

SML/201 THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES: ASSESSED COURSEWORK 2005-2006

Course Organiser: Professor Chris Pountain

Write an essay on ANY ONE of the following questions. Your essay should be around 2,000 words in length. It must make proper reference to sources quoted or used, and must include a full bibliography of books and articles cited. See pages 19-22 and 30 of the School of Modern Languages Handbook for Undergraduate Students Session 2005-06 for full instruction on this matter.

Deadline: Tuesday 2 May 2006

Work should be placed in the postbox in the gallery area by 4.00pm on the day of the deadline, accompanied by the appropriate coursework coversheet.

*Extensions can only be granted by the Senior Tutor, Mrs Anna Pilkington, to whom application must be made **in advance** of the deadline.*

1. To what extent is it appropriate to claim that spoken Latin is the ancestor of the modern Romance languages?
2. How satisfactory is the distinction between 'popular' and 'learned' words in Romance?
3. Do the changes which took place in the stressed vowel systems of Romance seem to tend more towards simplification or complication of the various Romance languages?
4. 'In the development of the Romance languages we see cyclic developments from synthetic to analytic structures and back again.' Discuss.
5. 'The claim that declarative sentences in the Romance languages evolved from a Latin basic word order of Subject-Object-Verb to a new basic word order of Subject-Verb-Object is an inaccurate over-simplification of complex data.' Discuss.
6. 'Before claiming that the Romance languages have a "simpler" structure than Latin, we must first be able to define the notion of "simple".' Discuss.
7. 'There is no satisfactory criterion for creating sub-Romance groupings of languages.' Discuss.
8. 'The substratist hypothesis can claim validity only when all other attempts at an explanation of change have failed.' Discuss.
9. 'The Romance languages have diversified primarily as a result of contact with neighbouring language communities.' Discuss.
10. What evidence is there that the modern Romance languages are tending towards convergence?