

# LATN 101

## Elementary Latin

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### *General Description*

#### **Introduction**

You are about to begin a journey into the wide world of Latin. You may be returning to the language after several years, or you may be encountering it for the first time. This may be your first exposure to any foreign language. Whatever the situation, it is the instructor's hope that you find this course challenging. Successful completion of Elementary Latin will give you a basic reading knowledge of Latin, an increased appreciation for Roman culture and history, and greater understanding of and appreciation for the English language.

#### **Texts**

The required and optional textbooks for this course may be purchased from the Higher Grounds bookstore, located in the Friday Center, using the book order form in this manual or online at <https://s4.its.unc.edu/HigherGrounds>. The required textbooks for this course are

- Balme, Maurice, and James Morwood. *Oxford Latin Course, Part I*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Balme, Maurice and James Morwood. *Oxford Latin Course, Part II*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

The *Oxford Latin Course* employs the reading-language method of teaching. Simply put, this means that you will read a great deal of Latin as the main tool for learning the language. Grammar explanations are minimal but thorough, and they occur *after* you have been exposed to new concepts in your reading.

Recommended, but not required, is:

Goldman, Norma, and Ladislav Szymanski. *English Grammar for Students of Latin: The Study Guide For Those Learning Latin*, 2nd edition. Ann Arbor, MI: The Olivia and

Hill Press, 1993.

For students with little or no foreign language background, or for those with only a hazy memory of English grammar, this text is very helpful. It provides explanations and plenty of examples of the parallels between grammatical concepts in Latin and in English. It defines and explains the use of even the most basic grammatical concepts, such as nouns, pronouns, and verbs. Subjects are broken down into short chapters ranging from the most basic English concepts to the most complicated Latin ones, and there is a detailed index. This book complements the grammar explanations in the Oxford books; it is often true that students benefit from multiple descriptions of the same topic.

A Latin dictionary is neither required nor recommended. All necessary words and meanings are provided in your textbooks.

***Cassette*** Also recommended, but not required, is the cassette produced by Oxford University Press to accompany *Parts I* and *II*. Although Latin pronunciation is not a required element of this course, many students find it valuable to hear the language. Hearing the Latin being read will help you learn Latin vowel quantities—long or short—which will help you with spelling in this course.

***Web sites*** Last but not least, for those students with Internet access, there are two very good Web sites that drill Latin vocabulary and grammar as it is presented in the Oxford textbook series, chapter by chapter:

Internet Workbook for the Oxford Latin Course, by Robert W. Cape, Jr. (<http://artemis.austinc.edu/acad/cml/rcape/latin/>)

Drills to Accompany the Oxford Latin Course, 2nd edition, by Margaret B. Phillips  
(<http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/artscience/forlanglit/oldrills>).

These two sites are well organized, thorough, and even enjoyable. They are well worth your time and could be of great help.

**Learning a Language**

*Time*

This course consists of twenty-two lessons, two midcourse exams, and one final exam. As the material introduced becomes more complex, the number of pages assigned per lesson will decrease, but the amount of work will stay about the same. The material covered is equivalent to that covered in an on-campus Latin I course, but there are fewer “classes”—each lesson submitted covers what would be about three or four days of class time. Expect to spend an average of five hours per lesson. You may need to spend more than that to absorb the material adequately. If you are consistently spending only a couple of hours per lesson, you will most likely find yourself unprepared for the exams.

*Communication*

If you have never tried distance learning before, you will probably have to adjust your normal learning style. The text, rather than the instructor, will present the material to you as you begin each new concept. This means that communication will primarily be limited to the instructor’s comments on your written assignments, **after** you have already received a grade. If you are feeling lost or puzzled as you do an assignment, or if an instruction seems unclear, you are certainly welcome to contact the instructor as you proceed through an assignment (e-mail and phone contact information is available through the Self-paced Courses office; e-mail is preferred if you have access to it).

Always read your instructor’s comments carefully when your assignments are returned to you. These are our main means of communication, and careful consideration of the corrections and suggestions will prevent mistakes from recurring in future assignments.

*Keys to learning*

As you might expect, a language course does not require as much reading as, for example, a history course, but the reading assignments in a language course must be read over and over. If you have never learned a language before, or perhaps even if you have, you will find that **repetition** and **review** are the keys to learning. Languages have to be practiced. A toddler does not suddenly begin talking in complete sentences; an elementary school student cannot skip the introductory reading skills and then expect to pick up and understand a play of Shakespeare. Work on this course a little bit each day, if your schedule will possibly allow it. Regular, daily practice and repetition are invaluable to learning a language.

*How to study  
each chapter*

Each chapter in the textbook has two sections:

- Latin reading passages, vocabulary, essay topics, and cultural information
- grammar and exercises, found in the back of the book.

Each written assignment will include parts of both sections. The grammar and exercises are placed in the back of the book intentionally to encourage the reading-method approach to learning Latin.

The following is the order in which you should complete each lesson:

1. Read through the cartoons on the opening page of the chapter for an introduction to new grammar. Next, look over the vocabulary, and then read the Latin passage—**without** referring to the resources at the back of the book. Do not try to write out any translations or answers at this point.
2. Read the entire grammar and exercises section of the chapter at the back of the book.
3. Go back and begin to memorize the vocabulary listed in the colored boxes before the Latin passage. It's a good idea to make flash cards.
4. Now, begin your written assignment. Work through the Latin-to-English translations and the reading comprehension questions. In lessons where there are short essays based on the cultural sections, these can be written now or after the next step.
5. After all this, you will be well-prepared to complete the exercises at the end of the book. They often revolve around story lines introduced in the long reading passages from step 4, so it will be much easier for you to complete them at the end of your other work. The English-to-Latin translations in these exercises will be the most difficult part of the assignment for most students; that is another reason these exercises should be done **last**, after you have really begun to absorb the new vocabulary and to see the new grammar in action.

6. Finally, do the English-to-Latin translations assigned. These exercises will be the most difficult part of the assignment—another reason they should be done after you have really begun to absorb the new vocabulary and to see the new grammar in action.

***Flash cards***

All students have different styles of learning, but flash cards usually prove to be the most effective way to learn new words. Knowing the vocabulary in the colored boxes is essential to your progress through the course. If you are constantly having to stop your reading to look up words, you will be distracted from comprehension and practice of new material.

Exams will contain words that were not required to be memorized, and their meanings will be provided to you, but **no** meanings will be provided for assigned vocabulary (those words in the colored box in each chapter). As you encounter each chapter's new vocabulary list, put the Latin on one side of a card and the English meaning on the other. Study the words until you can produce the Latin given the English meaning and vice versa. Get a friend to quiz you if possible. The flash card method may seem elementary and time-consuming, but it will greatly aid comprehension and retention.

***Gaining fluency***

The ultimate goal of studying Latin or any other foreign language is to develop the ability to comprehend that language as a native speaker does. If you spend enough time studying Latin, you should eventually be able to read a Latin passage as fluently and effortlessly as you would read a similar passage in English (or whatever your native language may be). This course makes use of translation into English as a tool to develop fluent, direct comprehension, but always remember that translation is a tool, not an end in itself. Your goal is to read Latin and understand it directly—without converting it to English in your brain.

How does this work?

1. Read the whole sentence—aloud if necessary—in Latin.
2. Make sure that you know what each word means. If necessary, look up words in the glossary and write down their meanings.
3. Read the sentence again, and see if you understand it.

4. If necessary, look at the forms and word-order clues within the sentence (you'll learn these gradually throughout the course).

You should understand the sentence by now. **Do not** jump around in the sentence; if you do, you are guaranteed to misunderstand the sentence because you will miss the structural clues that reveal its meaning.

When you are asked to write an English translation, do **not** write anything down unless it makes sense.

### **Written Assignments**

Each lesson will include a written assignment to be sent in for grading, with comprehension exercises, grammar exercises, translations, and usually, essays.

### *Comprehension exercises*

There are two types of reading comprehension questions that you will encounter in the text: Questions in Latin requiring Latin answers (*Respondē Latīnē*), and questions in English expecting English answers. The Latin questions can be answered in only a few words, using phrases or clauses from the passage just read. You need not compose new Latin sentences (unless you so desire); simply copy the relevant Latin answer from the passage.

The English questions are designed to help you practice reading Latin as a language, not as an exercise. Answer the questions as specifically as possible. In most cases, these questions follow a passage for which you are not asked to write out a translation. Do **not** provide a translation of the entire passage as an answer in the hope that somewhere you will hit upon what is desired. Read the passage again until you are sure of your answers.

### *Grammar exercises*

The instructions for the grammar exercises in the back of the book are quite clear. Unless specified otherwise, you are to follow the instructions given in the textbook, which provides thorough examples of what is expected. There will often be further explanations in this course manual. Always read the lesson notes in the course manual before starting your written assignment.

### *Translation exercises*

As mentioned before, the English-to-Latin translations are probably what you will find the most difficult. They focus on

new vocabulary and new grammar, though of course they will contain words and concepts from previous lessons. Learning a language is cumulative, so do not forget the material from earlier lessons; you are never finished with it.

Pay attention to the function each word has in the sentence, and apply the grammar you have previously learned. You may be challenged by Latin's many word endings; however, the word endings ultimately serve to make learning Latin **less** frustrating than learning English because they eliminate ambiguity from the word's meaning and function in the sentence.

In translating, note that several sentences in a row usually follow the same story line, so each sentence will build upon the previous one. The context will help you greatly as you proceed through the translation exercise.

***Essays*** For lack of a better word, "essay" is used to describe your response, in English, to the questions in the colored boxes after the cultural section in each chapter. These essays are not expected to be research papers, but short answers of only a few sentences are inadequate. Two or three paragraphs (each paragraph should contain at least four or five sentences) should be sufficient. Certainly feel free to write more if a specific topic interests you.

It is very important that you read these special cultural sections in each lesson because they give you the background (historical, literary, social, religious, and so on) of the Latin passages. Without the cultural context, translation will be more difficult because you may not understand the motivation of the characters involved. The assigned essays will ensure that you have read and understood these sections.

***Unassigned material*** Everything in each lesson should be read through, whether assigned or not. Most lessons have questions on derivatives (English words arising from Latin words) or some word-building activities. Although not required for grading, these sections can really improve both your Latin and English vocabularies.

The more you explore the language, the easier and more enjoyable learning Latin will be. In addition, your exams may contain Latin passages from unassigned sections of your text.

Feel free to send in unassigned exercises if you have problems with them, but **only** if you include specific questions and explanations as to the nature of your problem; without specific questions or problems, extra submissions will not be evaluated.

**Grading** The written assignments count for 65 percent of your course grade. Each midcourse exam counts as 5 percent of your course grade. The final exam counts as 25 percent of your course grade.

**Submission requirements** It is critical that your written work be complete, carefully done, and to the point. It should be legible (your instructor must be able to easily read your response) and free of mistakes that were pointed out in previously returned assignments. It is acceptable to send in assignments with answers on both sides of the paper as long as they are still legible. Assignments can be neatly handwritten or typed. If typed, please **double-space** your answers to allow space for correction of translations and additional grammatical explanations.

Except in rare cases, resubmissions to raise a grade will not be accepted. Always double-check your course manual before you send in a written assignment in order to eliminate mistakes or omissions.

**The point system** For each assignment, a strict point system will be used—each word is worth one point. A translation passage is worth as many points as there are words in it. An English sentence that requires five Latin words in order to translate it adequately is worth five points. Each Latin word produced or translated is worth one point. Each reading comprehension answer is worth one point. The only exception to the rule is that essays will be worth twenty points.

Clearly, there will not be 100 points per assignment; the total amount will vary greatly, usually between 500 and 800 points. The advantage of this system is the smaller value of each individual answer; for example, you could accidentally skip a grammar exercise worth 40 points of a 500-point assignment, and you could still receive an “A.” Total points possible and total received will be clearly indicated on each part of each assignment.

**Spelling** There will be no partial credit for a misspelled Latin word. In Latin, spelling is critical; misspelling can create a new form of

the same word or even a completely different word. Long marks (such as ā, ē, ī, ō, and ū) are an essential part of correct spelling. The presence or absence of a long mark can mean the difference between one word and another. Words without their required long marks are misspelled words, and will not receive points. The notes in Lesson 2 will explain this more thoroughly.

***Midcourse exams*** The two midcourse exams are closed-book and self-timed (90 minutes). Unlike the final exam, they are not monitored, but you are expected to take these tests without any assistance from your textbook, notes, or any other materials.

Each exam will consist of two Latin passages, about which you will answer translation, comprehension, and grammatical questions. The passages will come from your text, but will not necessarily come from parts that you have submitted as translations for grading. Since **all** reading has been required, even if not assigned, any passage is eligible for the test. However, any words not from your required vocabulary lists will be glossed (a definition will be provided).

Each midcourse exam is worth 5 percent of your final grade.

***Final exam*** The final exam will be cumulative, and similar in structure to the midcourse exams, but longer, since it will cover more material.

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 the Self-paced Courses office 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 exam 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.