

## French Sub-Faculty Lecture List 'Blurbs' for HILARY TERM 2019

Please click the titles below for a brief description of the content of each of these lectures.

For lecture times please check the main online lecture list at:

<https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/modlang/general/lectures/index.html>

*Always ensure to check the latest online lecture list on WebLearn for any changes to lectures during term time. Changes are shown in red.*

- ❖ French Morphology and Syntax / Dr Thomas
- ❖ Language Variation & Change: Topics in French / Dr Temple
- ❖ History of French / Dr Wolfe
- ❖ La chanson de Roland (Paper IX (VI) / Prof Sophie Marnette
- ❖ Writing History in the Middle Ages, (Paper VI) / Prof Sophie Marnette
- ❖ Key Contexts for Reading Medieval French Literature (VI, IX, XII) / Dr Cooper
- ❖ French Renaissance Poetry, (VII, XII) / Prof. Worth
- ❖ Literature and the French Revolution, Prof. Nye
- ❖ Literature and conflict in the early modern period / Prof. W Williams, Dr E Claussen & Dr J Patterson
- ❖ French Dramatic Theory 1605-60 (Paper XII reading class) / Dr Hawcroft
- ❖ The Rêverie : Themes and Styles from the 18th to 19th Century / Dr Alessandra Aloisi
- ❖ Crises in Lyric and Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry (VIII) / Prof Whidden
- ❖ Proust (Paper XII, Paper VIII) / Prof. Yee
- ❖ Camus (Paper VIII, Paper XII Francophone Lit.) / Prof. Morisi
- ❖ Presentation Guidance for Submitted Work (XII, Extended Essay, MSt portfolios) / Prof. Yee
- ❖ Old French Reading Group / Prof. Burrows

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### **French Morphology and Syntax / Dr Thomas**

These lectures are aimed at undergraduates preparing French paper V, but they may also be of interest to those doing paper IV and to graduate students preparing options involving French. We will consider topics in French morphology & grammatical structure, including gender, number, and verb paradigms. The course will consist of both lecture and practical exercises.

### **Language Variation & Change: Topics in French / Dr Temple**

These lectures provide a broad view of Language Variation in French as applied to French. After examining some general principles and constructs of LVC, we'll explore studies of variation at different levels of the language and how they can inform not only our understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Modern French but also provide insights into linguistic structure. Mainly relevant to Paper V, but also tangentially to Paper IV (and to Paper XII Sociolinguistics and Paper XIII/A General Lx, since we'll be covering some general sociolinguistic theory).

### **History of French / Dr Wolfe**

These lectures will continue to outline and discuss major issues in the history of French, with a main focus on structural changes in phonology, morphology and syntax. They are essential for Paper IV students.

### **La chanson de Roland (Paper IX (VI) / Prof Sophie Marnette**

The Oxford version of the Chanson de Roland, whose unique text is found in the Bodleian Library, is a heroic tale of military prowess and moral anguish, whose poetry and searching profundity are perennially relevant. This lecture course will explore many aspects of the text including its origins, its oral style, its narrator's voice, its ideological values and its fascinating characters: Roland, Olivier, Charlemagne, Ganelon, the Saracens...

### **Writing History in the Middle Ages, (Paper VI) / Prof Sophie Marnette**

This lecture course will study several literary genres that purported to be "historical" (i.e. chansons de geste, prose romances, prose chronicles) and will analyze their differences, both in form and content. The course will also focus on specific medieval historians such as Clari, Villehardouin, Joinville, Froissart and Commynes. This lecture course is geared towards students taking paper VI (both Old French and Middle French periods).

### **Key Contexts for Reading Medieval French Literature (VI, IX, XII) / Dr Cooper**

Designed primarily with Paper VI in mind, it will also be of interest to those taking (or thinking of taking) Paper IX. Over the course of five lectures, we will explore some of the ways in which the cultural and historical landscape of the Middle Ages shaped the literary works that were being produced at the time. Some of these "key contexts" concern the environment within which the works were composed (such as the important historical events taking place and their impact on the wider culture), and others are to do with the ways contemporary audiences would have encountered and received them. Together, we will think about who would have read the texts you will be studying and how that reading would have

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taken place, and I will also introduce you to the captivating world of medieval visual culture. Our own experience of reading modern printed editions differs enormously from that of contemporary readers, and this series will give you the tools needed to understand those differences and why they matter, as well as help you to grasp the cultural and manuscript contexts of the works studied.

### **French Renaissance Poetry, (VII, XII) / Prof. Worth**

Four lectures examining some of the range of poetry written in Renaissance France (from Clément Marot to Agrippa D'Aubigné). The course is relevant for Paper VII and Paper XII. The lectures will not assume prior knowledge of any particular poet; they will range across court and popular poetry, and short and longer forms (sonnet to epic). The themes treated will include: the interplay between poetic theories and practice; imitation, inspiration and poetic identity; gender; poetry as a vehicle for political and religious polemic.

### **Literature and the French Revolution, Prof. Nye**

This series of lectures will discuss literature which is part of the Revolutionary atmosphere of the last two decades of the eighteenth century. There will be lectures on Beaumarchais, Sade, Mercier, and the poetry of the Chénier brothers.

### **Literature and conflict in the early modern period / Prof. W Williams, Dr E Claussen & Dr J Patterson**

Four lectures exploring how early modern literature framed various kinds of conflict (personal, psychological, political, physical warfare etc), and considering literature as a form of conflict itself: where texts create their own particular disagreements, and where words are wielded as weapons. The main focus will be the period 1500-1700: an age full of intellectual and religious fracturing, discord between the sexes, and literary querelles. We will cover well-known sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors such as Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre, Ronsard, Montaigne, Corneille, Pascal, Lafayette, Racine, as well as lesser-known material from the period.

### **French Dramatic Theory 1605-60 (Paper XII reading class) / Dr Hawcroft**

The class will take place in Keble College room 3516: Tuesdays 2-3.30 in weeks 1-4. The purpose is to introduce those taking the Paper XII special subject on Dramatic Theory and Practice to key aspects of dramatic theory: (1) Vraisemblance and Time; (2) Catharsis and Morality; (3) Place and Staging; (4) Violence and Bienséance. Passages for discussion will be distributed, but those interested may contact Dr Hawcroft beforehand ([michael.hawcroft@keble.ox.ac.uk](mailto:michael.hawcroft@keble.ox.ac.uk))

### **The Rêverie : Themes and Styles from the 18th to 19th Century / Dr Alessandra Aloisi**

This course is intended for 2nd-year undergraduates studying the 18th and 19th centuries for Paper VIII (Modern Literature, 1715 to the present). It introduces aspects of modern French literature and culture through the prism of rêverie, a recurring theme from Rousseau to Baudelaire. Specific meanings and functions of the rêverie (philosophical, political, narrative and stylistic) will be covered across different texts and authors, while considering the historical context, literary genres, and social positioning of each writer.

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### Lecture Schedule:

#### Lecture 1: The Rêverie and the Search for Self (Rousseau)

This lecture provides a general introduction to rêverie in the 18th and 19th centuries, After discussion the relationship and differences between reverie and rêve, distraction and daydreaming, along with the philosophical presuppositions and stylistic implications, Rousseau's *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782), will be discussed with special reference to Promenades I, II, V, VII. This lecture asks: what are the main aspects of the reverie according to Rousseau? What is its social and/or political function? We will also refer to *Les Confessions* (Livres IV, XII) to further examine the relation between reverie, movement and *déseuvrement*.

#### Lecture 2: The Rêverie of the Prisoner (Xavier de Maistre)

Xavier de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1795) will be discussed and compared to Rousseau's *Rêveries*. What are the main differences and similarities? Which are the other literary models that influence X. de Maistre (e.g. Sterne)?

#### Lecture 3: The Romantic Rêverie (Madame de Staël)

In *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807) the theme of the reverie is disseminated throughout the novel and contributes to the characterization of the female protagonist. The lecture asks: what are the main dissimilarities between Mme de Staël and the Rousseauian model? While in Rousseau the reverie is always pleasant and related to the present moment, in Mme de Staël it can have a melancholic connotation and be projected towards the past. Is there, in the novel, any difference between the male and the female reveries?

#### Lecture 4: The Rêverie and the Fictional Logic I (*Le Rouge et le Noir*)

What is the function of the reverie in a 'realist novel', as Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830)? In this novel, the reverie seems to suspend the fictional logic and has no role from the narration point of view. We will be addressing this question by paying special attention to Livre II, chapters I, XLII, XLIII, XLIV, XLV.

#### Lecture 5: The Rêverie and the Fictional Logique II (*La Chartreuse de Parme*)

As a continuation of Lecture 4, this lecture discusses the role of the reverie within the 'realist novel' by considering Stendhal's second major novel, *La Chartreuse de Parme* (1839). We will make special reference to Livre II, chapters XVIII, XIX. What are the main differences and similarities with respect to *Le Rouge et le Noir*? What is the role of women in the rêverie stendhalienne?

#### Lecture 6: The Discontinuous Rêverie (Balzac)

Balzac's short story *La bourse* (1832) starts with the description of a moment of reverie, suddenly interrupted by an accident from which the development of the story begins. What is the function of the rêverie in this short fiction? Is this just a strategy to introduce the reader in medias res, into the space and time of the action, or does the reverie have a more complex function? We will be addressing these questions while also considering other episodes of reverie described by Balzac, as in *La peau de chagrin* (1831).

#### Lecture 7: Rêverie and Transformation (George Sand)

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As we have already seen when discussing Mme de Staël, women can be not only the object of the reverie (as in Stendhal), but also the subject of the rêverie. We will examine another example of female rêverie by referring to George Sand's *Histoire de ma vie*, in which the reverie has the power to transfigure reality. We will pay special attention to: II partie (chapters XV-XVI), III partie (chapters VII, VIII), IV partie (chapters II, IV, VI, XV).

### Lecture 8: The Rêverie and the Prose Poem (Baudelaire)

When Baudelaire, after publishing *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), starts writing his petits poèmes en prose, he intends to introduce a new poetic genre able to express the rêveries of his 'tortueuse fantaisie', as well as to satisfy the intermittent attention of the distracted modern reader. The lecture asks: what are the issues at stake in this new literary genre? What is the relationship with the Rousseauian model?

### Crises in Lyric and Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry (VIII) / Prof Whidden

These lectures offer a glimpse into different aspects of the crisis of the lyric subject in French poetry of the long nineteenth century. Under pressures of accelerated industrialisation and booming readership, questions about poetry – what it was supposed to do, to whom it was addressed, and who had a right to speak – were no longer answered so easily. Fallen dominant presences gave way to vacuums that gave access to a number of new voices and new forms. The first will trace the advent of Romanticism and transition to Parnassian poetry (Lamartine, Desbordes-Valmore, Gautier, Banville, Leconte de Lisle). The next two will focus more on formal elements of versification: the breakdown of French verse and the advent of prose poetry and free verse (Bertrand, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine). The final one will consider poetic experimentation in form and voice that paved the way for the new century (Krysinska, Laforgue, Kahn, Mallarmé).

### Proust (Paper XII, Paper VIII) / Prof. Yee

These four lectures aim to give students a series of different angles from which to approach *À la recherche du temps perdu*. They are relevant to students who have read all of *À la recherche* for paper XII, but also to students who have read some of it, for paper VIII. They will include some close reading.

### Camus (Paper VIII, Paper XII Francophone Lit.) / Prof. Morisi

One of the major writers and thinkers of the 20th century, Albert Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957 in recognition of "his important literary production, which with clear-sighted earnestness illuminates the problems of the human conscience in our times." This lecture series sets out to consider his oeuvre as a whole beyond the best-seller *L'Étranger* and erroneous assumptions such as his classification as an existentialist. His relationship to the history and politics of his time, his conception of art, as well as the various genres and poetics he embraced will be examined through some of his early writings, plays, journalism, short stories, and novels. This sequence will be of use to the preparation of Paper VIII and Paper XII (Francophone Literature; Literature and Modern War). Two additional will complement it in Trinity Term.

1. Life, Works, Art: l'écrivain embarqué

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2. Love of Life and the Absurd: Early Works  
(L'Envers et l'endroit, L'Étranger, Noces)
3. Stories of Revolt?  
(La Peste and Les Justes; or, depending on students' preference, La Peste and La Chute)
4. Always Algeria ("Misère de la Kabylie," "L'Hôte" in L'Exil et le royaume)

### **Presentation Guidance for Submitted Work (XII, Extended Essay, MSt portfolios) / Prof. Yee**

This lecture aims to offer guidance to finalists preparing submitted work for Paper XII special subjects (methods B and C) and Extended essays. It may also be of use to some students taking the MSt in Modern Languages. The importance of correct scholarly presentation will be explained. The lecture will also explore the exciting details of how to set out your bibliography and footnotes, how you should refer to primary and secondary works, where to put that tricky full stop or colon, and when it is appropriate to use italics.

### **Old French Reading Group / Prof. Burrows**

The purpose of these meetings is to help graduate students (all levels) to improve their skills in reading early French through practical, 'hands-on' translation sessions involving a range of materials (requests for specific texts may be accommodated, subject to negotiation). Prior experience of early French is not a prerequisite, but those attending are expected to engage in prescribed preparatory work, including translation of source texts and consultation of grammar guides and dictionaries. Interested parties are asked to apprise Prof. Burrows ([daron.burrows@spc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:daron.burrows@spc.ox.ac.uk)) of their intention to attend before term begins, in order to facilitate practical arrangements.