

***Student Comments from the Erasmus Academy
Latin Course Online of Summer 2018
Taught by Dr. Ben DeSmidt***

The pace of the course was really great and challenging. The professor gave useful exercises and explanations. She was easy to contact.

How would you compare this online, “real time” course with online courses where there is no direct interaction with the instructor or other classmates?

Obviously, this course taught me a lot about Greek, but also about English and French. I found myself developing a great interest for grammar, but I also realized that I want to do literature and philosophy more than linguistics.

I would recommend this course to someone who can work full time on this course. It would be best to have around 50-60 hours a week for this course.

With Dr. Chew, even the most complex notions of Greek grammar were interesting. She is really competent, enthusiastic and available. I think that she should spend more time on new grammar notions during class and less time commenting on the difficulties of the previous assignments. The paradigms shared on the course’s website were really helpful as well as the summaries of some grammar notions prepared by the professor. The textbook is really great. Yet, if I were teaching the course, I think that I would not try to cover the entire Mastronarde textbook.

As an online Ancient Greek class, it was ok. But I really prefer a classroom setting especially for modern languages, history, philosophy, etc.

Charles M.

July 19, 2018

This is an in depth course that features a lot more unadapted or only slightly adapted texts than what one usually sees in an first year Greek course. It has been an excellent bridge to reading the original Greek texts. As an online course in real time, directly interacting with classmates and instructor has provided numerous insights into the Attic Greek language and larger classical world. Outside of the grammar of Attic Greek, this class has given me the confidence to take on reading ancient texts.

The only thing that could really improve this course would be extend the amount of time it covers. Covering all of Attic Greek in 8 weeks requires working at a very difficult pace. But, beyond this I don't think the course could be meaningfully improved upon. The only advice I could give would be to be prepared to work hard. The class is challenging but very rewarding.

Dr. Chew has an aura of kindness that permeates everything she says and does. She is more present than most of the other professors I've had classes with despite being on the other side of the country. She always goes the extra mile to research a specific question that someone in the class has, which speaks to her genuine passion for the subject matter. In general, I would consider this class to be very successful.

Mastrorade is a difficult textbook but it is ultimately rewarding. Some of the online resources that the publisher supplied are spotty. The vocabulary tools on the website aren't the easiest to use. The third party supplied Memrise list is uneven but helpful for memorizing vocabulary, despite the occasional word in the wrong dialect. Everything on the Nifty Greek Handouts site is very useful.

The quizzes were all appropriate to the difficulty of the work we were doing. The class exercises and homework were also very helpful. Dr Chew was always very quick to grade all of our work, even the extra unassigned homework I did and was very forthcoming with encouragement.

Craig K.

July 15, 2018

If this course had not been run in 'real time', I would not have enrolled. I have done online courses where there is no direct interaction with the instructors or fellow students, and I found it completing unengaging and I was not motivated to do the work. Also, it is very tedious to listen to audio only versions of lectures. Overall, I was very happy with the course, so I have no suggestions to offer.

I feel that I have learned quite a lot. The course has had an impact in the sense that I have been inspired to continue, so much so that I have enrolled in another course offered by the Erasmus Academy. The course is INTENSIVE, hence its aptly named title. It definitely requires a huge commitment of time, as is clearly stated in the *Course Description*, but is well worth the effort.

I found the instructor extremely engaging, professional yet warm and friendly. I especially liked her positive approach to what I had seen as difficult concepts. As a result of the way Dr. Chew presented and spoke about some aspects of the language, I was able to change the way I thought and approached some of the material. I found that it made it easier to learn the material when I adopted her 'positive' take on things. She is very professional and experienced. One of the best teachers I have ever had.

I opted for this method of learning as I found it very tiring to travel to the University which was near to me. I found it much more relaxing to be at home in front of my own computer imbibing tea as I felt like it. It was a fantastic way to learn.

There was a lot of homework, but I valued it and saw it as necessary as it did encourage me to do it, and as a result I learnt much more than I would have if it had not been set. I know myself well enough in that, I have the intention and desire to learn, but I never do because there is always something else that comes along that needs doing or attending to. The homework helped me to keep on track with my learning otherwise it would never have happened. I enrolled in the course to learn and that I did because of the amount of homework and quizzes. I live outside the US, and in the country I live in, instructors do not assign so much work, expecting the student to learn on his or her own accord.

Dr. Chew's feedback was always informative, encouraging and helpful. Regarding how one would improve this course, I cannot answer this question, but I would like to say that I have never experienced this style of teaching and it really brought the best out of me as a student.

Eusebeia S.

July 20, 2018

The course covered Classical Greek thoroughly, students had the ability to interact with the instructor in real time during class, and the instructor is extremely knowledgeable and experienced. Recording the lectures was a huge plus to be able to go back over things missed during the scheduled class session. The ability to interact in real time with the instructor is extremely beneficial, so questions can be addressed in the moment and misunderstandings corrected.

I'm not really sure how this course could be improved. Dr Chew has obviously put a great deal of time and effort into making this course successful and effective. She mentioned several times how she is always looking for ways to improve how the course is taught and how to enhance the learning experience for the students.

I learned the fundamentals of Attic Greek, but I also realized just how much time and effort needs to be put in to get the most out of the course. I learned some about Greek history, Greek authors, and linguistics. Learning about Greek grammar will help my writing in English.

Some changes for me resulting from taking this course are that I am more focused and more disciplined in my approach to studying. This was a very difficult course in a short amount of time, so I have more confidence in taking on a difficult task.

Although I had a number of personal issues during the class that impacted the time I could devote, Dr Chew was very understanding and helpful in this regard, but my advice would be to insure you can devote sufficient time to study and homework outside the scheduled class sessions. It is very intensive and there is a lot of information to take in.

Dr Chew is clearly very knowledgeable about Classical Greek and has a great deal of experience, but that alone doesn't make someone an effective instructor. She also has a great personality and interacts with and takes an interest in her students. She really seems to enjoy teaching and was always very helpful and understanding when I had an issue I had to deal with. Great job!

Dr Chew always responded to emails promptly despite her very busy schedule. She said several times we could contact her by phone and if needed she was willing to arrange a one-on-one Goto meeting. She seemed to really go above and beyond what I expected.

Steven R.

July 21, 2018