



# Ancient Greek at BCG?



A proposal for an elective  
in the Department  
of World Languages .

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# PROPOSAL FOR AN ELECTIVE IN ANCIENT GREEK

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### WHY STUDY ANCIENT GREEK

*“Students of Ancient Greek approach this discipline for a variety of reasons. They appreciate the beauty, clarity, and concise nature of the language, or they are fascinated with the culture which has had such an impact upon our own and to which we have exceptional access through its abundant linguistic and archaeological record. In order to have a better understanding of this culture and its literature, they need to read and comprehend its texts, not merely translate them word for word. To this end classicists, archaeologists, philosophers, historians, theologians, and anyone with an avid interest in the Graeco-Roman world will want to develop the tools for approaching a Greek text, whether it is an Homeric epic, a tragedy of Euripides, a philosophical treatise of Plato, a history by Thucydides, or an inscription on a monument or painted vase.”*

- Alison Willard Barker, St. Paul's School

The study of Ancient Greek has been pursued by educated individuals since antiquity—including the classical Romans, early church fathers, and modern theologians of Judeo-Christian religions. Greek was the original language of the New Testament, and likely the language spoken by many members of the early Christian Church. Significant portions of modern technical terminology derive from Greek, and many of the fundamental questions of philosophers and theologians arise from ancient Greek sources. Furthermore, Greek literature, from poetry to philosophy, has been a model of composition for many famous authors, poets, and playwrights, and the ancient Greek philosophers wrote the first descriptions of literary genre as it is now understood (e.g. Aristotle, Poetics). The recent resurgence of interest in Latin is leading to a parallel phenomenon in Greek study for similar reasons: Greek roots in English words, the relationship of Ancient Greek culture to our own, to read the literature, philosophy, histories, etc. in their own language, and others. The benefits of studying Ancient Greek have been recognized since Roman antiquity—all educated Romans were expected to be fluent in Greek—and have not diminished with the passage of time. An elective in Ancient Greek that focused on the cultural and philosophical importance of Greek culture as well as the basic elements of the language would leave Bishop Guertin students even better prepared for the knowledge-based, analytical job-climate of the twenty first century.



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### Some Benefits to Guertin students include:

1. Familiarity with a great classical language, its literature, and culture.
2. Increased comprehension of English grammar and vocabulary.
3. Familiarity with the language of the early Christian Church.
4. Familiarity with the Greek philosophers and philosophical methods.

### Relationship to the Charism

*"The most important aspect of any Catholic education is the development of Christian values and the transmission of the Catholic heritage."*

- from the Introduction to Charism and Mission  
BG Faculty Handbook 2003

In relation to this statement from the "Educational Charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart," Bishop Guertin students stand to benefit particularly from an elective in ancient Greek. The philosophical and religious implications of familiarity with classical Greek for the educated Christian are profound, and range from increased understanding of the socio-political, economic, and cultural circumstances of the Levant in the time of Christ to a point of departure for comparison of early Christian and Pagan lifestyles and worldviews. Familiarity with the Greek philosophers and their arguments, often appearing in the early church as heresies or rebuttals of Christian beliefs, will enable the student to better understand the teachings of the apostles in the New Testament. Furthermore, familiarity with classical languages—Latin and Greek—aids the understanding of difficult religious terminology. In particular, terms such as *Eucharist*, *charism*, *Christ*, *apostle*, *angel*, *ecclesiastical*, *Pentecost*, *evangelist*, *patriarch*, *hypocrisy*, *hymn*, *alpha and omega*, *sympathy*, words fundamental to Catholic theology, derive directly from ancient Greek. A single year of study of the Greek language will prepare diligent students for reading selections from the Greek New Testament. Cambridge University Press publishes a reader designed for such students (see Appendix I). Since the aim of the Bishop Guertin Curriculum is to prepare our students for a Christian life in the twenty first century, we should provide them with every tool at our disposal for understanding and defending Christian values. What better way to accomplish this goal than to teach the language of the New Testament.

### Comments

Appendix 4 contains additional material in support of Ancient Greek in the high school curriculum provided by Gilbert Lawall, University of Massachusetts, and coordinator of a CANE database of New England schools with high school Greek.



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## TEXTBOOK AND RESOURCES

### Principal Textbook

Thrasymachus, Peckett and Munday, published by Duckworth Academic Books, London (#0862921392)

This is a “Greek through reading” course recommended by Alison Willard Barker, President of the Classical Association of New England, and the text she has used at the Saint Paul’s School for many years. Unfortunately the availability of this textbook has not been confirmed, so another textbook may have to be used instead. Possibilities include Athenaze, published by Oxford University Press, and An Introduction to Ancient Greek, published by Prentice Hall. Thrasymachus teaches Greek prose through an inductive approach favored by many modern language methodologies. For classical languages, it is the closest parallel to total immersion learning, and it allows the greatest possible acquisition of language in the shortest time. Thus, this method is probably the best for a one year elective. An Introduction to Ancient Greek uses a grammar based approach, the traditional methodology for teaching ancient languages, and Athenaze uses a modified inductive approach. Appendix 2 contains more detailed bibliographical information on all three textbooks.

### Supplements

Alison Barker’s supplemental exercises and explanations of material for Thrasymachus are available on the web at <http://www.vroma.org/~abarker/thrascontents.html>. Many other internet-based supplements to learning Greek exist. These range from interactive texts (see [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)) to language courses and review sites (see Appendix 3). These sites can be a valuable resource to language students and teachers if used judiciously; however, the information on these sites needs to be reviewed carefully for accuracy before recommendation for beginning students.

In addition, the syllabus of this course will require extensive readings in Greek philosophy (in English translation). A packet of passages would be the most efficient method of presenting this information to students; however, other options include requiring the purchase of additional texts by the students or the placement of reserves in the Library.



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## SYLLABUS

### Initial Comments

The following syllabus is based on my best approximation of how much material can be covered in a single year course. St. Paul's School normally covers twenty two chapters of Thrasymachus in a course primarily devoted to the study of the language. Since this course will incorporate substantial material of a cultural/historical nature, I have assumed a slower pace for language acquisition (through Chapter 16). In addition, the amount of material actually covered during the course of the year will depend in a great part upon the effort and enthusiasm of the students enrolled in the course. Finally, the syllabus may vary slightly depending upon which of the three possible textbooks—Thrasymachus, Athenze, or An Introduction to Ancient Greek—is actually chosen based on availability and suitability.

### Material

The material of the syllabus will be divided into two sections: Greek language and English readings. The first section will involve the use of a textbook and likely a workbook made up of material from supplemental sources and created by the teacher. Assignments for this portion of the class will be drawn from text and workbooks and/or teacher-created worksheets and will involve language acquisition skills—reading, writing, grammar, syntax, comprehension, etc. The second section, English readings, will draw from a variety of sources, and will cover basic Greek history and culture, in addition to selections of translations of Greek philosophers. Assignments will usually involve reading of a passage and a written response to a specific question posed by the teacher. The length of the response may vary from a paragraph to a 5 page research paper. Again, the depth and breadth of individual assignments will depend greatly upon the students enrolled in the course.



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## Greek Language

### Concepts learned in Chapters I-XVI, Thrasymachus

- I. The Greek alphabet, pronunciation, accents, breathing marks
- II. Basic characteristics of Ancient Greek: parts of speech, inflection, etc.
- III. Nouns: First through Third Declension forms
- IV. Definite Article
- V. Adjectives: declensions, agreement, comparison
- VI. Pronouns: Personal, Demonstrative, Reflexive, Intensive, Interrogative, Indefinite, Relative
- VII. Indicative of regular (contract and non-contract) verbs: present (active, middle/passive voices), future (active, middle, passive), aorist (active, middle, passive), imperfect (active, middle/passive)
- VIII. εἰμί (to be, irregular verb): present, future, imperfect tenses
- IX. Irregular verbs: 24 most common in addition to εἰμί
- X. Participles: present (active, middle/passive), aorist (active, middle, passive)
- XI. Infinitives: present (active, middle/passive), aorist (active, middle, passive)
- XII. Principal parts of Greek verbs: how to find verb stems
- XIII. Imperatives: present (active, middle), aorist (active, middle)
- XIV. Aspect of Greek verbs (as different from “tense” in English)
- XV. Major uses of all cases (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative) in Greek: subject, direct object, indirect object, prepositional phrases, etc.
- XVI. Comprehension of short to medium length passages in Greek
- XVII. Composition of short original sentences in Greek

### Additional concepts learned in Chapters XVII-XXII, Thrasymachus, if covered

- I. Result (consecutive) clauses
- II. Purpose clauses
- III. Commands/prohibitions in first person plural (iussive/hortatory subjunctive)
- IV. Definite and indefinite actions
- V. Clauses of fearing
- VI. Indirect discourse: formation, sequence of moods and tenses
- VII. Participles: future (active, middle, passive)
- VIII. Subjunctive mood: present (active, middle/passive), aorist (active, middle, passive)
- IX. Optative mood: present (active, middle/passive), aorist (active, middle, passive)



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### Notes on the Greek Language Outline

This outline does not list the order in which language skills are acquired, but rather groups skills by similar subject area (nouns, verbs, syntax). The sequence of material covered in Thrasymachus follows the progression of noun/adjective forms in the first several chapters, then the verbs. Verb tenses are introduced in all four moods learned in Chapters I-XVI (indicative, imperative, infinitive, and participle) before the next tense is learned to encourage association of all forms of a tense in memorization, recognition, and comprehension.

As forms are taught, the related syntax is introduced (i.e., how to translate). Each chapter of Thrasymachus (except review chapters) introduces new forms for memorization and new concepts for comprehension. The material is introduced first in the chapter reading, and then through lecture, drill, and review.

The method employed by Thrasymachus emphasizes understanding of words in context rather than rote memorization, although a certain degree of memorization/recitation work is unavoidable, and in some circumstances even desirable to reinforce learning of individual forms.

In an ideal world, the concepts in Chapters XVII-XXII would also be covered; however, it is most likely that time will not permit covering these topics. The majority of the information contained in Chapters XVII-XXII concerns more advanced syntactical constructions and verb forms. These are necessary for reading advanced Greek, but not essential for a basic understanding of the language.

The material not covered under the extended syllabus is limited to two verb tenses (perfect, pluperfect), which are encountered infrequently in simple Greek prose, and advanced syntax (absolutes, conditional statements, wishes, deliberations). This material would normally be covered in a second year of Greek, but could be learned independently from contextual clues, especially if the student has become used to the inductive approach to learning.



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## English Readings

- I. Brief history of Ancient Greece (taken from a history textbook)
- II. Brief history of philosophy: "Introduction" to Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy, Cohen, Curd, Reeve (2000) or similar text
- III. Plato: biographical excerpts
- IV. Plato: excerpts from the Apology of Socrates
- V. Plato: excerpts from the Protagoras dealing with the nature of virtue
- VI. Plato: excerpts from Meno dealing with teaching of virtue and the immortality of the soul
- VII. Plato: excerpts from Meno dealing with morality and religion in society
- VIII. Aristotle: biographical excerpts
- IX. Aristotle: excerpts from Metaphysics dealing with the "unmoved mover"
- X. Aristotle: excerpts from De Anima
- XI. Aristotle: excerpts from Nichomachean Ethics dealing with morality and moral responsibility
- XII. Aristotle: excerpts from Politics
- XIII. Aristotle: excerpts from Poetics

These readings will be broken down further into weekly assignments and focused for classroom and/or written discussion. Each reading will consist of 2 to 10 pages (length dependent on content). The written response will generally involve journaling and occasional papers (2 to 5 pages) on a series of readings (e.g., on Plato's Apology)

The syllabus as represented here is broad enough to allow the class to move in several different directions, depending upon the interests/interest level of the students. The only non-negotiable items in this syllabus are the historical and biographical readings which are necessary to provide a context for understanding the philosophy.

In addition, Biblical readings will be provided for contrast with the philosophical view-points of the Ancient Greeks. Passages from the New Testament will be examined to determine if a dialogue between the New Testament theologians and the Greek philosophers exists in terms of the mandates for individuals.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Alison Willard Barker of St. Paul's School and Gilbert Lawall of the University of Massachusetts for their assistance in preparation of this document. They both have provided information and advice for the syllabus and other material included herein.

I would also like to thank Paul Jacques for allowing me to write this proposal, and for supporting my enquiry into offering ancient Greek at Bishop Guertin.



# Appendix 1

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## New Testament Greek



**New Testament Greek - Cambridge University Press**  
<http://us.cambridge.org/titles/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521654475>

BackForwardStopRefreshHomeAutoFillPrintMail

Address: <http://us.cambridge.org/titles/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521654475> go

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**\$23.00**  
December 2001 | Paperback | 228 pages 15 half-tones 2 maps | ISBN: 0521654475  
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This book provides the ideal introduction to the New Testament in Greek for students with only the most basic knowledge of Greek. It presents a selection of substantial extracts, with vocabulary, some grammatical help and brief introductions setting the various authors in context. At the end there is a checklist of about 350 of the commonest New Testament words, but all other words are printed as they occur. It is particularly suitable as a follow-on textbook for students who have learned Greek using Wenham's *The Elements of New Testament Greek*. Also available... *The Elements of New Testament Greek* by J.W. Wenham, 0-521-09842-4, Paperback, \$16.95 D



First Introduction to Classical or New Testament Greek  
**New Testament Greek**  
A Reader

[Email friend about this title](#)

**Contents**  
Prologue: John Chapter 1 vv. 1-14  
Section 1. Luke Chapters 1-2  
Section 2. Mark Chapters 2-5  
Section 3. Matthew Chapters 5-7  
Section 4. John Chapters 9-11  
Section 5. Luke Chapters 22-4  
Section 6. Acts of the Apostles Chapters 1-2 v. 21  
Section 7. Acts of the Apostles Chapters 16-19  
Section 8. Romans Chapters 4-6  
Section 9. 1 Corinthians Chapters 12-15  
Section 10. Hebrews Chapters 3-5 v. 10  
Section 11. James Chapters 1-2  
Section 12. Revelation Chapters 21-2  
Appendix: Classical and New Testament Greek  
Checklist of most common words.

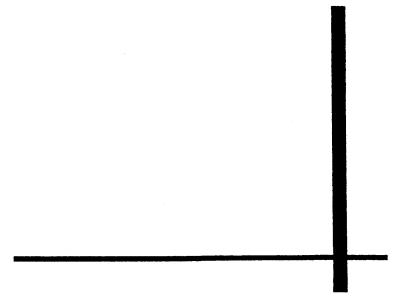
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Order by phone 845-353-7500, or by fax 845-353-4141.

Internet zone



## Appendix 2

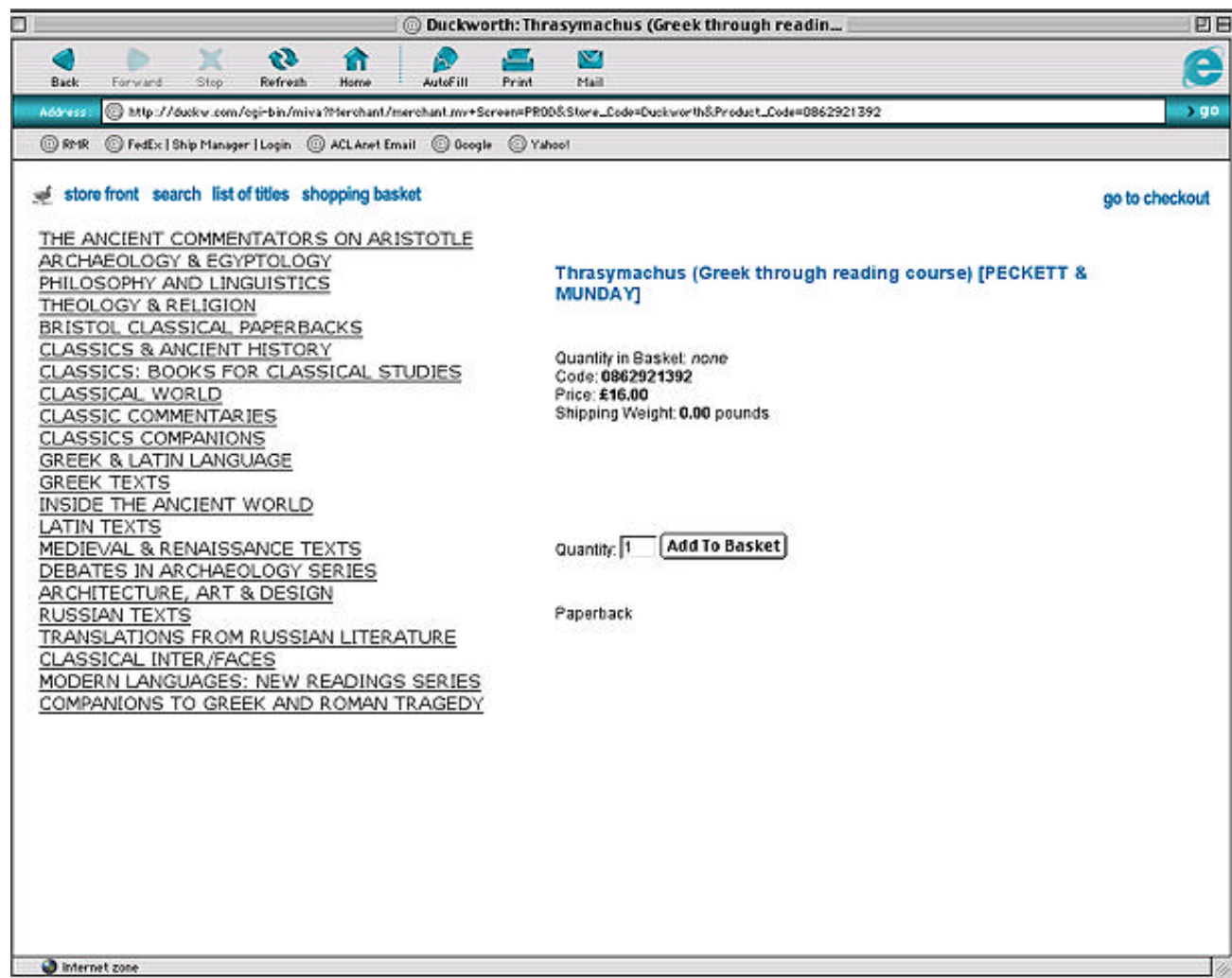
# Textbooks



**Duckworth: *Thrasymachus* (Greek through reading course) [Peckett & Munday]**

<http://duckw.com/cgi-bin/miva?Merchant/>

[merchant.mv+Screen=PROD&Store\\_Code=Duckworth&Product\\_Code=0862921392](http://duckw.com/cgi-bin/miva?Merchant/merchant.mv+Screen=PROD&Store_Code=Duckworth&Product_Code=0862921392)



## Oxford University Press: Athenaze: Student's Book I

http://www.oup.co.uk/isbn/0-19-912219-9

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**Athenaze: An Introduction to Ancient Greek - Student's Book I Revised Edition**



**Maurice Balme and Gilbert Lawall**  
**Price: £13.99 (Paperback)**  
0-19-912219-9  
Publication date: 14 September 1995  
OUP USA 282 pages, halfpene  
illustrations throughout, 235mm x  
165mm

**Description**

Combining the best features of traditional and modern methods, *Athenaze* provides a unique course of instruction that allows students to read connected Greek narrative from an early stage, and guides them to the point where they can read complete classical texts. There is a fictional narrative about an Attic farmer's family placed in precise historical context (432 BC). The narrative is interwoven with tales from mythology and the Persian Wars, and gradually gives way to extracts from Herodotus, Plato, and Thucydides. Each chapter includes a full explanation of new vocabulary and grammar, and an essay on relevant aspects of ancient Greek culture and history. Exercises in translation from English to Greek are integrated throughout.

**Links to web resources and related information**

More in the same subject area: [Classical languages](#); [Classical languages: specific skills \(speaking, listening, reading, writing\)](#); [Classical languages: grammar](#); [Classical languages: collections & anthologies of various literary forms](#); [For National Curriculum Key Stage 4 & GCSE](#); [Ancient \(Classical\) Greek](#)


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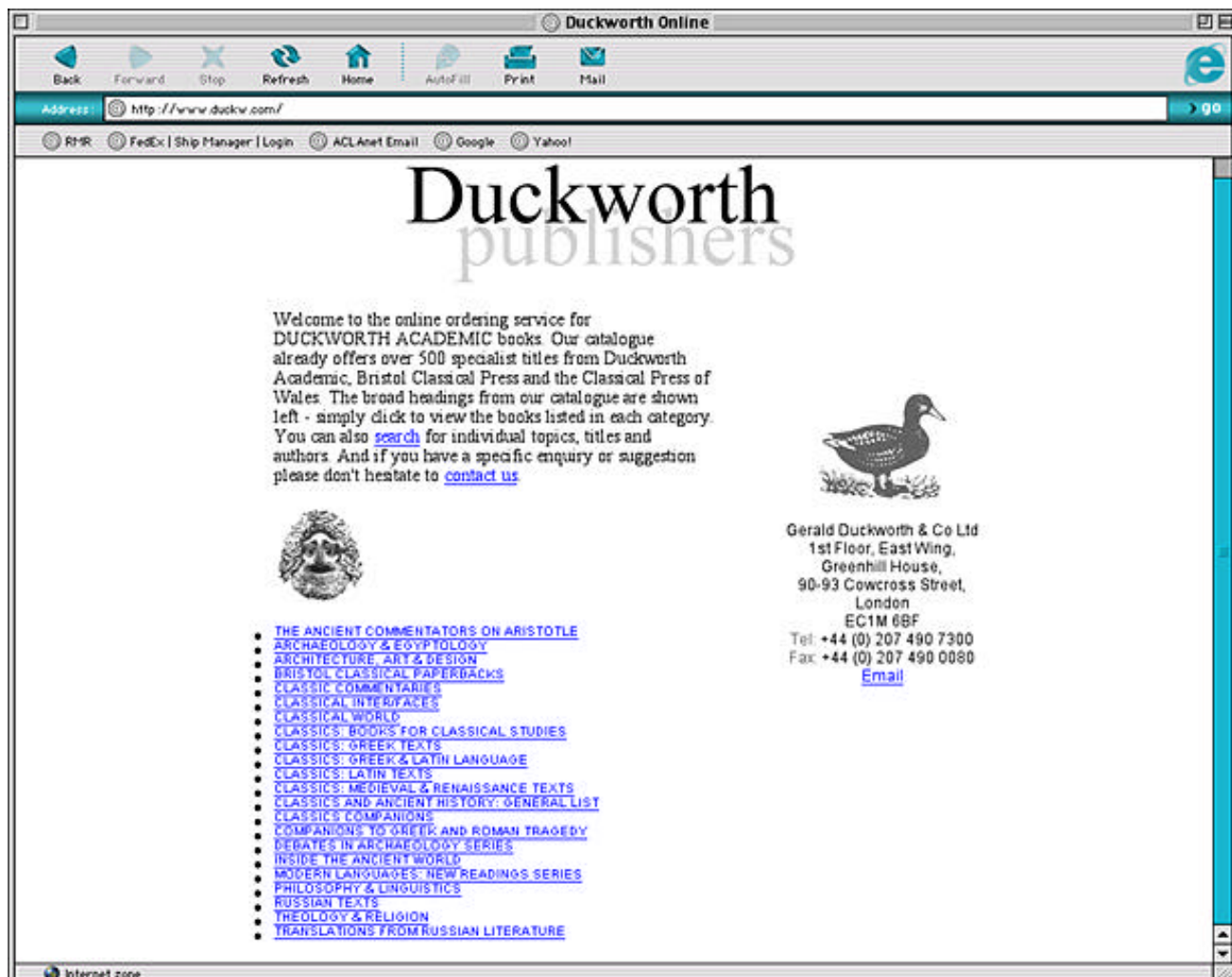
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## *An Introduction to Ancient Greek* - Prentice Hall Catalog

<http://vig.prenhall.com/catalog/academic/product/0,4096,0130337390,00.html>

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Prentice Hall catalog page for the book "Introduction to Ancient Greek, An" by Luschnig. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://vig.prenhall.com/catalog/academic/product/0,4096,0130337390,00.html>. The browser's toolbar includes buttons for Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Home, AutoFill, Print, and Mail. Below the address bar, there are links for RFR, FedEx | Ship Manager | Login, AOLnet Email, Google, and Yahoo!. The Prentice Hall logo is visible in the top left corner of the page. The page has a blue header with navigation links: Home, Instructor Support, Student Support, About Us, and Careers. A "Texts & Technology:" section with a "Select a Discipline" dropdown menu is also present. Below the header, there is a search bar with the text "Find Your Rep: Enter Zip Code" and a "GO" button. To the right of the search bar is a "Search Our Catalog:" section with a "by Keyword" dropdown and a "GO" button, followed by a link to "Advanced Search". The main content area features a sidebar with "RESOURCES" and "RELATED TITLES" sections. The "RESOURCES" section includes a link to "Discipline-Specific". The "RELATED TITLES" section includes a link to "Elementary Greek (World Languages)". The main content area displays the book title "Introduction to Ancient Greek, An" by Luschnig. Below the title, the book's details are listed: ISBN: 0-13-033739-0, Publisher: Prentice Hall, Copyright: 1976, Format: Paper, Published: 07/01/1976, Status: Instock. The price information is shown as US: \$58.67, You Save: \$5.87 (10% off), and Our Price: \$52.80. A link for "Instructor Exam Copy" is provided below the price. At the bottom of the page, the Pearson Education logo is visible, along with copyright information: Copyright 2004 by Pearson Education - Legal Notice - Privacy Policy - Permissions. Technical Support: Pearson 24/7. The status bar at the bottom of the browser window indicates "Receiving image (0 bytes of 713 bytes, 0 bytes/sec) - careers.gif".

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**Luschnig**

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Published: 07/01/1976  
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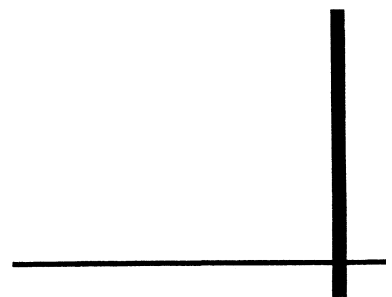
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## Appendix 3

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# Internet Resources



### **Introductory Courses and Course Materials**

<http://perswww.kuleuven.ac.be/~u0013314/greekg/courses.htm>

### **CANE Instructional Materials**

<http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~glawall/cane.htm>

### **Greek Too! Pedagogical Materials**

<http://www.txclassics.org/greekmaterials.htm>

### **Ancient Greek with *Thrasymachus*: Introduction**

Alison Barker: <http://www.vroma.org/~abarker/tsintro.html>

### **A Call for Greek in School: Recovery of a Renaissance Tradition**

Richard Evans: <http://www.txclassics.org/greekarticles.htm>

### **High School Greek**

John D. Towle: from the Athenaze Newsletter, Fall 1995,  
<http://www.txclassics.org/greekarticles.htm>

### **CANE Phinney Fellowship for Creation of New Ancient Greek Programs**

<http://www.wellesley.edu/ClassicalStudies/cane/phinney.html>

### **Why in Heaven's Name are you Majoring in Greek**

Lynn Sherr: Rouman Lecture UNH April 9, 2003 from the Hellenic  
Communication Service website

### **Greek in and out of the Latin Classroom; Greek in Western Massachusetts**

Gilbert Lawall: courtesy of author

### **Listing of Greek Programs in New Hampshire**

Courtesy of Gilbert Lawall