When I declared my English Literature major as a freshman, I was naively intent on focusing strictly on the Victorian era. In order to establish an appropriate foundation for this particular route, my course work included the literature preceding and following the Victorian period, beginning with medieval literature and working up through the modernist literary tradition in England and America.

I have always considered the possibility of attending graduate school for English Literature, but last year I awakened to the potential benefit of uniting two majors and linking my work in each. Such an action would broaden my options when applying to graduate school, and the possibility of pursuing a postgraduate degree combining the two appealed to me enormously.

Although I continuously enrolled in classics courses throughout my first two years, it was not until the fall of my junior year that I became determined to declare classics as my second major. I had established a strong connection with Dr. H.P. Stahl of the classics department as a freshman, and I contacted him immediately to discuss the appropriate course of action. Dr. Stahl confirmed my suspicion that but a year of Greek and Latin studies would be woefully insufficient for admission into graduate school, so I decided to start my language training at once rather than waiting until the following fall.

Dr. Stahl introduced me to the head of the department, Dr. Floyd, who agreed to supervise my independent study in ancient Greek over the summer. For the antecedent phase of the agreement, I would need to teach myself the equivalent of Latin I and II over the spring semester before commencing the independent study. I was already committed to studying in London during spring semester, but I accepted Dr. Floyd’s proposal and departed for London with a grammar workbook. Between classes and my internship in London, I worked through the grammar and returned to Pittsburgh in April. I began my 12-week independent study in ancient Greek, specifically Homeric, with Dr. Floyd, and was able to work through Book I of the *Odyssey* and approximately half of Book I of the *Iliad* by the end of the summer. Since most students of Greek begin with Attic, I also translated the beginning of Sophocles’ *Antigone* to get a feel for Attic Greek and prepare for subsequent courses. At the end of the independent study, I enrolled in Greek 3 and Latin 3 for the fall semester. Seeing as Greek 3 entailed translating Plato’s *Apology* and was thereby restricted to Attic Greek, I also enrolled in Dr. Stahl’s graduate seminar on the *Iliad* to continue my training in translating Homeric Greek.

The bond between my studies in English and Classics has surfaced in a number of courses, but I intend to take the link to another level. Classical philosophy and texts are inexorably woven throughout English literature, but my studies in classics are allowing me to establish a far more intimate connection to the ancient works and are enabling my awareness of linguistic nuances. If Francis Bacon alludes to a passage in the *Aeneid*, I am developing the ability to read it exactly as he did.

Another link uniting my areas of study is the development of religion across the centuries. I am working on a minor in religious studies; the classes I have taken thus far have included the ancient foundations of religion as well as the development of apocalyptic eschatology over the millennia. So as to avoid eschewing modern forms of expression entirely, I have already completed a certificate in film studies. By the time my fifth year at the University of Pittsburgh is complete, I will have progressed through enough classical language courses to apply to graduate programs in comparative literature. I am fascinated by the classical roots of the
English literary tradition, and I hope to study the link more intently for the remainder of my undergraduate career.