

KAREN FOLEY: Good afternoon and welcome to the Student Hub Live, The Open University's online, live, interactive platform. My name is Karen Foley and I'll be hosting today's event, which is called Opening Up Classical Studies and this event is for ACE.

And we're here at The Open University in Milton Keynes with, I'm delighted to announce, Redborne School, our live audience. Welcome everyone to the studio today. And welcome everybody at home or at school or in your office or wherever you may be watching today's programme. We've got a fun packed three hours for you this afternoon.

We're going to first introduce today's session. Then we're going to look at things like Greek drama. We have an interview with Edith Hall. We're going to look at Greek votives, and also talk about studying classical studies at The Open University. And we'll end today with a session about classical civilization in schools, a Q&A session for teachers.

Now, if you'd like to find out any more about today's programme, you can look at the Student Hub Live website, studenthublive.open.ac.uk find out more about all of the guests in the studio today and also about each session. But for those of you who are logging in remotely, our wonderful HJ is going to be managing all the comments and questions. And you might like to vote using our interactive widgets. And actually, we'll be feeding those into the studio. How are things at home?

HJ: We're doing well in the chat, lots of people speaking up already. As with every event that we do, anything goes in the chat, your thoughts, comments, or questions, anything you want to put to our lovely guests here today. I know they'd want to hear from you. And there's a lot of people who are currently studying classics in the chat as well. So Susan's just finished AA100 and is looking to go into classics as well.

Sylvia is currently- she's completed her level two, going on to level three. And she said she absolutely loved Edith's Aristotle ways. And Sarah has actually completed her BA in classical studies with the OU. She says she highly recommends it and enjoyed every minute. So lots of people enjoying classical studies already in the chat. And anything you want to put to our guests, we'd love to hear it.

KAREN FOLEY: That's wonderful. Thank you, HJ. So those of you watching at home, you might like to let us know where you are, how you're feeling right now. And these widgets, these interactive tools,

you just click on the option that you'd like to vote on. And then where there are things like three words, you just need to put three things in.

If you can only think of one or two, that's absolutely fine. Just put a full stop in. And then you can see what other people say as well. For those of you studying with The Open University already, it's great to see that you are advocating classical studies so highly to everybody who may not quite be studying at The Open University yet.

But if you are, you might like to let us know which level you're at and what you are studying. So you can have a go at those interactive widgets. And we'll have plenty more in today's session as well. And Sylvia, you'll be delighted that Edith will be telling us more about Aristotle's way in a later session. So let's begin then with our first guest who are already in the studio.

We are joined by Edith Hall, who is a professor of classics at King's College London. Now, she writes a lot of books, mainly about ancient Greeks. And she teaches classics at university level. But she has also been a champion of getting the Greek and Roman classics taught more in secondary schools across the country.

So for this reason, she founded the initiative called ACE, Advocating Classics Education, which is what she's going to speak to us about today. And Henry Stead is a research fellow here at The Open University who writes about cultural history, about ancient Greek and Roman culture and its reception in the modern world.

And his first book was about the Roman poet Catullus and what happened to him. And he's currently writing a book with Edith, *A People's History of British Classics*. And alongside Jay Poole, who we'll be meeting a little bit later, he has organised today's session, for which we're very, very grateful. So welcome both. I wonder, Edith, if you could begin by telling us about ACE and where the idea came from.

EDITH HALL:

The initiative is something we only started about four years ago actually, applying for money with my wonderful colleague Dr. Arlene Holmes Henderson. But actually, I've been wanting to try to get more Greeks and Romans into the state sector pretty much since I was an undergraduate. There's a very sad situation in one way, which is that the study of Latin and Greek languages is almost nonexistent in the state sector.

But that means that people were only applying three classical subjects at university from 7% of our young whose parents pay for the education. What about the other 93%? Simple as that.

And in fact, there's a wonderful solution. There are two superb subjects, which you can do at GCSE and A level, of ancient history or classical civilization where you study the whole of antiquity through translated texts and art and archaeology.

And any teacher qualified in any subject, physics, like Steve Dobson, who is here today, can actually write it. Provided he likes the Greeks and Romans, teach these subjects in school. So we could theoretically, with very little expense, have classical civilization or ancient history available in every state school in the British Isles. So I decided, having come to a very great age, that if somebody didn't stick up for it in the higher education level and say these qualifications are fantastic, then if nobody else was going to do it, than I jolly well had to.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, you're doing a fantastic job. And it's great to see Stephen and the class here today as well. You're very passionate about classics. How did you first get into it? And we'll talk more about this later, but just a very brief account.

EDITH HALL: Well, it's a strange story. I'm actually a vicar's daughter. And there were copies of the Greek New Testament lying around my house. And kids are very fascinated by funny scripts and funny writing and code. So I actually said, hey, dad, what's in this? So that's fine. And he taught me a bit of Greek.

But then at 13 years old, I stopped believing in God, which caused a bit of a family rift as you can imagine. It's all right. We're now very good friends. He's still alive, 89. And by then, had got the bug for the ancient Greeks. I also watched a huge amount of television. Televisions came into- I'm 60 years old. They came into our house in 1966.

We got a TV so that my dad, who was the vicar, could show to the whole parish the World Cup final in 1966. But I spent every Sunday afternoon- they used to put old classic films for kids. And *Jason and the Argonauts* with the special effects in it, I have never seen anything so thrilling in my life.

Those gods on Olympus looking down with the little toy boats and the Talos stuff and Greek myth just got to me. So I have stuck with the pagan Greeks and Romans rather than the early Christians- that's most of my books- but I really never stopped from there.

KAREN FOLEY: And Henry, what about you?

HENRY STEAD: Ooh.

KAREN FOLEY: How can you top that?

[LAUGHTER]

HENRY STEAD: I don't think I can. I think I got into the Greeks and Romans through probably children's books as well, like the Usborne book of ancient Rome with all- I used to trace pictures when I was young, of birds, not only of- and I lived in the countryside. You'll have to forgive me.

[LAUGHTER]

But later on, I got to school, and I was taught Latin. Because I was loving reading the romantic poets like Keats and Shelley. And then I read Catullus, the Roman poet who I still love to this day.

And he spoke to me across centuries. And it was so exciting to decode his beautiful Latin and then gradually to become more familiar with how his beautiful poetry made sense. So that's really my way in, is through poetry.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow. So very, very different approaches. And we've got a really varied programme today that, Henry, you've been helping to put together. So what are you most looking forward to?

HENRY STEAD: Oh, most, that's not fair.

[LAUGHTER]

Oh, I guess I'm really looking forward to Christine and Yan's introduction to Greek drama, which is coming up next I think. But the votive offerings, I don't know a lot about votive offerings, but offerings to the gods given by the ancients in their daily religious practises, that's pretty interesting stuff. So I'm really looking forward to that, too. And then also to share what kind of resources we have been making here at OU. I think Joe and James are going to be doing that in a later session.

KAREN FOLEY: And what about you, Edith?

EDITH HALL: Well, actually, I'm looking forward to all of that and Greek drama is one of my great loves. And I'm really looking forward to getting questions I haven't been given any preparation for.

My experience is that questions from the general public tend to be incredibly- and anybody who is studying the subject, at sometimes quite elementary levels- tend to really put me on the

spot in a way that they don't when they're from my professional colleagues and really make me think and often set off and kick off new ideas in my head about ways to make the ancient world more approachable.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So if anyone here has a question for Edith or anybody at home, not an essay question, but an interesting question, and we've already have some in for you, then do let us know. And at the end her session will be offering you the chance to ask your question. So think of something.

And at home, you can put that in the chat box and HJ will pick those up. And we've already had some in already, but that's not all we've had, we've had some wonderful photographs sent to us, haven't we, HJ?

HJ: Yes. We've also got a hello from- I'll just bring it up- we've got lots of chats today- so Bolton School's girls division students are currently watching, so hello from us at the studio, they're studying A level classics, Latin, theatre studies and some key stage three students, too, so it's great to see you watching us today. We've had some photos as well.

So the Runshaw College have sent us photos of their classics classroom as well, just to give us an idea of things from their perspective. And we've got some photos there. And there's also been, at Runshaw College, they've been on a trip as well to Greece. So they went with their teacher, Francesco Grilli. And they visited the Acropolis in Athens and various sites at Delphi as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, that's Delphi. Wonderful.

HJ: So we've got lots of lovely pictures sent in by them. But if you want to send any pictures to us, we'd love to see them on our Twitter at [studenthublive](#) or email at studenthub@open.ac.uk. We'd love to see the view from where you are, where you're watching from, or just anything classical that you've found. But I know we've got lots more photos later and some questions as well. So keep them coming in the chat.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. And just email them to us at studenthub.open.ac.uk. Well, that introduces today's programme. And we're going to be back after this video from the ACE project, in which Emma Bridges tells us about why she loves studying the classical world, followed by an introduction to our module on the Roman Empire here at The Open University. I'll see you in a few minutes.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

