The creation and use of language is one of the most significant achievements of human beings, for our ability to organize our understanding in verbal symbols and to communicate sets us apart from other life forms. The symbols of our language make communication possible at many different levels of meaning and allow us to translate our private experience into more universal terms.... A sure understanding of language is one of the foundations of knowledge, and the ability to use verbal symbols effectively is one of the most important of skills. The study of a foreign language allows us to see that our native language often reflects cultural needs and interests at the same time that it shares basic patterns with other languages.

The aim of this two-semester series of courses is to learn basic reading and writing skills in ancient Greek as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. At the end of two terms of Introductory Greek you will know the fundamentals of Greek grammar, have a basic Greek vocabulary, and be able to read almost any Greek text
with the help of a dictionary. Speaking and listening skills in Greek will be encouraged only in order to assist the development of reading and writing Greek. READING ancient Greek is much more important than speaking or writing it.

**Why Greek?**

Learning Ancient Greek is a fun ordeal. Fun ordeal? Why, that’s an oxymoron or paradox (oops, those are both words derived from Ancient Greek! And what DO those words mean, anyway?)

Why should YOU learn Ancient Greek (other than fear of Zeus)? If you’ve ever enjoyed reading Sophocles or Plato in English, you’d be amazed to realize how much more fascinating they are in the original Greek, and by the end of your first year of Greek you start to study these and other famous authors in their own words. Free yourself from the tyranny of translators and talk to the authors themselves!

Greek not only provides enjoyment and intellectual stimulation, but it is also **very practical.** Consider:

1) It sharpens analytical language skills and improves knowledge of English; introduces Greek words that have been borrowed by English, e.g., architect, athlete, Catholic, Christ, dyslexia, holistic, pedagogy, psychiatry, sophomore.

2) Many English technical vocabularies, from philosophy to geology, since the time of the Renaissance are based on Greek. Almost all terms in biology, medicine and other hard sciences are derived from Greek. If you plan to go on to study any of these subjects in graduate school or in a job, then Greek is going to serve you well!
3) Greek is often required or recommended for students who plan to enter seminary, or pursue graduate studies in Western theater, history, literature, political science, or philosophy.

4) Because of the advantages listed above students of Greek tend to do very well indeed on such pre-graduate and professional exams as the GRE (grad school), MCAT (med school), and LSAT (law school).

By the end it's not just Greek that you've learned. You discover that with steady effort and patience you can learn to read the actual words of the founders of the Western intellectual tradition. You come to know yourself not just as people from Philadelphia, New York, or central PA who hope to find a job someday, but as those select few who have engaged Herodotus, Plato and St John in conversation! This is a rare treat and these days even a privilege.

Texts and materials:


Handouts and web-based resources

Flash cards for vocabulary. Ideally, making your own is best!
Blank sets of flash cards are available at the bookstore.
There is a pre-made set available for purchase online, but it is not tied specifically to our book (which is entirely ok and is probably good for your vocabulary). You can order this set at: http://www.vis-ed.com/lang.html (order “Greek Vocabulary, Classical”)
A Few Tips on Learning Greek:

Steady, **daily** progress is the best way to assure retention and mastery of the Greek tongue (and consequently good grades). Cramming for quizzes and tests, though it may seem to work in the short term, will inevitably hurt you on the final exam and in your continued study of ancient Greek. It is best to work consistently over the course and the semester. Remember, slow and steady wins the race! I would recommend studying Greek every day, at least a little, even Saturday, even if it is only vocabulary.

Each of you will progress at a different rate. The rate of your individual progress necessarily may not reflect your final level of competency. Language learning generally progresses in a series of steps not as a slope, so if you feel like you are stuck on a plateau, **don’t get frustrated with your progress**. And if you have questions or feel like you have hit a wall, **COME TALK TO ME**!

Class Format:

We will meet four days per week. Class structure will vary from day to day — sometimes I will introduce material in mini-lecture format; at other times we will review our homework as a class, do additional exercises on the board or from our desks, practice drills, read select passages together, etc. Occasionally we will consider larger issues within Greek culture — language is a key component in understanding another culture and vice versa, it is thus useful to understand something of the cultural background in order to make sense of the language!
Evaluation

Attendance & Participation
In this course there is a heavy emphasis on attendance and participation. Realistically, you cannot expect to pass, much less to do well, unless you are in class regularly, on time, prepared and actively participating. If you are absent, you will still be responsible for finding out what you have missed and what you need to do for the next class. Find out from one of your classmates about homework or upcoming quizzes.

I will not take attendance every day. I will occasionally at random pass around an attendance sheet (when I remember). But essentially, I am going to know each day who is there and who is not, who is participating and who is not, who has done their homework and who has not. So don't slack on this one. It's worth coming to class for your own edification, but also, you won't earn my good graces by the end of the semester if your attendance and participation have been consistently poor.

Participation includes but may not be limited to:
-- That you are in class, on time, with your homework completed;
-- That you are ready to hand the homework in if requested to do so;
-- That you are familiar enough with the material to go over it orally;
-- That you take an active role in the discussions about the material and/or
-- Ask questions. There are no stupid questions! If you are confused or have a question, there are probably four other people with the same problem.
Don't miss any homework! Your overall performance will suffer if you do. I will collect homework often, to grade it, or to give it a once over, just to see how you are doing. No late homework will be accepted.

**Friday Quizzes**

10-15 minute quizzes will be given regularly every Friday, except on exam weeks. You will have one quiz grade which you can drop at the end of the semester. Quizzes will cover grammar, short translations, and anything else I may deem appropriate from what we have covered in class and in the homework.

There will be no make-up Friday quizzes for any reason.

"Mini"- Quizzes

On other days of the week we may also have announced "mini"-quizzes which will cover vocabulary and other items which I will divulge. This is where your flash cards will come in handy! You will have two mini-quiz grades which you can drop at the end of the semester.

I reserve the right to give pop quizzes, but I will only start practicing this evil behavior should I be pushed into doing so by class performance. Scary! Don't make me go there!

There will be no make-up mini-quizzes for any reason.
Tests

There will be 2 tests and a final exam. Due to the cumulative nature of learning a language, all tests will be comprehensive.

Grades

- Daily Participation: 20%
- Friday Quizzes (1 drop): 15%
- "Mini"-Quizzes (2 drops): 15%
- Tests (2 total): 15% each
- Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale:
NO CURVES: A+ 100-97, A 96-93, A- 92-90; B+ 89-87, B 86-83, B- 82-80; C+ 79-77, C 76-73, C- 72-70; D 69-60 F below 60

Great Web Sites that we may use:

The Open University's introduction to the Greek alphabet:
http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/greek/interactive.htm

Ancient Greek Tutorials:
on-line drills for Greek forms, and a very handy accentuation drill. You must have a particular configuration of browser and font.
http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ancgreek/ancient_greek_start.htm

Classical Language Instruction Project:
A site designed to function as a resource for college undergraduates hoping to gain some insight into the pronunciation
and elocution of ancient Greek and Latin. As the rationale for the Project states on the site: "There may be considerable debate among scholars about the most 'authentic' way to pronounce Greek or Latin; yet it is certain that the texts from the ancient world reflect a vivid and complex spoken language, not a lifeless code."

With that in mind, the site features different classical scholars reading passages by a number of writers, including Homer, Plato, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Seneca. As the scholars read, students can follow along, view the passage in English, and pause the recording in order to develop an understanding of the text and its pronunciation. Finally, the site also includes a brief essay on rhythm and meter in Greek and Latin.

http://www.princeton.edu/~clip/

Tentative Syllabus and Assignments:

I am not going to list specific days for assignments on this syllabus, since we will be setting our own pace as a class. I list only dates for the tests below to allow you to plan accordingly. These will not change and will cover however far we have reached by those days.

Test I, 10/4 monday

Fall Break, 10/25-10/26 monday-tuesday

Test II, 11/5 friday

Thanksgiving Break, 11/24-26 (wednesday-friday)

Final Exam, TBA