

Stat 5101 Notes: Greek Letters

Charles J. Geyer

February 25, 2019

Table 1: Table of Greek Letters (Continued on following page.)

name	capital letter	small letter	pronunciation	sound
alpha	A	α	AL-fah	short a
beta	B	β	BAY-tah	b
gamma	Γ	γ	GAM-ah	g
delta	Δ	δ	DEL-tah	d
epsilon	E	ϵ or ε	EP-si-lon	e
zeta	Z	ζ	ZAY-tah	z
eta	H	η	AY-tah	long a
theta	Θ	θ or ϑ	THAY-tah	soft th (as in thin)
iota	I	ι	EYE-oh-tah	i
kappa	K	κ	KAP-ah	k
lambda	Λ	λ	LAM-dah	l
mu	M	μ	MYOO	m
nu	N	ν	NOO	n
xi	Ξ	ξ	KSEE	x (as in box)
omicron	O	o	OH-mi-kron	o
pi	Π	π	PIE	p
rho	R	ρ	RHOH	rh ¹
sigma	Σ	σ	SIG-mah	s
tau	T	τ	TAOW	t
upsilon	Υ	υ	UP-si-lon	u

¹The sound of the Greek letter ρ is not used in English. English words, like *rhetoric* and *rhinoceros* that are descended from Greek words beginning with ρ have English pro-

Table 2: Table of Greek Letters (Continued.)

name	capital letter	small letter	pronunciation	sound
phi	Φ	ϕ or φ	FIE	f
chi	X	χ	KIE	guttural ch ²
psi	Ψ	ψ	PSY	ps (as in stops) ³
omega	Ω	ω	oh-MEG-ah	o

nunciations beginning with an “r” sound rather than “rh” (though the spelling reminds us of the Greek origin).

²The sound of the Greek letter χ is not used in English. It is heard in the German *Buch* or Scottish *loch*. English words, like *chemistry* and *chorus* that are descended from Greek words beginning with χ have English pronunciations beginning with a “k” sound rather than “guttural ch” (though the spelling reminds us of the Greek origin).

³English words, like *pseudonym* and *psychology* that are descended from Greek words beginning with ψ have English pronunciations beginning with an “s” sound rather than “ps” (though the spelling reminds us of the Greek origin).