**Why study Latin?**

For two thousand years Latin was the premier language of the European continent. From Latin came Spanish, French, Italian and Romanian, while after the Norman Conquest of England, Latin-French words have come to make up some 60% of modern English vocabulary. This makes Latin of great advantage and interest to students of English, modern Romance languages, and of Indo-European languages in general, while the study of Latin grammar and syntax provides a perfect foundation for other language learning. Because of its long and extensive use, Latin has had vast influence on literature, politics and religion. As a result, it makes an excellent companion to other studies, especially English, history, philosophy and theology.

The BA in Maynooth caters to this wide range of interests, offering a survey of the Latin language and its literature from the Roman Republic to the later Empire. In the first year, students will work throughJones & Sidwell’s *Reading Latin* (Cambridge), with adapted readings from mythology, fable, and such authors as Catullus, Cicero and Livy. This introduction prepares for modules in second and third year, which concentrate on major Latin authors, in both prose and poetry. Here Plautus’ comic plays, Catullus’ lyric poetry, the histories of Sallust and Caesar, Cicero’s speeches and philosophical dialogues, the epic poetry of Virgil and Ovid, Petronius’ comic novel, Augustine’s *Confessions* and other select works are read (in Latin and English translation), with a view both to language and cultural contexts. Through close study of these “classics,” students will gain an intimate knowledge of major writers, periods, and themes of Roman civilization as a whole. Even students who complete just the first-year class will have an excellent introduction to Roman literature and society.

**Study of Latin**—whether through a major, minor, or single, first-year module—is an excellent complement to other studies and opens a door onto a tradition that has united the European continent from antiquity to the present. It is said that “the past is a foreign country,” and Latin is no exception and is indeed almost unmatched in the number of past worlds it can open to the enterprising student. In the Europe and global culture of today, knowledge of Latin can be way to distinguish your CV, particularly if you are interested in working in the government or European Union, and in such fields as education, curatorship, journalism, librarianship, publishing, translation, and law. A highly organized language, Latin fosters analytical skills and attention to detail that is valued by a wide range of employers.