



PERSONAL STATEMENT – COURSE II A/B #5

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Personal Statement ~ Course II A/B

The concept of heroism is something that I've always been fascinated by. Characters that we grow up with from film and fiction are symbolic of everything we believe a hero should be in the modern day: strong, noble, able to make the righteous choice in the face of adversity and yet still retaining their humanity and emotion. Through my enjoyment of A-Level Classics, I have had access to new kinds of heroes. The Homeric heroes: Hector, Achilles or Odysseus, and Virgil's hero, Aeneas.

One thing I've found interesting is how heroes of the Classical age are often presented in supra-human physical perfection, something reflected in Classical sculpture, and are very physically able, whilst modern day heroes are centered around a strong sense of morality. The search for kleos in Homeric heroes leads Achilles and Hector pursuing the task of winning their glory via the slaughtering of their enemies, despite knowing it will ultimately bring them death. In Book 20 of the Iliad, Achilles shows his supra-human fighting abilities when he returns to the fight. We also see his sub-human morality when he glories in the killing of Hector, mutilating and dragging his body around Troy.

This is a stark contrast to what we associate heroism with now, where heroes do not have to kill hundreds of enemies to win themselves glory but temper bravery, justice and mercy as unshakeable virtues in the face of adversity. It is not just the contrast in how we view heroism but every aspect of Classics that enthralls me and has done throughout my life. I drew a lot of moral teachings from Roman and Greek mythological stories, at GCSE I studied Latin and achieved an A grade, and in year 12 my enthusiasm was intensified with the studying of A-Level Classics, so much so that I am absolutely certain that this is the course I wish to continue with into the future.

My interest in classics is something that extends to studying in my own time. I enjoy reading ahead of the class, and have been exploring the peripheries of the subject by reading the two volume set of 'The Greek Myths' by Robert Graves, and Martin Thorpe's 'Homer'. I find Thorpe's observation that a heroes live to exceed other men in any possible field insightful, allowing Odysseus to gain honour through the success of his deceit in Odyssey 13. I have always enjoyed visiting museums and historical sites which have included Elgin's Marbles, classical sculptures and other artifacts preserved at the British Museum. I have also made trips to Italy to see the colosseum, Mount Vesuvius, the villa at Oplontis, the remains of Pompeii, and Halicarnassus.

I am well suited to the challenges of university life. My enthusiasm for a challenge is demonstrated by my recent trip to Tanzania, working in cooperation with the Friends of Urambo and Mwanahala project. I was a part of a group of students who went out to Tanzania and refurbished schools and medical clinics. We were successful in completing our project, despite several setbacks presenting difficulties with our work. The feeling of pride and accomplishment that I had seeing the grateful smiles for our efforts is one I'll never forget.



I feel that a degree in Classical Studies will lend me an important foundation when seeking employment as a Classics teacher. Not only will I have the chance to develop a knowledge of a wider range of Classical texts at university, but I will develop skills that are important in every aspect of employment; critical analysis of texts and source examination. I work well as part of a team as my trip to Tanzania, my work experience in a school and my part time employment in the retail sector show that I can produce results whilst under pressure. I look forward to the challenges that university life and studies will present me with, and it is my hope that that university will be a place where I'll be able develop my own independence and to flourish intellectually so that I can step into the world with confidence and ability.

