

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**FACULTY OF
MEDIEVAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES**



Information for the PRELIMINARY COURSE in

**French
2015/2016**

SUB-FACULTY TEACHING STAFF

The Sub-Faculty of French is part of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, and at present includes, among others, the following members who teach French at Faculty level:

Dr M. Abecassis (Language Centre)
Prof. D. Burrows (St Peter's)
Prof. R. Cooper (Brasenose)
Dr A. Counter (New College)
Prof. N. Cronk (Voltaire Foundation)
Prof. R. Due (Magdalen)
Prof. T. Farrant (Pembroke)
Prof. T. Garfitt (Magdalen)
Dr J. Goodman (St Catherine's)
Dr M. Hawcroft (Keble)
Prof. J. Hiddleston (Exeter)
Dr M. Holland (St Hugh's)
Prof. C. Howells (Wadham)
Prof. S. Kemp (Somerville)
Prof. N. Kenny (All Souls)
Prof. M-C. Killeen (Lady Margaret Hall)
Prof. N. Lübecker (St John's)
Dr K. Lunn-Rockliffe (Hertford)
Prof. I. Maclachlan (Merton)
Prof. I. Maclean (All Souls)
Prof. M. Maiden (Trinity)
Prof. J. Mallinson (Trinity)
Prof. S. Marnette (Balliol)
Prof. P. McGuinness (St Anne's)
Prof. E. Nye (Lincoln)
Prof. R. Pearson (Queen's)
Prof. R. Scholar (Oriel)
Prof. C. Seth (All Souls)
Prof. J.C. Smith (St Catherine's)
Prof. H. Swift (St Hilda's)
Dr R. Temple (New College)
Prof. K. Tunstall (Worcester)
Prof. C. Warman (Jesus)
Prof. I. Watson (Christ Church)
Prof. W. Williams (St Edmund Hall)
Prof. J. Yee (Christ Church)

THE PRELIM COURSE

The first year of the French course is designed to effect a transition from the kind of work you have done at school and the kind of work you will move on to when you start preparing for the Honour School in your second year. Your written language skills will be consolidated and improved, and you will be introduced to some techniques of literary study. The examination is taken at, or just after, the end of Trinity Term and consists of four papers.

LANGUAGE

Paper I French Grammar, Translation into French and Summary (3 hours)

1. Grammar Test

20 short sentences to translate into French, testing common, not exceptional, points of French grammar such as those explained in R. Hawkins and R. Towell, *French Grammar and Usage*, 2nd edn., 2001.

2. Translation into French

A passage of about 180 words from a post-1945 creative or discursive text testing accuracy in negotiating common grammatical and syntactic structures rather than abstruse vocabulary, but also requiring imagination and flexibility in dealing with some words and phrases.

3. Summary

A passage of 500-700 words of French from a work of reflective, analytical or critical writing. To be summarised in French, using 180-200 words and bringing out clearly the writer's argument. Candidates must not simply reproduce the expression of the original passage.

Paper IIA and IIB

IIA Unprepared translation into English (1 ½ hours)

A passage of about 250 words of French, taken from a post-1900 creative or discursive text testing accuracy in negotiating common grammatical and syntactic structures and some appropriately challenging vocabulary, but also requiring imagination and fluency in English expression.

IIB Prepared translation into English from Prescribed Texts (1 ½ hours)

A passage of about 300 words from one of the three novels set for Paper IV, i.e., excluding the medieval text.

Oral

In order to pass the Preliminary Examination in French, candidates must present a certificate of attendance and active participation in oral classes. Candidates must attend and actively participate in no fewer than eight oral classes of at least one hour before the end of the fourth week of the Trinity Term of their first year. The classes will consist of reading aloud in French with attention to proper pronunciation and intonation, and discussion in French of passages dealing with issues in contemporary French culture. Candidates are required to submit, via the Senior Tutor of their college or society, to the Clerk of the Examination Schools, High Street, a certificate endorsed by the Senior Tutor, and their French tutor (the latter acting on behalf of the sub-faculty of French) stating that they have attended, and participated in, the required number of classes. Candidates who fail to satisfy this

requirement for the June examination shall have their mark for each of the two written papers in French language reduced by ten per cent. Candidates for the September examination in French language who have not previously in that academic year satisfied the attendance requirement will be examined viva voce to demonstrate their competence in spoken French. Certification is required by noon on the Friday of 5th week of Trinity Term.

Language Teaching

French language teaching is provided mostly by your college, but at some stage in the year the French Language Instructor typically organises a series of classes open to students from any college, if they feel that their French grammar needs further attention. Classes in college will give you practice in all aspects of the work on which you will be examined, and will provide you with the opportunity to fulfil the oral requirement. Tutors will offer advice about the use of dictionaries and grammars.

Language Centre Teaching

The French Instructor, who works for both the Modern Languages Faculty and the Language Centre, organizes centralized grammar classes at the Language Centre which are open to all students who feel they need extra help on top of their college classes. (Similar additional grammar classes are offered by graduate teaching assistants, usually at the Taylorian.) Further classes cover essay-writing, and oral/aural skills. The French Instructor offers advice throughout the year to newly-appointed lecteurs and lectrices, helps college language tutors to network effectively, organizes and conducts intensive language-learning weekends for specialists and non-specialists, and plays an important part in reviewing and developing the syllabus for language teaching.

LITERATURE

Many students begin the course without having had the opportunity to undertake much formal study of French literature. Both literature papers require you to undertake a close reading in the original French of a range of literary texts selected from different periods and different genres so that you will gradually build up your reading speed and learn how to write critical commentaries and essays. This will provide a sure grounding for the literary study you will do from the second year onwards.

Paper III Short Texts

This paper will introduce you to the techniques of close reading through the study of six short works arranged in three complementary pairs:

- (i) Montaigne, 'Des Cannibales' from *Essais I*
Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*
- (ii) Baudelaire, a selection of poems from the section 'Spleen et Idéal' of *Les Fleurs du Mal* [see below]
Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*
- (iii) Racine, *Phèdre*
Beckett, *En attendant Godot*

This paper is examined only by critical commentary. One passage is set from each of the texts and you have to write on one passage from each of the three pairs of texts. You will certainly need to show that you know the texts well by establishing the context of the passages, but the skill is to show that you can comment pertinently and in detail on the words

and ideas in front of you. When commenting on texts written in verse, you are required to show an awareness of the author's use of versification.

List of prescribed poems by Baudelaire

| | |
|----|---|
| | Au lecteur |
| 3 | Elévation |
| 7 | La Muse malade |
| 10 | L'Ennemi |
| 19 | La Géante |
| 21 | Hymne à la beauté |
| 23 | La Chevelure |
| 25 | 'Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle' |
| 28 | Le Serpent qui danse |
| 29 | Une Charogne |
| 31 | Le Vampire |
| 36 | Le Balcon |
| 40 | Semper eadem |
| 44 | Réversibilité |
| 48 | Le Flacon |
| 49 | Le Poison |
| 50 | Ciel brouillé |
| 53 | L'Invitation au voyage |
| 62 | Moesta et errabunda |
| 66 | Les Chats |
| 69 | La Musique |
| 74 | La Cloche fêlée |
| 75 | Spleen ('Pluviôse, irrité contre la ville entière') |
| 76 | Spleen ('J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans') |
| 77 | Spleen ('Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux') |
| 78 | Spleen ('Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle') |
| 81 | Alchimie de la douleur |
| 83 | L'Héautontimorouménos |
| 84 | L'Irrémédiable |
| 85 | L'Horloge |

Paper IV French Narrative Fiction

This paper introduces you to four narrative texts written between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century:

La Chastelaine de Vergy

Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*

Sand, *Indiana*

Proust, *Combray*

This paper will be examined only by essay. There is a choice of two essay questions on each text, and you are required to answer three questions, each on a different text. You will need to show that you can construct a clear, relevant, and interestingly written argument, supported at every stage by detailed knowledge of the text. If your argument can be enhanced or sharpened by making comparisons between texts, you are positively encouraged to do so, though you are not penalised for not doing so.

Lectures are provided in Michaelmas Term on the six short texts, setting them in context and showing how passages from them might be commented on in detail. There are also lectures introducing you to the techniques of versification. In subsequent terms there are lectures on the novels. Throughout the year you will be required to read and write about the prescribed texts for your tutor in college who will discuss your work with you in a series of tutorials or seminars. Lecturers will offer bibliographical advice, as will your tutors.

FRENCH SOLE PRELIM

Paper XI Introduction to French Film Studies

This paper will introduce you to four twentieth- and twenty-first century film directors. In your essay writing you will be able to engage with their ideas and with their particular way of realising them. The prescribed films are:

Henri-Georges Clouzot: *Le Corbeau* (1942)
Jean-Luc Godard: *Vivre sa vie* (1962)
Bertrand Blier: *Les Valseuses* (1974)
Agnès Varda: *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000)

The teaching for this paper takes place in Michaelmas Term weeks 1-8 in a combination of lectures and seminars. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay on three of the films and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. The three-hour examination in Trinity Term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different film. There will be a choice of two questions on each film.

Paper XII Introduction to French Literary Theory

This paper will introduce you to four twentieth-century literary critics. In your essay writing you will be able to engage with their ideas about literature and with their particular way of expressing them. You will be encouraged to apply these ideas to your own reading of texts.

The prescribed authors are:

Valéry, 'Questions de poésie' and 'Poésie et pensée abstraite', in *Théorie poétique et esthétique*, part of *Variété: Œuvres*, vol. I (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) (Gallimard)
[both essays are available electronically on WebLearn]
Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Folio) [Sections I and II only]
Barthes, *Critique et vérité* (Seuil)
Todorov, 'La notion de littérature', 'L'origine des genres', 'Les deux principes du récit', 'Introduction au vraisemblable' in *La Notion de littérature et autres essais* (Seuil)

The teaching for this paper takes place in Hilary Term weeks 5-8 and Trinity Term weeks 1-4 in a combination of lectures and seminars. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay on three of the authors, and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. The three-hour examination in Trinity Term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different author. There will be a choice of two essay questions on each author.

Paper XIII Key Texts in French Thought

This paper will introduce you to four thinkers from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. In both essay and commentary writing you will be able to engage with their ideas and with

their particular way of expressing them. The prescribed texts are:
Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, edited by Laurence Renault (Garnier-Flammarion)
Rousseau, *Discours sur l'inégalité* (Folio)
Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (PUF) [Chapters I and II only].
Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Folio), I, 'Introduction'; 'Mythes'; II, 'La femme mariée'; 'La mère'.

The teaching for this paper takes place in Michaelmas Term weeks 5-8 and Hilary Term weeks 1-4 in a combination of lectures and seminars. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay or commentary on three of the authors, and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. Written work should include at least one essay and at least one commentary. The three-hour examination in Trinity Term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different text, one a commentary, the other two essays. There will be a choice of one commentary passage from each text and one essay question on each text.

The University has three offices, the two Proctors and the Assessor, held by members of the colleges in rotation for one year at a time, who have a University-wide role of ombudsman. The Proctors have particular responsibility for University student discipline and formal complaints, while the Assessor is concerned with student welfare and support. You should refer to the *Proctors' and Assessor's Memorandum*, available from the University Offices or your college, for information about such matters (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/info/pam/>).

The University's Complaints and Appeals procedures are available [here](#).