



TREASURE VALLEY
CLASSICAL ACADEMY

A CLASSICAL EDUCATION *for* MODERN TIMES

The mission of Treasure Valley Classical Academy is to train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes the principles of virtuous living, traditional learning, and civic responsibility.

Classically educated individuals understand they are the heirs of an enduring tradition of thought and philosophy. As such, they continue the great conversation that began with the ancient Greeks and Romans, the same ideas that ultimately provided the intellectual and philosophical basis for the American Founding. The ancients believed that true happiness (*felicitas*) comes from a life well-lived, and is the result of a foundation of virtue (*virtus*) and knowledge (*scientia*).

Virtue comes from shaping character and building good habits—or more formally, the ideal of a rightly ordered soul, in which higher reason governs baser instincts. Knowledge comes from an education steeped in good books and the great minds of the past—or more formally the ideal of an enlightened liberal arts education, similar to how the American Founders were educated. Human beings shaped by virtue (*virtus*) and educated with knowledge (*scientia*) can best experience the classical notion of true happiness (*felicitas*). Citizens so educated are also essential to the preservation of our American freedoms and liberties.

Virtus . Scientia . Felicitas.

***Virtus*: Virtuous Living and Civic Responsibility**

Students start each day by reciting the school pledge, “I will learn the true, I will do the good, I will love the beautiful.” Our school virtues are *courage, courtesy, honesty, perseverance, service, and self-government*. Teachers build relationships with the students by engaging them in conversations, stemming from the content of the curriculum and daily circumstances, about the virtues and how one “does the good.” The aim is for students to learn to govern themselves, and so, from the lower school to the upper school, teachers invest time and effort to help students form good and virtuous habits, and ultimately to understand the true aims of self-government—which are to live well as citizens of a free society.

***Scientia*: Content-rich Curriculum and Traditional Learning**

The curriculum of the lower school (K-6) aims to prepare students for the rigor and beauty of the upper school curriculum. This starts in kindergarten with the students memorizing phonograms and spelling rules, and utilizing them to spell and read. With these building blocks of the English language, the students proceed in the remaining elementary grades to read and discuss classic works including *Charlotte’s Web*, *Anne of Green Gables*, Frederick Douglass’ autobiography, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *The Children’s Homer*. They memorize poems such as Rudyard Kipling’s “If,” Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!,” and Thomas Babington Macaulay’s “Horatius at the Bridge.” They diagram sentences and write study questions and essays analyzing

the actions and motivations of characters in history and literature. They study, in a spiraling format, the histories of Ancient Greece and Rome, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, and the Civil War. They begin to learn scientific theories of chemistry and biology, master math facts, and move from a concrete to a pictorial to an abstract understanding of mathematics through bar models in Singapore Math. Students are also regularly immersed in the study of art and music, and take Spanish until 5th grade, after which they begin their Latin studies in sixth grade.

With this foundation, upper school (7-12) students are equipped to discern truth and beauty in the various courses they take. In the **humanities**, students engage in Socratic discussion, as teachers propose questions based on close readings of complete works. Freshmen read *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid* and delve into the works of historians and philosophers such as Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato, and Plutarch. In their sophomore year, students read Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dickens, and Austen, while considering the religious and political contributions of Augustine through Adam Smith. Students explore the American tradition in their junior year, completing courses in American Literature, American History, and American Government. They read the founding documents as well as the influential Federalist papers and other writings of the statesmen, authors, and activists of the 19th century. Finally, the senior year focuses on modern times with works by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and George Orwell and a study of the political, military, and cultural trends of the “American century.”

Mathematics and **science** classes place an emphasis on the search for truth and beauty and the primacy of logic (including Euclidian Geometry), as well as deductive reasoning as students move from foundational to more advanced courses such as calculus, statistics, and upper level science.

After three years of Latin in grades 6-8, students must complete one year of **Latin** in high school before pursuing 3 more years of foreign language. Many choose to advance further in Latin.

Other required courses include at least one semester of **Composition** with an emphasis on coherent, concise, and compelling writing and habits of clear thinking. Tenth grade students take **Moral Philosophy**, with a focus on the moral traditions of Western Civilization.

Students may continue to build upon **music theory** and **art history** instruction received during their elementary and middle school years by participating in **performance ensembles** and **advanced art classes**.

Graduating seniors must write a 20-page **Senior Thesis** and defend it before faculty members and peers. The thesis serves as a capstone to the classical curriculum. It requires that students answer a substantial question of their choosing. In the process, they examine and reflect in a multi-disciplinary way upon their course of studies in the humanities and sciences. Students are mentored in this endeavor by a faculty member.

Felicitas: Develop Students in Mind and Character

We believe a noble education ought to instill virtue and shape character, and should develop students intellectually through a classical, content-rich, liberal arts curriculum. In the end, a classical education prepares young men and women to live well—to enjoy liberty responsibly, to succeed with humility, to be self-confident yet introspective, and to understand what it means to be human. That is true happiness—*felicitas*!