

## Report on the Modern Greek Teaching Workshop held on 3/25/06



*From left to right: Karen Van Dyck from Columbia University, Martha Kilronomos from San Francisco State University, George Syrimis from Yale University, and Panayiotis Pappas from Simon Fraser University.*

What resources are there for learning Modern Greek—the spoken language, culture, and history of Greece and Greeks? This is a question people ask us frequently, and one we look into regularly as we prepare our classes.

Greek is an old language—one of the oldest with a continuous written record—yet its modern, spoken form is a new subject in American colleges and universities. We who teach Greek find its newness exciting. It inspires us to be creative—to invent new classes, produce new teaching materials, and search the ends of the earth for just the right book, song, film, TV clip, or article to help students explore and grasp a topic. But creating new instructional materials takes time, and relying on texts that are not effective or tailor made to our needs can be frustrating. This is a common experience shared by people who teach Greek in North American colleges and universities.

To address the challenges of teaching and learning Greek, the Modern Greek Program at UM (with support from the Modern Greek Studies Association) hosted a workshop on the Greek Language and Undergraduate Education on March 25, 2006. We invited a representative group of faculty from Modern Greek Programs in the U.S. and Canada, who discussed the effectiveness of existing instructional materials, presented new methods and resources, and discussed ways to share resources such as syllabi, exercises, and tests. Attending the workshop were faculty and instructors from Columbia, Cornell, Ohio State, San Francisco State, Simon Fraser, and Yale Universities.

The findings of this hard-working group are now available in a complete report - please click here to download (PDF). A new experiment with great promise is the Distance Learning Tutor that is being created and put to use by Simon Fraser University under the supervision of Professor of Linguistics Panayotis Pappas.

The Hellenic Studies Research Group at Simon Fraser University has also translated into English and digitized a vocabulary list of the 1500+ most frequently used words in Greek. Click here to download a PDF copy of the list, graciously made available by the compilers.

Here I'm listing some excellent electronic resources available to anyone with a computer and a strong desire to learn Greek. Enjoy!

[www.cls.yale.edu/lexis](http://www.cls.yale.edu/lexis) is a wonderful Electronic Pictionary for Elementary and Intermediate Modern Greek conceived and developed by Dr. George Syrimis of Yale University and funded by the Stavros S.

Niarchos Foundation. This multimedia courseware helps students to learn Greek vocabulary by theme, parts of speech, and level (its "chapters" coincide with those of the textbook, Greek Today). The picture dictionary incorporates image, audio, and text. On each flashcard page, students view an image, along with several buttons that allow them to 1) view the Greek vocabulary word that is depicted by the image, 2) view the English definition, 3) hear the word pronounced, and 4) view and hear the vocabulary word in a sentence context.

[www.cls.yale.edu/ikones](http://www.cls.yale.edu/ikones), also from Yale University, helps intermediate and advanced students develop comprehension. It offers a series of 5-minute video selections with conversations in Greek on a range of topics, from a young couple having an argument to two chefs competing in their cooking skills.

<http://www.asprilexi.com> is a website for advanced students of Greek who want to explore word uses and learn a new Greek word every day.

Two music-related websites for advanced students of Greek are <http://www.kithara.vu> and <http://stixoi.info>. Both give the lyrics of thousands of Greek songs, which can be searched by title, first line, lyricist, songwriter, singer, and label. The latter of these two websites also offers English translations!

[www.hau.gr](http://www.hau.gr), the website of the Hellenic American Union in Greece, offers many resources, including free Modern Greek lessons in the form of podcasts ([http://www.hau.gr/hau/en/services\\_mg\\_podcast.html](http://www.hau.gr/hau/en/services_mg_podcast.html)). A new lesson will be available every Friday. In all 80 podcasts will be made available, which anyone can download to an iPod or mp3 player.

~Artemis Leontis, Modern Greek Program Coordinator

[Back to top](#)