

INTRODUCTION TO ATTIC GREEK

101 Reasons to Take Greek

101) Homer: worth learning Greek for the *Iliad* alone, everything after is just icing. 100) Satisfy your Language requirement. 99) Astound hallmates by deciphering medical terms on “ER”. 98) Individual attention from professor. 97) When competing in decathlon or heptathlon, avoid embarrassment of not knowing how many events are left. 96) New Testament was written in easy-to-read Greek. 95) Greek alphabet is no big deal; the few letters are different from English are easy to learn. 94) Shock parents with Thanksgiving recitation of Greek erotic poetry. 93) Learn why Plato says “all men are pregnant, Socrates.” 92) Be prepared in event of unanticipated time travel. 91) Democracy. 90) Bill and Ted had to speak to Socrates in sign language. 89) None of those pesky silent letters. 88) Win sports trivia contest by reciting and then translating Greek that appears on Olympic medals. 87) Prove Ted Turner’s father wrong. 86) By learning about Greek & Roman culture, understand more of the literature & film produced by people steeped in the Classics. 85) Know thyself. Master philosophical dicta. 84) Learn about aspects of “recent” literary theory anticipated by Greeks & Romans. 83) Fundamentals of Classical rhetoric handy when requesting extensions for term papers. 82) Expand your vocabulary geometrically. 81) Familiarity with Greek letters gives you tiny advantage in math class. 80) Greek Tragedy much better in original. 79) Robert Kennedy quotes “favorite poet” Aeschylus from memory in famous speech after killing of Martin Luther King. 78) Avoid the tragedy of discovering Classics late in Wheaton career. 77) Know a photon from a muon: Greek not unhelpful in deciphering particle physics. 76) Learn about litotes and how you can use it to confound adversaries. 75) Understand those two pesky non-Latin words in the pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Mass. 74) Recognize that the plots of most television sitcoms and dramas were written over 2300 years ago. 73) Regular assignments/quizzes form nice contrast to your other courses. 72) Tastes great, less full: advanced courses are like great English or History courses, but easier to get into. 71) Learn why Western literature begins with the word “wrath.” 70) Medea: “I would rather stand in battle three times than bear one child.” 69) Famous speakers/readers of Greek: Cleopatra, Nietzsche, Marx, Ted Turner, Jerry Brown, Ron Cameron, Jean-Luc Picard (reads Homeric Hymns in “Darmok” episode where alien captain speaks only in myth). 68) Sappho: “Some say a host of cavalry is the finest thing... I say it is the one you love.” 67) Scoff intelligently at directorial decisions made by Wolfgang Petersen. 66) Help make sure the future does not forget the past. 65) The Greeks were just like us. 64) The Greeks were nothing at all like us. 63) By studying an “inflected” language, in which each syllable is important, become better, more observant reader of all texts and documents. 62) Be smarter than guy who told Sen. Paul Simon, “If English was good enough for Jesus Christ it’s good enough for me.” 61) Plato & Aristotle! 60) By studying a language so different from English, re-approach English with greater appreciation of nuances of diction, style, and sentence structure. 59) Knowing the Orders of Columns fundamental to appreciating architecture. 58) Contemplate (as Hayden White does) the philosophical implications of the Greek middle voice. 57) Development of logic skills will give you advantage on MCATs. 56) Personalized feedback and individual attention throughout the semester. 55) Avoid improper treatment by understanding difference between hypothermia and hyperthermia. 54) Learn your mythology straight from the centaur’s mouth. 53) Greek is so easy. Greeks found time to invent the steam engine and determine the circumference of the earth. 52) Second-year Greek classes read Homer, Plato, Herodotus, and more. 51) “Perseus Project”: great multi-media database of Greek material & literary culture on CD-ROM and on WWW (where, by the way, there’s tons of great Classics stuff). 50) Medical schools love us. 49) Law schools do not dislike us. 48) Render the first line of the University of Chicago’s fight song (*Themistocles, Thucydides / The Peloponnesian War, / X squared, Y squared / H2SO4 / Who for? What for? / What the hell are we fighting for? / GO, MAROONS!*) slightly less dorky. 47) Without a need for language lab, move quickly to study of interesting texts in the original. 46) Do the Vulcan mind-meld on odd, interesting, influential people who’ve been dead 2500 years. 45) The creators of modern opera sought to recreate Greek tragedy. 44) Euripides’s plays so popular they saved the lives of Athenians who could recite it. 43) Never confuse the Parthenon with the Pantheon again. 42) Become a better writer. 41) Learn why it is unlikely that Aeschylus died from being hit on the head by a turtle. 40) The next your parents complain about “that damn hip-hop music,” you can prove its not rotting your brain by pointing out their sentiment’s Platonic origins. 39) Be prepared in unlikely event of time travel. 38) Learn how the first author of Western literature could have been illiterate. 37) Sophocles’s *Antigone* influenced Hegel’s theory of dialectic. Knowing the play may give you a snowball’s chance of understanding Hegel. 36) Master vocabulary for GREs. 35) Add classical allusions to that screenplay you’re writing (brother of director of “Fatal Attraction” is a famous classicist). 34) Rock on College Jeopardy. 33) Be able to decipher correct words to Mr. Mister’s “Kyrie.” 32) Many fascinating texts deal with issues of power, gender, mortality, love, knowledge, madness, divinity, mortality, and courage. 31) Your father had this great blue-haired Greek teacher and will get all wistful when he hears you’re taking it now. 30) Your father never had Greek and will be intimidated by you and stop bothering you about your blue hair. 29) Small classes. 28) Stun Med School admission officer by reciting Hippocratic Oath in original language. 27) Learn how not to write a defense speech; in separate votes more jurors voted to put Socrates to death than thought he was guilty! 26) Appreciate the beauty of languages whose word-forms allow greater freedom of poetic word-order. 25) Become qualified to make up your own mind about “Black Athena.” 24) Having studied Greek participles, your writing will be free of those embarrassing dangling problems. 23) 2600 years ago Greeks theorized that everything was made out of water. 22) 2500 years ago Greeks theorized that matter consisted of atoms; how’s that for progress! 21) Correct misguided high school ideas about “tragic flaw.” 20) After you learn Latin roots of many Greek words, that sense of confusion and alienation you feel most of the time will be slightly reduced. 19) Will prove helpful when learning Latin next year. 18) Use classical philosophy to endure dizzying Hollywood success. 17) Odysseus seeing his dog Argos after 20 years is most moving scene in all of literature (scientifically-proven). 16) Those who cannot remember the past are doomed. 15) Discover the value of the small classes and personal attention promised by your campus tour guide. 14) After reading Homer, understand to universe of meaning contained in Vergil’s “*arma virumque cano.*” 13) Ponder the radical relativism of Protagoras’s statement, “Man is the measure of all things.” 12) Gain newfound insight into the character of Carmen Electra. 11) Avoid embarrassment of storming into wrong fraternity house. 10) Take Classical Civilization classes and feel like you have a tiny advantage (or talk your way into a full Classics class). 9) The past is a foreign country, but you can bring your own water. 8) Think the “politics of personal destruction” began with Bork-ing? Read Demosthenes. 7) Greek etymology: androgyny, basilica, Borg, diameter, gigantic, gubernatorial, gymnasium, deictic, agnostic, hedonism, thanatopsis, hippopotamus, catastrophe, crisis, kaleidoscope, cacophony, lithograph, macrobiotic, martyr, metaphor, Nike, necrophilia, oncology, oneiromancy, Oreo, homogeneity, holocaust, pedagogy, rhythm, synonym, synchronic, tautological, hyperbole, phenomenon, psychiatric, pseudopod, character, chiasmus, chiropodist, Christ, Xerox. 6) Sophocles’ Oedipus is complex. 5) Contemplate how sentences in any language create and then fulfill or frustrate expectations. 4) Go to Athens in junior year (you can’t take Intro..., so better start now). 3) The Greeks invented rhetoric: learn to make weaker argument the stronger (or spot someone doing it to you). 2) Smile in smug satisfaction when slack-jawed yokel says, “It’s Greek to me!” 1) **Why go to Wheaton if not to take what you want?**

Fall 2004: Wheaton College

Professor Bret Mulligan

Knapton Room 315

10:30-11:20