

Dr. Gavin Weaire
Visiting Assistant Professor of
Classical Studies
B.A., Trinity College, 1993
M.A., University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign, 1995
Ph.D., University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign, 2000
Joined Hillsdale faculty in 2003

Gavin Weaire

Irish Classicist Brings Culture to Campus

“CLASSICS is defined as the study of particular cultures,” said Visiting Assistant Professor of Classical Studies Dr. Gavin Weaire. “The classics allow you to dabble in a variety of areas such as history, literature, art and music; you are not confined to study one area.” The freedom to study so many facets within a discipline is what set Hillsdale’s newest classicist on the course to a teaching career in classical studies.



Within the broad field of classics, Weaire has concentrated on historiography—the study of how a people write their history—with a focus on first-century Greeks and Romans. During the fall semester, he taught elementary and upper-level Latin classes as well as Greek mythology. This semester, he is teaching an upper-level Latin course on Salust, a course that delves deeper into historiography and explores the Roman historian about whom Weaire wrote his dissertation.

Although Weaire was born in the United States, he grew up in Ireland. He earned his bachelor’s

degree in classics from Trinity College in Dublin, then moved to the United States for his graduate work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he also met his wife. Prior to coming to Hillsdale, Weaire taught at Union College, a small liberal arts college in upstate New York.

Weaire had never heard of Hillsdale College until he learned of the opening within the Classical Studies Department, but the size of the College and the chance to move back to the Midwest made for a desirable combination. Since arriving in Hillsdale last summer, Weaire and his wife have been delighted with both the College and the community.

“I feel incredibly lucky to join a classics program that is so strong,” he said in his soft Irish accent. “The program where I previously taught was nothing like this. At Hillsdale, we can easily fill up three sections of beginning Latin and not even blink. All the credit goes to my colleagues. They have worked very hard to build an astonishingly strong program.”

“The students at Hillsdale are unbelievably polite and hardworking,” he continued. “Their enthusiasm makes teaching a pleasure.” And how about living in Hillsdale? “My wife and I love the small-town environment here,” he added enthusiastically. “We

live in a beautiful Victorian house, and where else but in Hillsdale could you have your freezer stocked with venison that friends and neighbors share with you?”

Weaire believes that the worst of the abandonment of classics in education has passed. “There’s a definite interest out there,” he said, citing a resurgence of classical themes even in the entertainment industry. “You have to understand that classics is not just about Greek and Roman culture. These things were the very foundations of education and offer a window into the world of every generation before us.”

Outside of the classroom, Weaire enjoys helping with the activities of the Eta Sigma Phi classics honorary and attending Music Department events. His wife, who is completing work on her dissertation in musicology, teaches piano lessons and also is teaching “The Understanding of Music” this semester at the College.

As the fourth member of a department that has long been occupied by just three professors, Weaire hopes to give his colleagues relief from their heavy classloads. “Again, my colleagues deserve all the credit for making this department what it is today,” Weaire said. “I just want to help keep a good thing going.”

■ Monica VanDerWeide, '95