

MODERN GREEK STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA

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attending a few lessons a week. It is now a matter of personal incentive: everyone should seek their own reasons for learning Greek and make a great effort. Personally I believe that when we can give this inner motivation to students, it will work by itself. The question is how to implement this.

Unfortunately, the Greek race does not have the best reputation. Besides the negative aspects associated with the metropolis, there are also the local Greek organizations and their intrigues who have made a lot of younger Greek-Australians feel ashamed of their ancestry.

They have every reason to feel ashamed. I encountered this problem from the very first days. We were talking about how workers in Greece behave and I think it is my responsibility to show them that just is not exactly the case. Yes, there is corruption in Greece but there is also the real Greece and that is the one they must get to know. What I say to them, is not to focus so much on the information coming to them through the media. They should concentrate on what the real Greece is all about and what does its history have to offer.

As a community and as individuals, how can we help the subject of the teaching of the Greek language in Australia?

I think the best approach is to show an interest, and especially those who are in positions that can influence situations. They first need to approach Greek culture from a different perspective themselves. For example by focusing only on a parade come Greek national day, without knowing the meaning and the importance behind it, is missing the point. Unfortunately this applies to Greece itself. To get out of this impasse we need to radically change our mentality. This is not something that can be done easily. The other problem is the distance from Greece. It is very difficult to maintain a substantial contact. As a matter of we are becoming far removed from what Greece truly represents.

But perhaps the blame lies with the fact that for decades now the Greek government not only has no clear policy on the issue, but also fails to implement whatever policy they might have.

There is no coordination and they operate completely erratically. They move as politics move in Greece today: they have no clue what the next step will be, there is no organization, which applies to the metropolis' cooperation and relationship with the diaspora. There is such a vital piece outside of Greece and yet we can you not take advantage of it? We cannot use it in order to somehow impose Greek culture? This is unimaginable!

But maybe as a community we have not found the right ways to reach young people. Is this purely academic approach the correct solution? Shouldn't we somehow incorporate the Greece of



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young people?

The problem is that the Greek government does not function properly on any level. Is it possible to have such «products» which you can promote and do nothing about it? To put it in simple terms: our wonderful wine, our olive oil... What can we say about our culture? Promoting it is never done correctly. The issue is that children here have no real contact with true Greek culture and necessarily cling on to its sub-derivatives.

Back to the teaching of the Greek language in Australia: personally, are you optimistic or pessimistic about its future?

I always want to be optimistic. After experiencing all the interest shown, I do believe, if we find the right approach, we can be optimistic. This negative attitude of «nothing works, our language is in danger, the next generation will not know any Greek» has exactly the opposite effect. And I oppose that. Anyway we need to find a way. I repeat: everything is based on internal motivation.

GREEK STUDIES @ UNSW

Modern Greek is one of the most widely used community languages in Australia with a rich cultural heritage. With its history stretching back continuously to the beginnings of European civilisation, the Greek language offers valuable insights into the structure and lexicon of English and other modern languages. Furthermore in such languages it is the source of much abstract and scientific vocabulary.

Introductory Greek language and culture can be taken either as general education courses or as electives in the Bachelor of Arts and other undergraduate degrees.

Students interested in pursuing upper level Greek courses may do so through cross-institutional enrolment at the University of Sydney. Please contact the Faculty Student Centre for details.

GREEK STUDIES ABROAD PROGRAM

UNSW students can participate in a six-week study abroad winter program of Greek language and culture at the University of Athens. Students can apply for advanced standing upon successful completion of the program.

The General Secretariat of Greeks Abroad offers a «Program of Greek Language and Culture» for young people of Greek descent in Greece for 21 days. Please note this program does not count towards any degree or course undertaken at UNSW.

ARTS1540 - Introductory Greek A

This is an introductory level course in Greek language study and culture. Students are introduced to basic grammatical and syntactical aspects of Greek through oral, listening and reading activities. The morphology and structure of the language are presented in the context of culturally relevant topics concerning the Modern Greek world. Topics explored as an overview include popular culture, music, cuisine, travel, traditions, cinema and current affairs.

ARTS1541 - Introductory Greek B

This course is a continuation of Introductory Greek A and examines basic grammatical and syntactical aspects of Greek through oral, listening and reading activities. Topics explored include aspects of popular culture and current affairs.

ARTS2542 - Gods, Heroines And Heroes In Greek Mythology And Modern Culture

This course offers an introduction to the creation myths, the stories of the gods and their interaction with humans, as well as the great story cycles of - Oedipus and the Trojan War. The myths will be discussed in terms of stories of families and family groups with reference to modern adaptations of the stories. In addition, students will study 'The Odyssey', which has been a significant piece of literature with interesting historical references and an ongoing influence on the whole of western culture.