French Sub-Faculty Lecture List ‘Blurbs’ for HILARY TERM 2020

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.

❖ History of French
❖ Guidance for Submitted Work
❖ French Phonetics and Phonology
❖ French Morphology
❖ Language Variation & Change, Topics in French
❖ Béroul’s Tristan
❖ Chastelaine de Vergy
❖ Old French Lyric (VI, XII: Medieval Subjectivities)
❖ Old French Fabliaux
❖ Early Modern French Satire
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❖ Rimbaud (VIII)
❖ Baudelaire and Modernity
❖ Zola and Naturalism
❖ Disease, Doctors, and Dying in the Long Nineteenth Century (VIII, XI)
❖ Writing Killing
❖ Camus
French Sub-Faculty Lecture List ‘Blurbs’ for HILARY TERM 2020

- Rupture and Reformulation: Twentieth-Century Experiments in Poetry and Prose (VIII)
- Old French Reading Group
- Researching and Writing a DPhil: Problems, Methods

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History of French / Prof. Wolfe
In this term, we will move on to consider certain aspects of the history of French in more detail, with a particular focus on grammar. We will work with texts throughout the course. Detailed advice on commentary writing and examination technique will be given in the last two lectures (5th week).

Guidance for Submitted Work / 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.

French Phonetics and Phonology / Jennelle Thomas
These lectures (continued from MT) 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. Conventional ways of analysing the sounds of French will be presented, considering both segments and prosody, and the distinction between phonetics and phonology will be explored. There will be a significant practical element. Each week will involve one hour-long formal lecture, then an hour’s training in listening to and transcribing spoken French.

French Morphology / Jennelle 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.

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
Béroul’s Tristan / Helen Swift
Béroul's version of the story of Tristan and Iseut is a key text in the early medieval romance genre, not least because of the way it raises questions about the structure and content of romance: there is a tale, but it is fragment; there are lovers, but are they in love? There's a court, but is it courtly? And what about the dwarf, the leper and the hermit? This *roman* has a strong flavour of irony and more than a whiff of *fabliau*. The lecture course will ask a number of questions, taking each main character (Tristan, Iseut, Mark) as a cue to address broader issues of theme and structure, as well as tackling major textual and contextual concerns: the treatment of love and the presentation of feudalism. The lectures are intended both for Paper IX, for which Tristan is a prescribed text, and for Paper VI, the medieval period paper, where the *Tristan* legend feeds into discussion of the genre of medieval romance.

The lecture course will be structured as follows:
Wk 1. Introduction: how to read Béroul?
Wk 2. Tristan I: in search of an identity
Wk 3. Iseut: naïve or knowing?
Wk 4. Marc: sempres est ci, senpres est la
Wk 5. It must be love? contextualizing *amor* in Béroul
No lecture in Week 6
Wk 7. Getting political: the feudal context

Chastelaine de Vergy / Dr Grange
These lectures offer an introduction to Old French language, with examples taken from the Chastelaine de Vergy as well as a discussion of the literary themes at work in the text.

Old French Lyric (VI, XII: Medieval Subjectivities) / Dr Grange
More than 2000 songs by some 250 ‘trouvères’ (including well-known figures like Chrétien de Troyes) have survived from the 12th and 13th centuries. As well as introducing you to the early lyric corpus, this series will present some of the major ways modern scholars have approached it, including formalist and feminist criticism and manuscript studies. Early lyric represents an important component of Paper VI in its own right, but this series will equip you with tools to approach many other genres of medieval literature, too.

Medieval French Translation Classes (III, VI, IX, XII) / Prof. Burrows
These classes are primarily intended for French Sole students preparing the pre-modern translation paper (Paper III), but any students taking other medieval French papers are most welcome to attend. The main focus will be on improving comprehension and accuracy through practical engagement with the difficulties (primarily grammatical and orthographical) that the texts raise, thus complementing Prof. Marnette’s podcasts on Reading Old French (available on Weblearn). The passages on which we shall be
Old French Fabliaux / Prof. Burrows
Sex, violence, transvestism, scatology, blasphemy… With their motley cast of wanton wives, castrated priests, defecating peasants, and autonomous genitalia, the Old French fabliaux, a large body of short verse narratives composed in Northern France between the late twelfth and the mid-fourteenth century, are of singular importance to the development of comic literature in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, exerting a clear influence on, amongst others, the Middle French nouvelles, the Middle High German Mären, the Italian novelle, and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. In this series of lectures, we shall explore the various techniques that the fabliaux employ to entertain and enthral their audiences, and thereby come to recognise the creativity and sophistication which underlie their wilful and blatant transgressions. Topics to be covered include generic definition, narrative structure, didacticism, subversive language, parody, satire, and the treatment of the body.

Early Modern French Satire / Dr Hawcroft
A four week course for those doing the Satire special subject but also relevant to those preparing papers VII and X.

Week 1: Theory
Week 2: Verse Satire (Boileau)
Week 3: Satire and Religious Polemic (Ronsard and d’Aubigné)
Week 4: Enlightenment Satire (Montesquieu)

Racine Commentaries / Prof. Ibbett
For those preparing either Paper VII or Paper X. Close reading in a seminar style atmosphere.
  1. Beginnings
  2. Monologues and tirades
  3. Dialogue
  4. Endings

Places and Spaces in the Seventeenth Century / Prof. Ibbett
For students preparing paper VII. This lecture course will give some cultural and historical context for canonical literary texts. We’ll consider how place and space was represented and explored in writing and the visual arts.
Lecture 1, The nation
Lecture 2, The court
Lecture 3, The town
Lecture 4, Private space
Transnational French / Garrod, Ibbett
This course of lectures will give a history of France in the world for students preparing paper VII (lecs 1-4) and VIII (lec 4). It is vital for students in Paper XII options on race or travel.

1. Races and Wonders: Rabelais and the Medico-Legal Tradition, 16thc/ Garrod
What did ‘race’ mean, in the Renaissance, and how did the term migrate from medical and legal discourses to geographical and natural-historical ones? Using the works of François Rabelais (especially Gargantua and the Quart Livre) as our pretexts, we will plot this trajectory and its poetics as a response to wonder—a state of mind, and the perceived object that prompts it—in the age of philological and geographical discoveries.

2. The Early Anthropology of Race: The Travel Narrative from Thevet to Bernier
Race as a pseudo-scientific, anthropological categorization and assessment of human types on the basis of hereditary physical characteristics is articulated fully in the travel narratives of François Bernier, heterodox free thinker and materialist philosopher. This lecture will trace its genealogy back to travel narratives but also Jesuit missionary accounts in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Early modern discourses of races are tied to the emergence of the discipline of anthropology, and revelatory of its ideological purposes.

3. The French in North America, 17thc/Ibbett
What was New France? What was the place of Indigenous peoples within French-American projects of the 17thc? And how did the French imagine their American enterprises in relation to those of other European nations? We’ll look at writing by missionaries, fur trappers, and travellers, and consider the place of this writing within a colonial history.

4. The French in the Americas, 17th-18thc/Ibbett
This lecture will give a historical overview of French projects along the Mississippi and early Louisiana, and in the 18thc Caribbean. How did the French organise their settlements? How can we understand that French project as part of a global history of commodity and enslavement? How does that background help us read writing from this period?

Molière / Jessica Goodman
These lectures are particularly suitable for students studying Molière as a special author for Paper X, but they will also be useful for those studying seventeenth-century theatrical topics for Paper VII. The sessions will cover:

1. Background and context
2. Correction and Controversy
3. Laughter and Performance
4. Truth and Pleasure

Eighteenth-Century Theatre in Context / Jessica Goodman
A night out at the theatre in the eighteenth century was nothing like the experience we recognise today. Understanding the context in which the plays we study were written and
performed is absolutely vital. This course, aimed primarily at students studying eighteenth-century theatre in Paper VIII, and Diderot and Voltaire in Paper X, will explore the world beyond the theatrical text. From the actors and authors who were modernising their craft, to the dukes and kings who tried to control them, via the fighting, dancing and flirting of the theatre audience, this whistle-stop tour of eighteenth-century theatrical Paris will provide a lively backdrop and important supplement to your reading of plays and dramatic theory.

1. Institutions
2. Audiences
3. Actors
4. Authors

**Literature and Revolution / Prof. Nye**
Intended for students studying the eighteenth century for Paper VII or VIII. What reflections are there of the 1789 Revolution in contemporary literature and theatre? Are these reflections thematic or formal? Should we regard their authors as ‘revolutionaries’? To what extent do we make unwarranted assumptions when we talk of ‘pre-revolutionary’ literature? There will be lectures on Mercier, Chénier, Sade, and Beaumarchais (in that order).

**Preromanticism / Prof. Nye**
Intended for students studying the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for Paper VII or VIII. What signs of change in literary and theatrical practice and sensibilities are there at the end of the eighteenth-century? How do they relate to Romanticism in the nineteenth century? How do they relate to Classicism earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? When can preromanticism be considered post-classicism? There will be lectures on Rousseau, Cazotte and on melodrama.

**Lafayette / Prof. Ibbett**
For those preparing either Paper VII or Paper X. Lecture 1, prose fiction and the *Princesse de Montpensier*; lectures 2 and 3, *Princesse de Clèves*; lecture 4, *Henriette d’Angleterre*.

**Stendhal / Dr Lunn-Rockliffe**
Weeks 1-4: These lectures offer a survey of the main issues in Stendhal’s works, including history, Realism, and the importance of the self-conscious narrator. Particular emphasis will be given to the key novels *Le Rouge et Le Noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme*, but these will be situated in relation to Stendhal’s other writings.

**Rimbaud (VIII) / Prof. Whidden**
By the age of twenty-one, Arthur Rimbaud had already written some of the most enduring poems in French, including the first two poems in free verse. During the course
of his explosive itinerary, he dismantled verse poetry piece-by-piece, undermining rhyme and metre; picked up where Baudelaire’s synaesthesia had left off and pushed the senses to their limits; and tore apart lyric voice and perspective. By retracing this remarkable journey, these lectures will retrace the history of poetic voice and form during the second half of the nineteenth century and consider questions fundamental to the nature of poetry.

Lectures:
1. Le Parnasse and verse
2. 1871-1872 / the Commune, les lettres dites ‘du Voyant’, and Derniers vers
3. Prose in Une saison en enfer and Illuminations
4. Free verse and beyond

**Prose poetry, miracle of modernity? (VIII) / Prof Whidden**

This lecture series considers how we read prose poetry, and how a poet can produce and manipulate certain effects that enable a text to be perceived in a certain way. The first lecture examines the distinctions between verse and prose, how sights and sounds contribute to those differences, and how some French poets of the nineteenth century attempted to bridge the gap between poetry and prose. After some examples that help illustrate some of the tensions fundamental to all poetry, in subsequent lectures we will consider visual elements of prose poetry, in both formal qualities and how visual aspects are portrayed and perceived in the time and space of poetic prose. Examples will be taken from a variety of writers, including Sand, Bertrand, Gagne, Baudelaire, Barbey d’Aurevilly, and Krysinska.

**Baudelaire and Modernity / Dr Lunn-Rockcliffe**

Weeks 5-8: The first in this course of four lectures will examine Baudelaire’s representations of modern life and his use of irony in Les Fleurs du Mal, focusing on ‘Les Tableaux parisiens’. The other three lectures will focus on Baudelaire’s innovative collection of prose poetry Le Spleen de Paris. They will consider the hybrid status of prose poetry as a genre and discuss the relationship between Baudelaire’s verse and prose, before going on to explore how the prose poems systematically create ambiguity.

**Zola and Naturalism / Prof. Yee**


**Disease, Doctors, and Dying in the Long Nineteenth Century (VIII, XI) / Dr Jones**

This lecture series introduces students to one of the most important themes in literary studies: the intersection between medicine and literature, a question to which the long nineteenth-century in France is particularly pertinent. Students will become familiar with
different approaches to understanding medicine and culture, most notably Foucauldian structuralism and the approaches commonly adopted by the medical humanities. It will cover a range of periods, literary movements, and authors, whilst adopting a broadly historicist approach to reading literature. Key themes are Mesmerism, gynaecology, hysteria, tuberculosis, and syphilis, through which students will develop a nuanced understanding of how nineteenth-century literature dialogues with medicine.

Writing Killing / Prof. Morisi
(Paper VIII, Paper XII Francophone Lit., PXII Histories of Violence, P XII French Poetry from Surrealism to the Present)

Be it in the form of crimes of passion, State practice, war, or political violence, killing pervades French and Francophone modern and contemporary history. Both qualitatively and quantitatively, it can be said to reach new, and sinister, heights, from the long nineteenth century up to today. Accordingly, murder in its various guises haunts the French and Francophone imaginary. From the iconic guillotine of the French Revolution, to the mass graves of the two World Wars and the particular case of the French Collaboration, to the wars of decolonization, and contemporary terrorisms, this sequence of lectures will consider examples of how major writers have represented and reflected on taking life away, at both the individual and the collective levels. How do their works conceive killing? What tools and forms do they use to evoke it? For what reasons do their writings engage with the murderous realities – or imaginaries - of their times? With what limits is their art confronted in portraying killing? [Taught in French]

Lecture 1. Introduction: siècles homicides (XIXe-XXIe) et représentations du meurtre
Lecture 2. L’État qui tue: littérature et peine de mort (Hugo)

Lecture 3. Poésie de la Résistance: tuer, être tué, faire communauté (Éluard, Aragon, Desnos)
Lecture 4. Figures du terrorisme (Camus)

Camus / Prof. Morisi
(Paper VIII, Paper XII Francophone Lit., Paper XII Histories of Violence)
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 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 novels, plays, journalism, and short stories. This sequence will be of use to the preparation of Paper VIII and Paper XII (Francophone Literature; Histories of Violence).
Lecture 1. Life, Works, Art: l'écrivain embarqué
Lecture 2. The Possibility of Revolt (La Peste)
Lecture 3. Man’s Fall (La Chute)
Lecture 4. Always Algeria ("Misère de la Kabylie" and "L'Hôte" in L'Exil et le royaume)

Rupture and Reformulation: Twentieth-Century Experiments in Poetry and Prose (VIII) / Dr McLaughlin
This lecture series examines a series of formally innovative twentieth-century writing techniques that challenge existing conceptions of subjective, social, and worldly experience. The lectures examine texts in poetry and prose by Apollinaire, Breton, Ponge, Jaccottet, Bancquart, and Bonnefoy. Each lecture is focused on a key twentieth-century movement: Modernism, Surrealism, Existentialism/Materialism, the everyday, women’s writing, and ecocriticism. This is a useful survey course for any student who is studying twentieth-century topics for Paper VIII or more specialist papers.

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) of their intention to attend before term begins, in order to facilitate practical arrangements.

Researching and Writing a DPhil: Problems, Methods / Prof. Kenny
Tea served from 4.45pm. All DPhil students are welcome to attend, at any stage of the year, whatever year they are in, and whether or not they attended in previous terms or years. We discuss a wide range of problems, techniques, and methods that tend to arise in the researching and the writing of the kinds of doctorates done within the Faculty (with the exception of linguistics, to which the workshop is less well geared). Apart from perhaps giving a very brief presentation during the year, students do no preparation: they just turn up.