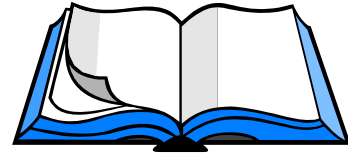


CLAS 125

Word Formation and Etymology



General Description

Course Goals

This course is designed to familiarize you with the elements borrowed from Latin and Greek that make up over half of the vocabulary of our language. You will learn to analyze words you encounter, and as a result, augment the precision and sophistication of your oral and written communications. Ideally, you will expand your current vocabulary; at a minimum, you will understand the underlying meanings of words you may have thought you knew well and discover how to use them more accurately. Because this course works with word parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes drawn from Greek and Latin) and production of definitions based on those parts, you will have the tools to learn other vocabulary in the same way—by an understanding of the components rather than just memorization of the whole. You will probably find that Latin and Greek produce differing effects on your vocabulary. Latin is more utilitarian; it appears in more English words that you may know or recognize. As a result, it will primarily clarify word meanings. Far more of the Greek roots will probably be unfamiliar to you, but for that reason, Greek will enhance and increase your vocabulary more than Latin. In other words, Greek helps you understand totally unfamiliar words, and Latin shows you why familiar words mean what they mean.

You will learn approximately 750 elements (prefixes, roots, and suffixes), many of which are already familiar to you. You will gain some familiarity with the history of our language and its antecedents, and you will have a chance to review some of the basic concepts of English grammar. This course has similarities to a foreign language course, in that you can

use some of the same techniques as if you were taking Spanish or German: You have to learn your vocabulary well, or the benefits of the course will elude you. A little curiosity will also be an advantage, for you will find that the meanings of words often do not correspond exactly to the meanings of their parts. Words, after all, come to us like people, with a history. In the case of some words, the evolution in meaning and usage may extend over hundreds, indeed thousands, of years and through several languages.

Textbooks

1. Luschnig, C. A. E. and L. J., *Etyma: An Introduction to Vocabulary-Building from Latin & Greek*, Washington: University Press of America, Inc., 1982.
2. You will also need a standard edition dictionary **that gives etymologies**. The *American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th edition, is especially recommended, but any standard edition will do (such as *Webster's*).

If you already have a dictionary that gives etymologies, you are certainly not expected to buy the *American Heritage* in addition. But do be aware that there are differences, even inclusion and omission of different words, between kinds of dictionary. The written exercises will be drawn from vocabulary included in the 3rd edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary*. You are advised and encouraged, therefore, to visit your nearest library and discover what dictionaries it contains. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is the largest and is great fun to investigate. If one is accessible to you, it makes a useful supplement for this course.

Etyma is about equally divided between brief narrative sections (in which new material is introduced) and exercises designed to illustrate and help you drill this material. The exercises are thorough and varied. You will use the information presented to build your way, carefully and step-by-step, back to the words that may have seemed so inaccessible before you learned the elements of which they are composed. You will be doing much memory work, of course, but it will be reinforced, often by drill in derivatives. The memorization will follow almost automatically. You will also

be asked in each assignment to use new words correctly in sentences. The exercises are designed cumulatively, so review is built in. Separate chapters devoted to review will help you consolidate what you have learned, and each chapter ends with a word game or notes on linguistic curiosities and monstrosities, most of which will be optional, but will whet your appetite for continued etymological exploration. Appendices and glossaries in the back provide useful summaries of information and word lists useful for review.

Course Plan

The course consists of fourteen lessons, one of which is a midcourse exam to be taken at home in order to acquaint you with the format and possible content of the final exam. The following outline gives you an idea of the content of each lesson. The numbers in parentheses refer to the pages in *Etyma* covered in each.

- Lesson 1: Historical Background of English, Dictionary Work (1–84)
- Lesson 2: Introduction to Latin (85–125)
- Lesson 3: Suffixes I and Review (127–159)
- Lesson 4: Latin Verbs and Prefixes I (161–175)
- Lesson 5: Prefixes II and Suffixes II (177–192)
- Lesson 6: Participles (193–200)
- Lesson 7: Suffixes III and Verb Review (201–216)
- Lesson 8: Suffixes IV (217–223)
- Lesson 9: Midcourse Exam
- Lesson 10: Introduction to Greek (225–235)
- Lesson 11: Nouns (237–250)
- Lesson 12: Adjectives (251–263)
- Lesson 13: Suffixes and Prefixes (265–286)
- Lesson 14: Verbs (287–303)

Study Suggestions

Although each lesson will vary slightly in format and in the sort of exercise assigned, the two procedures that will ensure success are constant: memorization and review. Each lesson, except for the very first one, contains one or more lists of words that must be memorized. To achieve this, employ all the means you might use in learning the vocabulary of a foreign language. If you have not previously studied a foreign language, or even if you have, you should consider making

flash cards with the Greek or Latin word and its various stems as they appear in English on one side and the meaning(s) on the other. Study the words for each lesson until you can produce the Greek or Latin given the English meaning or vice versa. This method may seem elementary and time-consuming, but if you do it as you are learning the new vocabulary for each lesson, it will greatly aid memorization and retention. It will also simplify your study for the midcourse and final exams. Get a friend to quiz you, if possible. There can be no substitute for memorization, and soon you will discover the technique that works best for you in each sort of memorization you have to do. But without constant review your memorization will do no long-term good. Oral and written review should precede every approach to new material. Mastery of previous material makes what follows easier; progress will be smoother and preparation for the exams reduced to a minimum. Review need take only a few minutes. Red lights in traffic and television commercials provide perfect opportunities, especially if you have made flash cards.

Your only real enemies are haste and lack of concentration. Take the time to read each lesson carefully and, if necessary, repeatedly, before you start to work on it. Take the time to use your dictionary. Check your work and always review. Do not start to work until you know what it is you are trying to learn in each exercise.

Not all of every exercise in the text will be assigned. The unassigned exercises can be done if you desire extra drills, and you are encouraged to use them as practice and review. In many cases, exercises are not assigned because they contain vocabulary that is not part of what you are required to memorize. Many of them are good exercises but do not fulfill the primary goal of solidifying previously learned vocabulary. Hopefully, however, this course will tweak your interest in learning more unfamiliar vocabulary as you gain tools for doing so more easily.

Two appendices are located in the back of this manual. Appendix I is a list of all required words to learn. Appendix II

is a list of vocabulary words organized by similarity in meaning.

Grades

A midcourse exam (Lesson 9) is included in order to show you what is expected on the final examination. The midcourse exam may be taken at home, but you should take it as though it were supervised, since it is your only practice for the final. Study for it by reviewing carefully Lessons 1–8. See the introduction to Lesson 9 for more details.

The written assignments, including the midcourse exam, will account for 75 percent of your course grade. It is critical that your written work be complete, careful, and to the point. It should be legible (your instructor has no obligation to give you the benefit of the doubt if he or she cannot read your response) and free of mistakes that were pointed out in previously returned assignments. Most importantly, your answers are to be spelled correctly. In a course where you are learning so many words, sometimes with very similar spellings, one letter can change a word to nonsense. Therefore, one-half point will be deducted for each misspelled answer.

The final exam will be cumulative (Lessons 1–14), but in all other respects it will be like the midcourse exam. As you know, the final examination must be supervised according to the policies established by Self-paced Courses. Please read the page *How to Schedule a Self-paced Courses Examination* in the back of this manual, and contact Independent Studies if you have any questions. Your instructor does **not** have any control over scheduling, mailing, or supervising the examination. **Remember, you must pass the final** in order to receive credit for the course. A failing grade on the final is an automatic failing grade for the course; otherwise, the final examination will count as 25 percent of the total course grade.