CLASSGEN 9: Word Power: Greek and Latin Roots of English
Tu and Thu 3:15-4:05 PM, School of Education 210
Instructor: Dan-el Padilla Peralta, dpadilla@stanford.edu
Office hours: Weds 1-3 PM, TA Office, 2nd floor Building 110 (Main Quad)

Course Description
Why learn the Greek and Latin roots of English? This course will introduce students to the many benefits of their study. Deeper knowledge of Greek and Latin's living presence in English improves vocabulary, comprehension of written English, and standardized test scores—but the story does not end there. The study of these roots will also enable us to better appreciate the rich history of English's development as a language; the patterns and processes at work in the formation of the English lexicon; and the terminology used in medicine, business, education, law, and the humanities. Greek or Latin not required.

Texts

[You may purchase these through Amazon; I have not put in an order through the Stanford Bookstore. You may also consult them at GREEN Library, where copies will be held on two-hour course reserve.]

Also note:


Ayers, D.M. English words from Latin and Greek elements (1986)
Bryson, B. The mother tongue: English and how it got that way (1991)

Serjeantson, M. A history of foreign words in English (1961)

[Books marked with ** are available digitally: Graddol through the listed URL; the OED, Clackson, and Winchester through Stanford’s digital subscriptions. All other books will be on course reserve at GREEN.]

Grading
Midterm: 30%          Fortnightly written assignments: 20%
Final: 30%            Class preparation and participation: 20%
Syllabus

Tues 6/26  Introduction
          Course objectives
          Tools at our disposal

Thu 6/28  English's basic properties; its place in the universe of
          languages; its past and future(s)

          Algeo: ch. 1, "Language and the English language"
          Graddol: Introduction, Overview, chs. 1 and 5
          Optional:
          Mencken: ch. 12, “The future of the language”

Tues 7/3  Words, meanings, and anti-meanings

          How we mean what we mean
          Pinker: ch. 1

          Defining what we mean: the story of the OED
          Winchester: chs. 1-4, Epilogue

          Synonyms and antonyms: the story of Roget’s Thesaurus
          Roget’s Thesaurus

          Assignment 1 due

Thu 7/5  Historical linguistics I: English and the IE languages

          Clackson: ch. 1, “The Indo-European language family”
          Watkins: “The Indo-European origin of English” (AHD)

Tues 7/10 Historical linguistics II: Old and Middle English

          Algeo: ch. 5, “The Old English period (449-1100)” FOCUS ON 78-92; skim
          rest
          Algeo: ch. 6, “The Middle English period (1100-1500)” FOCUS ON 112-128;
          skim rest
          Burnley nos. 2, 15, 18B

Thu 7/12 Historical linguistics III: Modern English

          Algeo: ch. 7, “The Early Modern English period (1500-1800): society,
          spellings, and sounds”
          Algeo: ch. 8, “The Early Modern English period (1500-1800): forms,
          syntax, and usage”
          Algeo: ch. 9, “Late Modern English (1800-Present)”
          Burnley nos. 31, 37, 44
Tues 7/17  Historical linguistics IV: Loan-words from Greek and Latin

Bryson: ch. 5, “Where words come from”
Algeo: ch. 12, “Foreign elements in the English word stock”
Assignment 2 due

Thu 7/19  Roots I: a very brief introduction to how Greek and Latin work

Green: chs. 3 and 5, with exercises

Tues 7/24  Roots II: suffixing, prefixing, and word formation

Green: chs. 4, 6, and 7, with exercises
Winter, “How I met my wife” (New Yorker 1994)

Thu 7/26  Roots III: Quantities and phrases

Green: chs. 8 and 18, with exercises

Tues 7/31  MIDTERM

Thu 8/2  The Greek and Latin presence I: Medicine, science and mathematics

Green: chs. 12-14, with exercises
Assignment 3 due

Tues 8/7  The Greek and Latin presence II: Humanities and the arts

Green: chs. 15-17, with exercises

Thu 8/9  The Greek and Latin presence III: Government, politics, social sciences

Green: chs. 9-11, with exercises

Tues 8/14  Stylistics: Latinate or Anglo-Saxon words?

D. Oppenheimer: “Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity” (Applied Cog. Psy.)
Corbett: “Figures of speech,” Classical rhetoric for the modern student
Assignment 4 due

Thu 8/16  Last class:
    The future of Greek and Latin word roots in English
    Final exam review