

A First History of Ohio Wesleyan's Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies Program
An Innovative Program Studying a Long Western History (1973-2005-and beyond)

Donald Lateiner (12/2005)

About 1973, faculty at Ohio Wesleyan in a variety of humanistic departments decided to create a program named "Pre-Modern Studies." It would provide a major for students with interdisciplinary interests in Philosophy, Classics, Comparative Literature (Humanities), Religion, History, Politics and Government, English, Art History, and Romance Languages. The focus would be on the European and Mediterranean World from 2500 BCE to 1650 CE. The men and women of this area, and their human values, thoughts, achievements, and less ephemeral deeds would provide the material. Wesleyan Students welcomed this opportunity for temporal diversity.

AMRS 2000 students and faculty at Sounion in Attika, Hellas



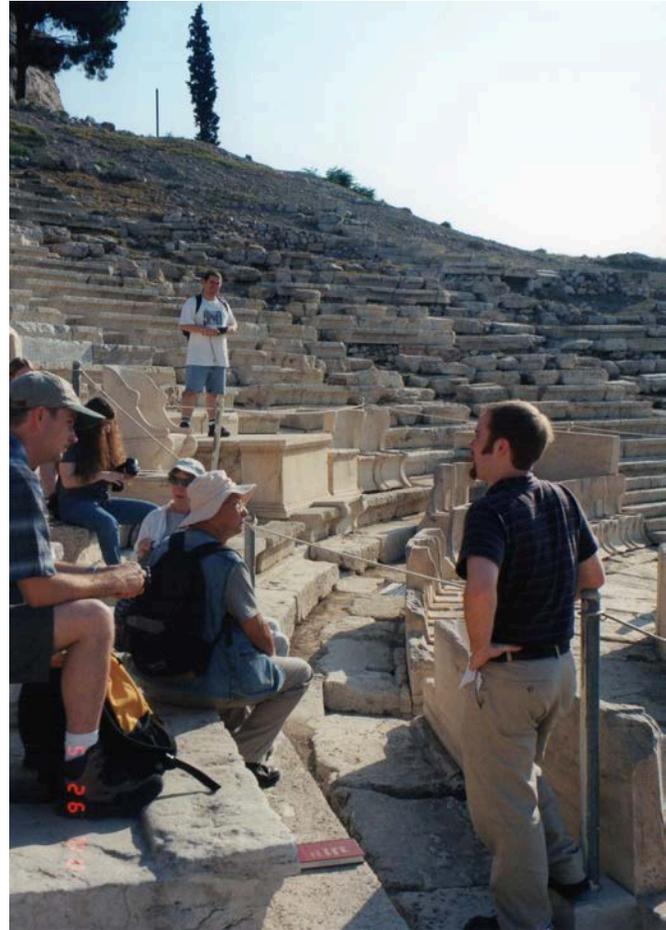
Some graduates would and did go on to careers as teachers, archaeologists, lawyers, museologists, librarians; others found satisfaction in publishing, the foreign service, the corporate world, public information services, and similar. Work in the appropriate languages has always been strongly encouraged: Greek, Latin, Italian, German, French, Spanish, Russian, and English. From the first, the program invited visiting lecturers from this country and abroad, including archaeologists, historians, literary critics, etc. The Aquila company came to Delaware three times in the 1990s with Sophocles and Aristophanes. Many students now spend a summer, semester, or year abroad. Travel field trips to relevant events and places in America and abroad in Europe and Asia. Below find a photo taken during a performance at Epidauros in the Greek Peloponnesos (AMRS 2000).

In 1980, the name of the multi-faceted program was changed to “Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.” Three tracks with separate curricula suited the interests of the varied students. The group now renamed itself for what it was, not for what it preceded or was not. Faculty shared slides, other electronic images, book and map resources. Some members developed a Medieval Latin Reading Group and a Byzantine Greek Reading Group--not for academic credit, but for the sheer joy of reading texts usually beyond the undergraduate curriculum. Examples have been Abelard and Heloise’s correspondence and the poetry of Constance of Angers, Procopius and Photios. Faculty, staff, and students help each other translate difficult passages. AMRS students produce the *Trident*, a newsletter reporting events past and future, student and faculty travel and research, puzzles with relevant AMRS clues, book reviews, etc. It has appeared twice each semester for most years.

Faculty members develop courses especially for the program, most of them listed under the home department of the faculty member offering them. Some students focus on a culture or historical period, some have pursued a concept such as the Christian holy man, a mythical figure such as Medea in ancient and Renaissance contexts, or the tradition of an artistic or architectural style such as the Baroque, or the archaeology of burial in Mycenaean, Classical, and Hellenistic Greece. We offer a capstone opportunity in which seniors invest a semester writing a paper. An interdisciplinary committee of three faculty members supervise the research and paper. Every year, at the annual graduation party, book-prizes are distributed for best paper, best over-all AMRS student career, etc. A wild Croquet Match galvanizes students and faculty after a delicious meal (often cooked by Prof. DeMarco).

To the original participating departments mentioned above, we have added Geography and Music. Some faculty specialize in linguistics, gender studies, paleography, drama, archaeology and other disciplines not represented by an OWU department. Many of our faculty have studied and taught abroad, in Germany, and England, Ireland, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Tunisia.

Professor Jan Hallenbeck of History was the principal founding father and the first Chairperson of the AMRS program. Donald Lateiner of Humanities-Classics succeeded him as Chair in the early 1980s. Carol Neuman de Vegvar of Fine Arts took over the chairpersonship in the early 1990s and served until 2004, when Julian Arribas of Modern Foreign Languages briefly took on this task. Thereafter, and to the present (2016), Patricia DeMarco of English has brilliantly promoted and extended the AMRS Program as member and Chairperson.



There is much more now to add...



Professor DeMarco in her books

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