

Student Comments on the Erasmus Academy Latin Course Summer, 2015

The course covers a large amount of material in only 8 weeks. I found it very impressive that we were able to cover all that material in so little time. The course has given me a good foundation in Latin.

The grammatical explanations given during the course were very clear. The instructor is clearly knowledgeable and passionate about the subject.

The instructor frequently paused and asked if anyone had any questions during class, which is very helpful for a course with this kind of format. It can be difficult teaching and learning without being in the same physical classroom and asking if people have questions keeps everyone engaged and prevents people from falling behind or getting lost...He was always responsive and helpful over email.

The instructor occasionally spent a little bit more time on a particular piece of grammar or a (Latin-related) tangent than was strictly necessary. In a full-semester course, this would certainly go in the "strengths" section, but in a course with really strict time constraints, this can sometimes lead to falling behind schedule.

I don't think a real classroom setting can ever be entirely replaced, but the online/real time system worked very well and it made it possible for me to study Latin over the summer.

Zachary F.

July 9, 2015

The teacher does a great job explaining, answering questions, and giving the students extra help. In addition, I found the class to be quite thorough with the grammar despite the strenuous pace.

Ben is extremely willing to explain concepts and to give extra help to students in need. He gives advice on the homework that includes where he sees our weaknesses/strengths, and suggests what to review. Other than the fact I could

not interact with him face to face as is my preference, I did not notice any glaring weaknesses with his teaching.

The students willingly participated, asked questions, and voiced interest with the subject matter. He was respectful and enthusiastic when interacting with us. It was a great environment.

I thought the book was an excellent resource. The chapters are easy to understand, and the homework we received was challenging, but not overly so. If one happened to be so, it was usually just a block in learning the language rather than the material itself.

I'm a visual learner so it was more challenging than a classroom environment because I was unable to see and interact directly with the teacher and other students, but otherwise it felt like a real class, just harder.

Heather C.

July 9, 2015

The course succeeded in going through 2 semester's worth of Latin grammar thoroughly in a time and cost effective way.

The Instructor is very knowledgeable, has experience teaching and therefore knows how to approach concepts, especially ones that are likely to be more difficult. Also very patient and receptive to questions.

Sometimes it felt that answers, while helpful, could have been a little more concise, since I felt that there were a couple of minor concepts at the end of Wheelock that we didn't quite cover in class.

Wheelock was a good core text for the class, the homework exercises helped solidify the concepts we learned in class.

The format worked for learning a lot quickly, although three hours of class (even with a break) is still a long time to stay fully focused. That being said, I definitely think I got what I expected/hoped out of it. I think this format would be more difficult for someone who didn't have any background in classical languages, since being familiar with certain grammatical concepts from Greek definitely helped.

Shlomit H.

July 9, 2015

The instructor explains things very well and in detail. He's always available for questions and further discussion, and is very pleasant. Ben is great with students - very open to discussion, amiable, and full of further reference material when needed or requested.

Wheelock is exceptional for grammar when you read every little note and remember where certain topics are within the chapters. But it can feel a bit rushed or scattered. I think this textbook demands at least 20 hours a week of independent study to master all of the vocabulary, readings, grammatical points. I personally feel I need to spend time with the book for the rest of the summer, going back through from the beginning and reviewing.

I personally work better in a classroom setting as far as retaining material, since there is more in-person reinforcement, especially in daily classes. But this course worked well with my current graduate schedule and I had the time and space to take the course peacefully at home. And it allowed for my work schedule.

All in all, I'm very happy I took this course! I think I will need a beginner/intermediate course next, during the school year. But this worked well for a summer intensive to have on my Ph.D. applications. Thank you!

Isabel B.

July 8, 2015

The strengths of this course were that I was able to learn many of the basic constructs of the Latin language whereby I can begin to study the language with more depth.

Dr. DeSmidt provided valuable and timely feedback on homework and pertinent questions while also giving us tips and facts that only someone with the degree of profession he has, could give. He provided other details about the language overall that will be beneficial in the future.

Perhaps there were moments when the class session seemed to be going a little too slowly. An example would be spending 45 minutes on a single sentence. However, having this kind of meticulous study with a professional grammarian is also something to be valued.

The discussions were great—a balanced mix of instructor’s comments on the material along with continual pauses for questions or concerns. I felt that the instructor was open to interruption when someone needed attention on an area. Great collegiality.

Wheelock’s integration of REAL Latin throughout the textbook was helpful to get a sense of what to expect when translating. Not only that but it provided insights into the minds of Latin authors which, I think, is one of the boons of learning a new language.

Which were the course materials that you found less helpful.

I can’t give an expert opinion on comparing Wheelock with other grammars. All I can say is that I think Wheelock was sufficient for our class, and I cannot really provide any critiques in my limited experience with the language.

Danny D.

July 7, 2015