

Classics and Ancient Civilizations (MA)

Master



Universiteit
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

Specialisations

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

The MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations at Leiden University covers the entire range of present-day research on the civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria and Palestine, Greece and the Roman Empire. In chronological terms, the program covers thousands of years, from the early origins of Egyptian and Sumerian societies down to the world of Greece and Rome, including its modern reception from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century.

[Apply in Studielink](#) [Admission guide](#) [Chat](#)

MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations at Leiden University

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Why study Classics and Ancient Civilizations at Leiden University

Classics and Ancient Civilizations at Leiden University has been ranked 6th in the [QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025](#). The Master programme distinguishes itself from other similar programmes

through its flexibility and wide range of electives, through the diversity of the research-related specialisms offered within the programme, and through the collaboration of Assyriology, Classics, Egyptology and Hebrew and Aramaic Studies within one programme.

The programme is well connected with excellent research institutes in Leiden, including:

- the National Institute for the Near East (NINO),
- the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) and
- the University Library. The library hosts the Papyrological Institute and a unique collection of ancient and medieval manuscripts.

Develop your research skills

An important goal of the programme is to develop your ability to conduct high-quality scientific research using a wide variety of research methods. Classics and Ancient Civilizations is a particularly exciting field in which to conduct research, with different research sources opening up the possibility of completely fresh interpretations of the past. Many students conduct field research in a country abroad, visiting excavation sites, or participate in one of our department's own research projects including excavations at Saqqara and the Dakhla Oasis.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

What are your career prospects?

As a graduate of an MA in Classics and Ancient Civilizations 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 the career prospects](#)

Is Classics and Ancient Civilizations the programme for you?

Research-based learning is characteristic of the program: students are trained in critical thinking and they learn by doing research on a small or large scale; they are constantly exposed to the ongoing research of the teaching staff (also in small-scale settings or individual meetings with a professor), and they are encouraged to participate in scholarly workshops, conferences and lectures. Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's Programme?

[Check the admission requirements](#)

Research MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations

It is also possible to study Classics and Ancient Civilizations as a two-year Research Master's programme.

[Learn more about the Research MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations](#)

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. Therefore, Leiden University's Faculty of Humanities consistently ranks in the top 30 Humanities faculties in the THE World University Rankings. The programme is also ranked 10th in the world in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023.

A unique programme

The Leiden University programme distinguishes itself from other similar research MA's 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.

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Use the facilities of the Humanities Hub

The Humanities Hub in Leiden houses some great facilities to support your studies—like the AI Lab, Digital Lab, MediaLab, Translation Lab, Journalism Lab, Editorial Room, podcast studio, and film studio. Whether you're into AI, media, or storytelling, you'll find plenty of opportunities to build hands-on skills. Best of all, these are exactly the kind of skills that stand out on the job market after you graduate. Want to find out more? Take a look [here!](#)

Benefit from our extensive network

In the Classics and Ancient Civilizations 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.

An excellent start to your career

Your qualification from Leiden University is respected by organisations worldwide. But that's not the only advantage of studying at Leiden. We challenge you to think and question more deeply, to challenge established wisdom and consider new perspectives, to apply what you learn to real-world situations. Our students learn how to become critical thinkers – a quality that will ensure they stand out in any future career.

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 one-year (60 EC) master in Classics and Ancient Civilizations provides intensive and comprehensive training covering the entire range of present-day research on the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome and the Ancient Near East.

Specialisations

The MA Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers four specialisations:

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

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Programme structure

- Ancient World Seminar (10 EC)
- Track Courses (35 EC)
- Thesis (15 EC)

MA Ancient World Seminar

The students of all specializations participate in the MA Ancient World Seminar. This seminar provides you with the academic skills that you will need for writing your papers and MA Thesis. It also prepares you for the job market, through meetings with alumni and career advisors. Finally, teams of students will set up a small-scale research project, in order to explore the intercultural connections between ancient civilizations.

Course overview

For a detailed programme, please see the [Prospectus](#).

Please note that this guide applies to the current academic year. This means that the programme for the coming year may differ.

Casper de Jonge

Professor of Greek Language and Literature



"At the Classics and Ancient Civilizations programme, we like to approach the ancient world from many different perspectives. We combine literature with linguistics, archaeology, history, religion and many other disciplines. The seminars are very closely connected with the ongoing research of professors and lecturers at Leiden University. Moreover, we have a very lively and vibrant research community, with many workshops, lectures and social events."

Extracurricular

The Classics and Ancient Civilizations 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.

Leiden Leadership Programme

If you're interested in developing your leadership potential, the [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) offers training sessions, seminars, and a Personal Leadership Roadmap to help you grow.

Study at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts

The Academy of the Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) is a research institute and part of the Faculty of Humanities. The ACPA offers education such as electives, and talent programmes such as the Practicum Artium (PA), which gives you the opportunity to study photography, graphic design or drawing, and the Practicum Musicae at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, where you can study classical music, singing, early music or jazz.

[Find out more about ACPA.](#)

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Career prospects

Our graduates end up working in a diverse range of positions, examples include:

- Policy officer for education
- Curator of classical antiquity at a museum
- Education officer at a museum
- PhD candidate at a university

- Research analyst at a consultancy firm
- Teacher of classical languages at a secondary school
- Teacher at an institute for special needs education
- Policy officer at the provincial department of a political party
- Chief desk editor at a publishing house

Tori Finlayson

Research specialist



"Immediately after graduating, I was hired by the University of Arizona as a research specialist with the Egyptian Expedition for a one year period. In this position, I have been working on the final publication for the Tausret temple site, while living in Luxor for several months overseeing the construction of our new research facility."

Next step

"I have also co-directed an undergraduate student tour in Egypt, taught a few outreach classes, and participated as a staff member on an archaeological excavation in Sudan along the third cataract. In the fall, I will be joining Johns Hopkins University as a funded PhD student in Egyptology. I look forward to this next step in my career, and I am thankful for the opportunities presented to me by the Egyptology Programme at Leiden University."

Experience in Egypt

"I chose the Leiden University Egyptology master's programme because I was excited to find a programme that offers real experience in Egypt and that has a strong tradition in language. The Cairo semester is really the jewel of the Leiden Egyptology programme. It gives you the opportunity to conduct original research in Egypt, as well as to connect with professionals in the field, from around the world. Living in Egypt for two months and working with the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, is an opportunity not given to many master's students. The Cairo semester is an invaluable experience that has made my time at Leiden meaningful."

In which sector do students find jobs?

- 39 % Education
- 28 % Research
- 11 % Government and semi-government
- 11 % Arts and culture
- 6 % Travel agency / aviation
- 6 % Publishing

These graphs are based on alumni data from the MA Classics and Ancient Civilisations 2020 through 2024.

Career preparation

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

Knowledge and skills

Launch your career with a master's degree

Continuing your studies after your bachelor's degree pays off. Graduates with a master's degree are more likely to find higher-level positions: 77% start at a university of applied sciences (hbo) or university level, compared to 63% of graduates who only hold a bachelor's degree. This difference remains visible in the long term. After more than two years of work experience, 87% of master's alumni work at a university of applied sciences or university level, compared to 76% of bachelor's alumni.

An unique strength on the job market

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 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.

Internships

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](#).

Humanities Career Service

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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 the [Humanities Career Service](#) provides all Leiden University Humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications.

The Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV. Check our video and hear from our alumni how they have benefited from our services!

Workshops and courses

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

LU Career Zone

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.

Ask Alumni: Leiden University Mentor Network

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. Admission requirements may vary per specialisation, please visit the specialisation of your interest to find out more about the entry requirements.

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

Assyriology

Application deadlines: starting in September

If you need a visa or residence permit: **1 April**

If you don't need a visa or residence permit: **15 May**

[**Apply now!**](#)

Classics

Application deadlines: starting in September

If you need a visa or residence permit: **1 April**

If you don't need a visa or residence permit: **15 May**

[Apply now!](#)

Egyptology

Application deadlines: starting in September

If you need a visa or residence permit: **1 April**

If you don't need a visa or residence permit: **15 May**

[Apply now!](#)

Hebrew and Aramaic Studies

Application deadlines: starting in September

If you need a visa or residence permit: **1 April**

If you don't need a visa or residence permit: **15 May**

[Apply now!](#)

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.

The study associations related to Classics and Ancient Civilisations are:

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

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](#).

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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](#).

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.

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

Master's Open Days

During the Master's Open Days you'll have the opportunity to learn all about Leiden University's master's programmes. Attend presentations about your chosen programme(s) or practical matters such as admissions and housing. Get real insight into the content of your preferred master's, along with the career opportunities it will bring.

When are the next Open Days?

- [15 & 16 October 2026: Master's Online Open Days](#)

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 previous Master's Online Open Days 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

Study adviser

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 Thursday, between 13:00 and 16:00