

Ancient Greek Linguistics I (A001805)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Cuomo, Andrea	LW06	lecturer-in-charge
Tsiampokalos, Theofanis	LW06	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

crdts	offering
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Teaching languages

English, Dutch

Keywords

Ancient Greek, Classical Greek, Attic Greek, Dialectology, historical-sociolinguistics, pragmatics, Ionic-Attic, Doric, Aeolic, Epos, verse inscriptions, Homer, Hesiod, Greek Lyric Poets

Position of the course

This course in Ancient Greek linguistics provides students: (i) with an introduction to the linguistics of Ancient Greek; (ii) with a focus on its dialects and literary languages. Previously acquired linguistic competencies in Attic Greek are challenged and strengthened by critical reading of an anthology of texts in verses. With this course, students ideally complete their training in Ancient Greek and learn to perform more advanced, linguistic analyses on Greek texts, with a focus on dialectology, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics.

Contents

Ancient Greek Linguistics I consists of 3 mutually interdependent clusters: (1) The Language of Greek Epic, Greek Metrics, Cognitive linguistics; (2) The Language of Greek Epic and other Literary Dialects, Historical Sociolinguistics; (3) Medieval Greek Metaphrases, Lexicography (focus on metalinguistics, grammaticalization, and lexicalization).

The goals of the course are (1) to be able to recognize and describe all the peculiarities of Homeric Greek and of the language of Epos; (2) to distinguish the main peculiarities of the historical and literary Greek dialects; (3) to apply modern linguistic paradigms to describe linguistic variations (e.g. sociolinguistics); (4) to learn Medieval Greek reception and descriptions of Homeric language.

This course provides students with a socio-historical contextualization, linguistic reading and interpretation of an anthology of texts including: Homer and Hesiod (epic language); verseinscriptions representative of the language of epigram in Ionic, Attic, and Doric; Tyrtaeus; Sappho; Alcman; and a passage from Attic tragedy. All texts will be integrally translated and commented upon at classes. The commentary will also touch upon metre (although metric is not the focus of the course) and its relevance to linguistic research. By combining contemporary historical (socio)linguistic theories, dialectology, and close reading of texts, this course helps students (1) become professional connoisseurs of Ancient Greek (e.g. because they will reflect on the peculiarities of the Greek dialects and of the

literary languages in contrast with Attic Greek) and (2) become familiar with linguistic research. For this reason, special attention will be given to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic implications of the use of single Greek (literary) dialects. The weekly reading assignments contribute to maintaining language proficiency and reading skills.

Students are **expressly** encouraged to interact with the instructors, by sending the weekly assignments and asking questions at class. The teachers are always available for individual feedback: we all learn at different pace. If you have questions, reach out quickly!

Initial competences

The students have completed the courses Ancient Greek: Language Acquisition I and II or acquired the necessary skills by other means. A good command of Attic Greek (morphology and syntax) is assumed.

Final competences

- 1 To be able to (i) read, (ii) contextualize, and (iii) interpret Ancient Greek texts in verses independently, by using standard academic tools (dictionaries, critical editions, commentaries, databases).
- 2 To apply modern linguistic insights to the studied anthology of texts, with a particular focus (i) on the morphology and syntax of single Greek dialects; and (ii) on the sociolinguistic and pragmatic implications of their use.
- 3 To (i) identify and analyze the metrical, stylistic, and grammatical particularities of the language of Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek Lyric Poets; (ii) explain the sociolinguistic and pragmatic relevance of these peculiarities compared to Attic Greek.
- 4 To be able to give a presentation discussing contemporary linguistic studies on one of the texts/authors examined in class.
- 5 To make responsible use of AI: this skill will be learned during the weekly assignments and during an ad-hoc designed lesson.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Interactive seminars
- Independent study / guided self-study: independent reading in preparation for seminars and exams with guidance from the instructors
- Presentations by students based on academic publications

Study material

None

References

The instructors provide students with all material they need. Any resource used is either open access available on the internet or via UGent. Students are not expected to have costs as far as resources are concerned. Nevertheless, they need access to the TLG, internet, and UGent library services. Here a list of frequently quoted books:

- C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955.
- M. L. West, *Introduction to Greek Metre*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 1987.
- S. Colvin, *A Historical Greek Reader*, Oxford, OUP, 2007.
- F. Budelmann, *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2009.
- G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (revised and expanded 2nd edition), Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Van Emde Boas, E., Rijksbaron, A., Huitink, L., & De Bakker, M. *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2019.

Course content-related study coaching

Help with and feedback on independent study and self-study, guided exercises.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Oral assessment, Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Permanent evaluation:

- Participation (5%): Active participation in seminars (students are expected to address and answer questions during classes, and to prepare for seminars by individually reading short assigned texts: students demonstrate their preparation by commenting at each class on a portion of the assigned text).
- Assignments (10%): At the end of each cluster, you will be asked to do a little assignment, on which you will receive feedback.
- Oral examination (15%): 20-minute presentation on a topic assigned at the beginning of the course.

Periodic evaluation:

- Written examination (70%): Final written test: metrical, phonological, and grammatical questions on the basis of texts discussed during classes.

Calculation of the examination mark

Your final score is the result of your performance in active participation in seminars, and assignments (15%), oral presentation on a given topic (15%), and the written test (70%).

The oral presentation will be considered passed if you achieve 2 out of the following 4 goals:

- 1 teamwork (as you decide among your peers who is dealing with which topic)
- 2 time management (as you have to make your point in no more, no less than 20 minutes [\pm 2 mins.], which entails critically and hierarchically selecting the material you want to present)
- 3 presentation skills (as you will be challenged to go out of your comfort zone, by speaking in front of an audience, clearly structuring your ideas, keeping contact with your public, and reacting to its questions with confidence)
- 4 coherence and relevance of the presented material.

The final written test will be passed if students correctly answer to 2 out of 4 questions. Over the entire duration of the course, we will simulate the final test. So that students become familiar with the format and the nature of the questions. Chiefly, it will be tested the ability to translate Ancient Greek texts (language acquisition skills) and to comment on them from a linguistic viewpoint (skills in linguistic research).

The oral presentation and the final written test can be taken in Dutch, even if the language of instruction is English. Other allowed languages are: Italian, Spanish, Modern Greek, and Russian.

The instructor welcomes the opportunity of providing students with extra material, feedback, and exercises in preparation for the written exam.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from specific educational activities requiring student attendance.
2. Possible rescheduling of the exam to a different time in the same academic year.
3. Feedback is possible on appointment during office hours.

