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The new learning that failed

by [Victor Davis Hanson](#)

On the value of classical learning.

Ten years ago John Heath and I wrote a lament for the decline of classical learning in the university—*Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom*. We sounded three simple themes. First, that the study of Western civilization and the appreciation of its literature, art, values, and ideas hinge on acknowledging the singular contributions of the classical Greeks and Romans.

Second, that classicists themselves had shied away from advocating the study of the classical world. Instead, a new careerism encouraged the avoidance of teaching undergraduates, while rewarding scholarly overspecialization and its counterfeit antidote—postmodern, politically correct “theory.” As a result, university students were not learning much about classics. And the public had little interest in reading from their professors about the racism, sexism, and homophobia of the founders of West ...

Victor Davis Hanson is the author of *A War Like No Other* (Random House).

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