

Teaching the Scientific Terminology Course

Faculty in many Classics programs teach courses in scientific terminology. This is sometimes done as a useful service to the institution and often, at the same time, it is done out of self interest to support a program's overall enrollment numbers. However, since the study of scientific terminology is not part of any specific discipline and its components and features are not part of a classicist's education, most faculty are at a loss for models for what to teach and how to teach it. The problem of "what to teach and how" is compounded by the dizzying array of textbooks, almost none of which give guidance in the use of the text itself and many of which are marred by large amounts of linguistic misinformation. In addition, the most useful reference books are not readily identified nor are they always easily available. Finally, added to all of this is the fact that pedagogical journal articles in this subject are few and far between.

In this presentation, various challenges in teaching a scientific terminology course will be identified and addressed. These include the purpose of such courses, which can vary from the memorization of five hundred significant terms to a full blown etymological study; the range of material that needs to be covered; varieties of subject matter to be covered in the course; teaching methodologies; specific student needs; linguistic information; and some recommended reference materials.

This presentation will specifically include the following inter-related topics with associated handouts:

1. The history and rationale for such courses.
2. Textbook choice.
3. Classroom procedures.
4. Testing procedures.
5. Useful exercises and supplementary teaching materials.
6. Students with learning disabilities.
7. The humanistic component.
8. Supplementary course topics (Greek alphabet, semantic change, etc.)
9. Teaching the oral component.
10. The grammar of compound words.