

Ancient Greek Linguistics: Language Variation (A005782)

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

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Cuomo, Andrea

LW06

lecturer-in-charge

Guasti, Duccio

LW06

co-lecturer

Pérez-Moro, David

LW06

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Latin - Greek)	5	A
Exchange Programme Classics	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Greek)	5	A

crdts

offering

Teaching languages

English

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

The course presents students with an anthology of texts drawn from Homer's *Iliad*, Hesiod's *Works and Days*, verse inscriptions in hexameter, as well as poetry in iambic trimeters and lyric poetry in the Aeolic dialect (primarily Sappho). Through reading and analyzing these texts, the course focuses on three major themes:

1. The Language and Meter of Epic Poetry:

Students learn the principles of Greek meter, with a focus on the hexameter and iambic trimeter (how to divide into syllables; syllable quantity; the specific metrical features of Homeric hexameter; the effects of archaic phonology on Homeric texts).

2. Dialectology:

The course introduces students to recent insights in Greek linguistics: the history and features of historical and literary dialects, and their diachronic developments; the phonetics and morphology of Greek dialects (with a focus on Aeolic); the

concept of dialect and literary language.

3. Metalinguistics:

The reflection of Greek grammarians on their own language and the use of Homer as a source of grammatical knowledge.

Students are **expressly** encouraged to interact with the instructors by sending their assignments for feedback, and by asking questions during class, etc. The instructors are always available for individual feedback: if you have questions, reach out quickly! Similarly, students are encouraged to engage with the course material every week right after class, so that any questions or gaps in understanding can be addressed and resolved as early as possible.

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.

The instructors encourage students to review their exercises and notes from the *Language Acquisition* course and to regularly complete practice exercises to strengthen their knowledge of Greek vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. The instructors are happy to correct any exercises, whether they are done in Dutch, English, Italian, or Spanish.

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 be able to professionally use the major instruments for the study of Greek especially: TLG (and the dictionaries linked to the TLG), and etymological dictionaries.
- 6 To make responsible use of AI: this skill will be learned during the weekly assignments and 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 in presence only. No lecture recordings will be provided.
- 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, pre-assigned questions, or on the basis of a text from the *Anthology of Texts*.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Anthology of Texts and Resources for OGT I 2024

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

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:

- Bozzone C. Homer's Living Language: Formularity, Dialect, and Creativity in Oral-Traditional Poetry. Cambridge University Press; 2024 (access through UGent VPN and library system)
- 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. Alternatively, the student may choose to give a "micro-lesson" of the same duration, in which he/she comments on one of the texts from the Anthology of Texts, describing its dialectological features and illustrating the relevant linguistic theories that we have covered in the first four lessons.

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, German, 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.