

Advanced-Intermediate Ancient Greek: Reading Plato's Gorgias

Deep Springs College
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This course is intended for students who have completed their initial study of Greek grammar (e.g. by completing an introductory course sequence) and who have some experience reading original (viz., un-adapted) Greek prose. The transition from textbook study to the engagement with real Greek authors can be a difficult one, and this course aims to facilitate this transition by combining continued reading of a complete Greek text with a rapid but comprehensive review of Attic Greek morpho-syntax. Our primary goal is to read Plato's *Gorgias* in its entirety, in order to become familiar with idiomatic Greek and to expand our vocabulary through repeated exposure to Plato's prose. Our secondary goal is to revisit challenging elements of Greek grammar through a review of Louise Pratt's *The Essentials of Greek Grammar* as well as via ad-hoc review of difficult points that arise during our reading. Class will consist primarily of the close reading of Plato's text, a specific section of which will be assigned in advance of each class. Students are expected to work through this text in advance (e.g., look up and record all unknown vocabulary, decipher any challenging syntactic constructions), and be prepared to translate the text with the help of their notes – but without a prepared translation – 'live' in class. We will always read the Greek out loud before translating to gain familiarity with the sounds and the rhythm of the language. While our main goal is to improve our Greek reading fluency, we will take time to discuss Plato's views on rhetoric, ethics, and politics as raised in this fascinating Socratic dialogue.

Learning objectives. By the end of this course, you will:

- Gain confidence and fluency in reading genuine Greek prose
- Gain a solidified grasp of all syntactical and morphological elements of Attic Greek
- Be prepared to transfer your knowledge to other Greek authors and texts

Required Texts

- Louise Pratt, *The Essentials of Greek Grammar* (Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma Press, 2011).
- Plato, *Gorgias*. Students may choose one of the two following editions:
 - Plato, *Gorgias*. A revised text, with Introduction and Commentary. Ed. E.R. Dodds (Clarendon Press, 1990). ISBN: 9780198144953
 - Plato, *Gorgias*. In: *Platonis Opera: Volume III*. Ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1922). ISBN: 9780198145424.

Course Assignments

Overview:

1. Attendance and preparedness for in-class translations = 40%
2. Weekly quizzes = 30%
3. Translation tests (3) = 30%

Detailed Description:

1. *Attendance and preparedness for in-class translations*: The success of this class depends on the commitment of each student to show up to class prepared to translate the assigned text. You are not expected to have a perfect mastery of the assigned passage, of course, and it is certainly ok and indeed encouraged to bring questions and confusions to class. But it should be clear that you have worked through the text and have gained enough familiarity with it that we can fluidly make our way through a translation together in class.
2. *Weekly Quizzes*: Each week, we will have a quiz on specific elements of morphology and/or syntax. Students will be told in advance the topics that will be covered, and will be expected to revise all required material in Pratt.
3. *Translation Tests*: Each translation test will entail an in-class, written translation of a passage that we have already read together. Students will not be informed in advance which passage they will be given. In addition, each test will contain a number of grammatical questions regarding the translated text (for e.g., you may be asked to parse certain verb forms or explain a certain type or clause). Students will have the full class session for the translation test. You may use a (paper!) dictionary, but not a grammar reference; you may not use any online resources. Each test is worth 10% of the final grade.

Note: In place of the third translation test, students may write a short essay of 500-750 words focusing on some linguistic element of the *Gorgias* and its meaning for some aspect of the philosophical argument(s). They must discuss their essay idea with the instructor in advance.

Reading Schedule and Lesson Plan

The assigned reading for each lesson will be determined dynamically. Expect to begin the course reading approximately 1-2 pages of Greek text per class meeting. The quantity of reading will increase from week to week as we improve our fluency and familiarity with the text. Specific reading assignments for each meeting (e.g.: “Read from 447a – 448b”) will be given in advance of each session.