

2014 CoAH Panel: History in Classics/Classics in History
Introductory Remarks

Georgia Tsouvala, organizer and chair
gtsouva@ilstu.edu

Good morning everyone and thank you very much for joining us this morning!

As a former chair of the Committee of Ancient History for three years, and an associate professor of history at Illinois State University with a Ph.D. in Classics from the City of New York Graduate Center, I have been heavily involved with some of the issues that ancient historians face, and the issues we are discussing today came out of my own experiences and the experiences of many colleagues and friends I have met over the years. So, they are close to my heart but I strongly believe that they affect the profession at large, and as such that they need a public forum in which to be expressed and be put up for consideration by the APA, the AAH, and even the AHA.

Today, I have brought together a panel of scholars and teachers who work at both large and small, public and private, research and teaching institutions, and I have tried to include a spread of geographical areas as well as expertise in both classics and ancient history.

The topic of this panel is teaching history and working as an historian in a Classics department or as a Classicist in a history department (while some Classicists who work in language or English departments might have similar experiences and challenges are not included here, since the focus of the panel is on ancient history).

While many of us have been trained in history or classics, many teaching positions are at institutions that might not offer both majors. Sometimes the institutions we work at do not have a classics department, but someone who teaches classics in a Language or English program, but most ancient historians are part of large history departments. Furthermore, some of us were trained in classics, but were hired to teach in a history department, or vice versa. Even when classics or history departments hire someone trained in that particular discipline, they usually expect the new colleague to be a generalist, so that many of us become generalists in our teaching by default. As a result, often one's training provides insufficient preparation for the "real world" challenge.

In some public universities and many liberal arts colleges, ancient historians and classicists are expected to wear multiple hats. They serve not only their own departments by offering the required courses, but also teach independent studies as well as interdisciplinary and general education courses. Moreover, ancient historians often need to teach language courses in universities that do not have a classics program, and classicists teach history courses in some classics departments. Many of us work at colleges or universities where we are one of (at most)

two scholars in the institution expected to teach every aspect and culture of the ancient and medieval worlds. At the same time, the same individuals are expected to have a well-defined research agenda and service in the field in which they were hired.

This panel aims at pointing out some of the challenges and opportunities that many ancient historians and classicists face in such professional environments and hopes to raise both questions and solutions to the complicated issues facing many (if not the majority) of our colleagues in both disciplines -and perhaps have a major impact, especially, on our junior colleagues who seek tenure in such departments and on graduate students, who need to be aware of the field and market at large.