



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

PURSuing TRUTH · DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 5, 2025

CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Follow [@HillsdalePR](https://twitter.com/HillsdalePR).

Hillsdale College Student Zachary Chen Presents Paper at Classics Conference

Chen's paper was titled 'Generosus Phaethon: The Uses of a Myth in Lucretius, Ovid, and Seneca the Younger.'

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College student Zachary Chen '27, a Greek and Latin double-major from St. Paul, Minnesota, presented his paper "Generosus Phaethon: The Uses of a Myth in Lucretius, Ovid, and Seneca the Younger" at the Ohio Classical Conference's annual meeting on Sept. 26-27 in Gahanna, Ohio.

"Studying the classics at Hillsdale is both challenging and rewarding," said Joseph Garnjobst, chairman and Professor of Classics. "Zack has embraced the challenge of learning, and it is gratifying to see his work recognized."

Chen was one of four students to present a paper as part of a panel titled "Close Readings and Dirty Work."

Chen discussed the myth of Phaethon, a youth who took over the chariot of the sun, only to lose control and be struck down by Jupiter. Typically seen as a negative example, Phaethon was instead used by Seneca as an example of Stoic virtue.

"My talk deals with an intertextual line of argument between Seneca, Ovid, and Lucretius concerning philosophy and the myth of Phaethon," Chen said. "Seneca's careful, tendentious appropriation of Phaethon's story demonstrates two related phenomena: an acknowledgement of Ovid's refutation of Lucretius' demythologizing, didactic approach to myth; and second, a philosophical 'misreading' of Ovid which bolsters Stoicism."

The conference also included two other panels, various speakers, a close reading session, and live readings in Latin and English of Plautus' play "Pseudolus."

Through Hillsdale College's chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, classics students can participate in several competitions, including college Greek and Latin exams from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South and the Maurine Dallas Watkins Translation Exams from Eta Sigma Phi. Students have also presented papers at classics conventions hosted by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, Eta Sigma Phi, and the Ohio Classical Conference.

Last academic year, Chen took second place in advanced Latin in the Maurine Dallas Watkins Translation Contests sponsored by Eta Sigma Phi, the national classics honorary.

At the Eta Sigma Phi National Convention in March, he delivered a paper titled "The 'Iliad' or the Poem of Gentleness: Μειλιχία, Memory, and Moments of Illumination in Homer's 'Iliad,'" which was chosen as the best paper of the convention.

At the Annual CAMWS Meeting in March, he delivered a paper titled "'Sana quippe ratio etiam exemplis anteponenda est': 'Exempla,' 'ratio,' and reforming moral education in Seneca the Younger and Augustine of Hippo," which won the outstanding undergraduate paper award.

Hillsdale's chapter of Eta Sigma Phi also organizes guest lectures, peer tutoring sessions, Latin teaching at a local charter school, and spoken Greek and Latin tables in the dining hall, along with events such as the Homerathon, Roman comedy performances, picnics, movie nights, and Latin scrabble.

For a headshot of Chen, click [here](#). For photos from classics courses at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than seven million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

###