UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

FACULTY OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES

Information for the Preliminary Course in

SPANISH

2019/20
This handbook gives subject-specific information for your Prelim course in Spanish. For general information about your studies and the faculty, please consult the Faculty’s Undergraduate Course Handbook (https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/humdiv.modlang)

SUB-FACULTY TEACHING STAFF

The Spanish Department, known in Oxford as the Sub-Faculty of Spanish, is part of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, and is currently made up of the following:

Dr V. Acedo-Matellán (Oriel)
Ms L. Acosta-Ortega, Lectora in Spanish (47 Wellington Square)
Dr R. Bercero, Instructor in Spanish (Language Centre)
Dr D. Berruezo-Sánchez, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow (Balliol)
Dr M. Blanco (Trinity and Worcester)
Prof. B. Bollig (St Catherine’s and St John’s)
Dr E. Bolorinos Allard (Magdalen)
Dr A. Brooke (Merton)
Mr D. Cabeza Campillo, Lector in Spanish (47 Wellington Square)
Dr I. Choi (Exeter and Keble)
Ms A. Cid, Lectora in Galician (Queen’s)
Prof. J. C. Conde (Magdalen and St Edmund Hall)
Ms A. Crosta, Lectora in Spanish
Prof. X. de Ros (LMH and Somerville)
Dr M. Donapetry, Research Fellow
Dr J. Edwards (Queen’s)
Prof. G. Hazbun (St Anne’s)
Prof. D. Hook, Faculty Research Fellow (41 Wellington Square)
Prof. J. Lawrance, Faculty Research Fellow
Dr L. Lonsdale (Queen’s)
Prof. M. Maiden (Trinity)
Dr D. P. Moran (Christ Church and Brasenose)
Prof. M. Morrás, Departmental Lecturer (Magdalen)
Dr J. Muñoz-Basols, Senior Instructor in Spanish (41 Wellington Square)
Dr O. Noble Wood (Hertford and St Peter’s)
Dr R. Norton, Lecturer in Spanish (Christ Church, New, Pembroke, and St Hilda’s)
Dr D. Omlor (Lincoln and Jesus)
Ms A. Paradís, Lector in Catalan (47 Wellington Square)
Prof. J. W. Thacker (Exeter)
Dr O. Vázquez-Medina (Wadham and St Hugh’s)
THE PRELIM COURSE

The Preliminary course, as its name suggests, is intended to provide preliminary training in the sort of linguistic and literary skills you will need later on in your studies at Oxford. It is intended to form a bridge between the work you have done for A-Level or equivalent and what you will be doing in the Final Honours Course. No matter what other subject you take in combination with Spanish (other than EMEL), the Prelims examination papers (also known as the First Public Examination or FPE), which you will study for your first three terms in Oxford, will consist of the following:

(a) Language

**Paper I:** Translation of a passage of modern English prose into Spanish, and a set of grammatical sentences in English to be translated into Spanish.

**Paper II:** Translation into English of two passages of modern Spanish prose of similar length but different registers.

These papers are designed to cover a range of language skills, each testing an aspect of your ability to understand and use modern Spanish. You will be taught Paper I in centrally organised Faculty classes for one hour each week. These classes will concentrate on consolidating your grammatical skills and on preparing you for the exam. These grammar classes will also be complemented by centrally organised oral classes. Paper II will be taught by your College Tutors.

**Oral:** In order to pass the Preliminary Examination, colleges must present, for each candidate, 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 may consist of reading aloud with attention to proper pronunciation and intonation, and/or discussion of passages dealing with issues in contemporary culture. The Senior Tutor of each candidate’s college is required to submit to the Undergraduate Studies Administrator, Modern Languages, Examinations Office, 41 Wellington Square a certificate endorsed by the Senior Tutor and a Modern Languages Tutor (the latter acting on behalf of the sub-faculty) stating that they have attended, and participated in, the required number of classes. Certification is required by noon on the Friday of 5th week of Trinity Term. Candidates who fail to satisfy this requirement for the June examination shall have their mark for each of the two written language papers reduced by ten marks. Candidates for a language paper or papers in the September examination who have not previously in that academic year satisfied the attendance requirement will be examined viva voce to demonstrate at least basic competence in the spoken language.

(b) Literature

The texts chosen for the literature papers will introduce you to the rich variety of literature written in Spanish (in terms of genre, period, and country of origin). In addition
to studying the texts for their intrinsic interest, knowledge of them will enable you to make more informed choices when you have to make a decision about which periods and authors you wish to study later in your course. The literature papers also enable you to become familiar with various possible ways of studying literary texts.

In the course of your first year there will be lectures on all the literary works studied for the Spanish Prelims.

**Paper III** consists of four major works selected for close study in relation to various possible approaches to literary texts:

(i) *El médico de su honra*, a seventeenth-century Spanish play written by one of the greatest authors of the Golden Age, Pedro Calderón de la Barca. One of the most important genres of this vibrant period for Spanish—as for contemporary English—literature was verse drama. Calderón’s powerful play of honour, suspicion, jealousy, and wife-murder will introduce you to the themes and conventions of the seventeenth-century Spanish theatre. Prescribed edition: Calderón de la Barca, *El médico de su honra* (ed. D. W. Cruickshank, Clásicos Castalia).

(ii) ‘Rinconete y Cortadillo’ is one of the short stories by Cervantes in his *Novelas ejemplares*. This will introduce you to the work of Spain’s most celebrated author. The story tells of the experiences of two teenage boys in the criminal underworld of early seventeenth-century Seville and is a work rich in comedy and irony as it exposes hypocrisies of both language and behaviour. Prescribed edition: Cervantes, ‘Rinconete y Cortadillo’, from vol. 1 of *Novelas ejemplares*, ed. H. Sieber, 2 vols. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989)

(iii) *Campos de Castilla*, a collection of poetry by one of Spain’s best-known poets of the earlier twentieth century, Antonio Machado. As well as being a fine collection of love and nature poetry, *Campos de Castilla* provides an introduction to some of the ideological and philosophical debates which took place at an important turning-point in Spanish history as Spain came to terms with the loss of its last colonies in the New World and Asia. Prescribed edition: Antonio Machado, *Campos de Castilla* (excluding ‘La tierra de Alvargonzález’, but including ‘Elogios’: in *Poesías completas*, Selecciones Austral).

(iv) *La fiesta del Chivo* is a controversial novel published in 2000 by one of the most important living Spanish American writers, Mario Vargas Llosa, who was born and brought up in Peru and who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2010. It is a carefully wrought fictional account of the dictatorship and assassination of Rafael Trujillo, who ruled the Dominican Republic for over thirty years. This gripping political thriller examines issues which are important for much Spanish American writing (e.g. the relation between Latin America and the USA, and between Church and State). It depicts not only how Trujillo’s brutal regime corrupted a country and its government, but also how dictatorship shapes the lives and attitudes of individuals.
In the examination for this Paper you will be asked to translate into English a short passage from one of the above texts, write a literary commentary on a passage selected from one of them, and also two essays on two separate texts (excluding the one on which the commentary was written).

**Paper IV** traces the history of the Spanish *romance*, or ballad, tradition from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. The examples prescribed are studied in relation to general trends in literature or thought or to historical background.

The examination will consist of three sections and candidates must answer one question from each section. Compulsory passages for commentary will not be set.

**Traditional romances**


**Golden Age**

Lope de Vega, *Lirica* (ed. J. M. Blecua, Clásicos Castalia), numbers 1–2, 6–10, 125, and 126.


**Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**


Antonio Machado, ‘La tierra de Alvargonzález’ (from *Poesías completas*, Seleccionas Austral).

FOR STUDENTS OF SPANISH SOLE

Paper XI: Introduction to Hispanic 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:

- *Cría Cuervos* (dir. Carlos Saura, 1976)
- *Camila* (dir. Maria Luisa Bemberg, 1984)

This paper aims to offer students basic skills in film analysis. It is taught in two parts:

1. A methodological one, consisting of four lectures devoted to four international films, presents the basic concepts of film analysis, such as montage, story, self-reference, and spectatorship. The international films taught in this part are used simply as illustrations for the lectures and are not treated as set texts for examination purposes. A representative selection might include the following films: *Potemkin* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925); *The 39 Steps* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1935); *Blow-Up* (dir. Michelangelo Antonioni, 1967); and *Beau Travail* (dir. Claire Denis, 1999);

2. A language-specific part devoted to the study of representative films from the Hispanic cinematic tradition. This part is taught in seminars, instead of lectures. Hailing as they do from different cultural and historical contexts, the films studied will offer students a good introduction to the diversity of cinematic industries across the Hispanic world. It will also allow students to scrutinize specific political and cultural contexts in the Spanish-speaking world ranging from revolutionary Cuba in the 1960s to Spain’s cultural transformation during the 1970s up to the twenty-first century. We will explore the varied narrative and formal techniques employed by each of these directors, the historical and political themes with which they engage, as well as the local and international reception of these films. Students will be encouraged to develop skills in scene analysis through discussions in the seminars. They will be expected to explore other literary and cinematic material to further contextualize each of the films under scrutiny.

The course will be examined through a three-hour paper in which students must answer questions on three of the four set films.

Paper XII: Introduction to Spanish Medieval Studies

This paper aims to introduce students to the study of Spanish medieval texts. It is taught in a combination of lectures and seminars (eight in total), focusing on cultural context, close reading and language support.

The set texts are: (i) Traditional Lyric: extracts consisting of selections from Frenk’s anthologies of early Iberian lyric; (ii) *Sendebar* (*Libro de los engaños*) (1253), a Spanish translation of short exemplary tales which originate in India and reached the Arab world via Persia; (iii) Jorge Manrique, *Coplas por la muerte de su padre* (between 1476 and 1479), a much celebrated poetic examination of death, fame, and the meaning of life via imagery of warfare and insight into the warrior caste; and (iv) Diego de San Pedro, *Cárcel de amor* (1492), a sentimental romance which reflects the idea of love prevalent in
fifteenth-century literature and culture as well as the elaborated and highly classicist style
much in vogue in late medieval courtly literature in Spain; an important precursor to
Celestina which was one of the first European best sellers, thanks to its Italian, English
and French translations.

Details of anthologized extracts and recommended editions

Lírica española de tipo popular ed. Margit Frenk (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001)
Parte I: all of the ‘Primeros testimonios’ (Jarchas, cantigas d’amigo y otras

Jorge Manrique, ‘Coplas a la muerte de su padre’, in Poesía, ed. María Morrás,
(Madrid: Castalia, 2003).

The exam consists of a three-hour paper in which each student has to write a
commentary (on a passage from Sendebar, Coplas, or Cárcel de Amor) and answer
three questions on three of the four set texts (the ones not selected for the commentary
question).

Paper XIII Introduction to Short Fiction in Spanish

This paper introduces students to a range of short fiction from Spain and Spanish
America, covering the period from the Golden Age to the present and including works
by a number of the most important practitioners of the genre. Introductory lectures will
encourage students both to consider works in their specific literary-historical context and
also to think more broadly about the aesthetics of short fiction across the ages. Seminars
will focus on the analysis of particular texts and are intended to help students develop
their close reading skills and sensitivity to matters of form, structure, narrative technique
and style in the specific context of the short story. The course will be examined via a
three-hour paper consisting of both commentaries and essays, a number of which will
be theoretical and/or comparative in nature. Candidates will be required to answer three
questions, including at least one commentary and one essay.

Details of anthologized extracts and recommended editions

Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce (Madrid: Castalia, 1987)

María de Zayas y Sotomayor, El prevenido engañado, in Novelas amorosas y

Benito Pérez Galdós, ‘La novela en el tranvía’, in Cuentos fantásticos, ed. Alan E. Smith
(Madrid: Cátedra, 2004)


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When drawing up this handbook we have tried to be as accurate and clear as possible. The texts prescribed for study for individual papers are now listed in this handbook.

The Examination Conventions, detailing the structure of each examination paper, including rubrics, are also available as a separate document at: [https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:humdiv:modlang:spanish:prelims](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:humdiv:modlang:spanish:prelims)

The revised edition of the University’s Examination Decrees and Regulations lists the examination papers and their permitted combination for your degree course. (For further details, refer to the handbook and the examining conventions.) See: [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2019-20/peinmodelang/studentview/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2019-20/peinmodelang/studentview/)

Courses and regulations are constantly under review, so always check also with your college tutor to confirm what is written here and in the Examination Conventions.

In addition, do not hesitate to ask for clarification about the course from any member of the Sub-Faculty who is lecturing to you or tutoring you; we will always do our best to help.

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