Leadership Roadmap – a five-year plan for reaching and developing your leadership potential.

Career prospects

Where do our graduates work?

As a graduate of a Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research) programme at Leiden University you are qualified to work as a junior academic researcher in an academic environment or carry out further research work on a PhD programme. It is also possible to find employment within the fields of publishing or teaching, at policy-making departments of governmental bodies, within the education sector, or within cultural tourism.

Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- PhD candidate at Dutch and international universities
- Project assistant at a Dutch city council
- Research assistant at a university
- Curator at a museum
- Policy officer at a ministry
- Communications officer
- Programme manager
- Teacher of classical languages at a secondary school

Andrew Deloucas

Graduated in Assyriology (Research MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations)



"Currently I am working as a Marketing Coordinator at Salas O'Brien, an architectural and engineering firm in Seattle, Washington. My job asks for me to compile working narratives for projects from a network of architect and engineer resumes, accounting information, and personal interviews for the purpose of submitting proposals to municipalities, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that are interested in upgrading, remodeling, or otherwise constructing new buildings or structures. They also allow me time to independently research and go to academic conferences!"

Successfully perform my duties

"The challenge of compiling material from differing contexts and from it producing data that speaks toward a particular end-goal is the strongest thread that ties together my studies and current work. In understanding an advanced level of data management and analysis of scope, context, and audience for objects that otherwise appear unbiased or created without particular interest, I have been able to quickly, accurately, and successfully perform my duties with ease."

Individualised attention

"Because Assyriology is a small department at Leiden University, it was common and expected to receive individual support and attention from teachers and researchers, both in class and in the NINO library (Netherlands Institute for the Near East). Everyone was caring and thoughtful in their wanting to help me carve out my own niche in the ancient world."

In which sector do students find jobs?

- 57 % Education
- 14 % Research
- 10 % Government and semi-government organisation
- 5 % Publishing
- 5 % IT
- 5 % Culture, sport and recreation
- 4 % Other

Career preparation

Find out how this programme exactly prepares you for your future career and check our career preparation activities.

The development of in-depth knowledge in the field and the ability to think critically and analytically are key goals of this programme. The Classics and Ancient Civilizations (research) programme introduces you to the concepts and academic approaches current in Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, including disciplines such as: linguistics, history, religious studies or material culture studies. You will learn to use these concepts and approaches in researching and analysing source material. Your thesis gives you the opportunity to apply these methods in your own research.

We also provide opportunities for students to broaden their experience and professional skills in preparation to excel early in their chosen career. Many of our students choose to do an internship during their study. Internships are a great way to gain invaluable first-hand experience in your area of interest before you decide on making it a career. Our students have done internships at, among others:

- the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities;
- the Netherlands Institute of the Near East (NINO);
- LeidenGlobal;
- at Leiden University;
- or have taken part in the [international excavation project on the Lake of Galilee](#).

Our staff can help you identify both the career that is right for you, and the necessary steps to get you there. Our team at [Humanities Career Service](#) provide all Leiden University humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV.

The Humanities Career Service offers you various (online) workshops, webinars and info sessions. [Check our overview of career activities](#).

The [Leiden University Career Zone](#) is an online career portal that helps you to prepare for the job market. Here you can find information, tools and tips to help you gain more personal insight, learn about the job market, develop your application skills, plan your academic and professional career, find job vacancies and discover what the [Career Service](#) can do for you.

Join the [Mentor Network](#) to contact alumni with experience on the labour market and ask them for advice. More than 1200 alumni are happy to help you!

Jelle on finding an internship via Leiden University's Mentor Network

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Admission and Application

We invite motivated students from around the world to apply for the Master of Arts in Classics and Ancient Civilizations (Research). Admission requirements may vary per specialisation, please visit the specialisation of your interest to find out more about the entry requirements.

- [Assyriology \(research\)](#)
- [Classics \(research\)](#)
- [Egyptology \(research\)](#)
- [Hebrew and Aramaic Studies \(research\)](#)

Student life

Your time at Leiden is about more than just studying. Some of your best experiences will stem from being a part of our lively and diverse student community, as well as from life in the beautiful city of Leiden.

Welcome and orientation programme

In August and February each year, Leiden University hosts the English-language [Orientation Week Leiden \(OWL\)](#), which welcomes both international and Dutch students. The OWL is an excellent way to get to know Leiden University, the city, and other students.

Life in Leiden

Picturesque and the perfect size, Leiden is the ideal place to spend your university days. The Faculty of Humanities is located within the heart of the city, where dozens of cafes, shops and bars line its historic laneways and leafy canals. Small enough to run into familiar faces, but big enough to keep offering surprises – you will treasure your time at Leiden. And for adventures further afield, the major cities of The Hague and Amsterdam are a short train ride away, along with Schiphol Airport, which is just half an hour away by train.

Our study and student associations organise a huge variety of social, cultural, and study events to keep you busy all year round. You can also join the University Sports Centre, which offers scheduled group sports and fitness classes, amongst other activities.

The study associations related to Classics and Ancient Civilisations are:

- [Pleyte](mailto:dispuutpleyte@gmail.com) for Ancient Civilisations. Contact via dispuutpleyte@gmail.com.
- [Sophia Aeterna](mailto:sophia.aeternaleiden@gmail.com) for Classics. Contact via sophia.aeternaleiden@gmail.com.

International Student Associations

Leiden has several student organisations that specifically cater for international students. These associations organise regular social events and activities that help create the strong sense of community that exists within our international student body. The main two organisations are:

Erasmus Student Network Leiden (ESN)

[ESN Leiden](#) is an international student organisation which hosts a range of activities and programmes. They also have a buddy programme which provides new students with the right support to assimilate into Leiden and the university.

AEGEE Leiden

[AEGEE](#) is a leading European student association with sister organisations in over 40 countries across Europe. AEGEE organises many activities in Leiden, from dinners and pool nights to boat trips and guest lectures.

For an overview of all of our student associations, please visit our [Student associations page](#).

Humanities Master's Buddy Programme

The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme has been set up by the Faculty of Humanities to help all students who are new to the university to integrate quickly and easily into university life. You will be matched to a buddy who can help you out with your academic and practical questions. Additionally you will be able to attend fun monthly activities and make friends from all over the world.

For more information about the Buddy Programme, please visit the [Humanities Buddy Programme page](#).

Information activities

Get to know us through our online and in-person events for prospective students!



Two speakers at the open day

Are you thinking about joining this Master's programme, and want to determine if it will be the right fit for you? Below, you can browse the events that we have coming up, and sign up to experience Leiden University and the programme for yourself. Alternatively, take a look at the Master Talks videos to find out more about the programme or check out our virtual campus tours!

Upcoming events

Master's Open Days

The next [Master's Open Day](#) will take place on 16 February 2024. You can also still watch the recordings of all the presentations from the last Online Open Days. The videos can be found on the [Master Talks page](#).

Master Talks: Programme videos

On the [Master Talks: programme videos platform](#) you can find videos for each master's programme. This includes a video which gives a short introduction to the programme. You can also find the recording of the Master's Online Open Days of 5-6 October and watch the programme presentation on the platform.

Get to know the campus

Check out our virtual campus tours, filmed in 360 degrees – by dragging the video, you can look around at the surroundings yourself. Below is the video recorded at the Humanities faculty, where most of your lectures will take place; you can also view other 360 campus tours of the various university faculties [here](#).

360 Campus tour: the Humanities faculty

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Contact

If you have a question, there are various ways to get in touch with us.

This website and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are the quickest ways to find an answer to many of your questions.

Questions about the Programme

Coordinator of studies

Jurjen Donkers

Phone: +31 71 527 4153

Email: cac@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Questions about the application procedure, tuition fees and scholarships

Student Affairs Front Office

Phone: +31 (0)71 527 80 11

Email: [Contact form](#)

Or visit their [website](#)

Visiting address

Leiden: Plexus Student Centre

Kaiserstraat 25, ground floor

2311 GN Leiden

Monday to Friday between 11.00 and 16.00, Tuesday between 11.00 and 17.30.

Chat with a student

Do you have a question about studying at Leiden University or student life in Leiden? Do you want more information about the The Classics and Ancient Civilizations research master's programme? Chat with a current student for answers to your questions!