



Modern Languages

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Photo: Edward Nye

BA (Hons) Modern Languages
BA (Hons) History and Modern Languages
BA (Hons) English and Modern Languages
BA (Hons) Classics and Modern Languages
BA (Hons) Philosophy and Modern Languages
BA (Hons) European and Middle Eastern Languages
BA (Hons) Modern Languages and Linguistics

French
German
Italian
Spanish
Portuguese
Russian
Czech
Greek
Celtic

Linguistics

Catalan
Galician
Polish
Yiddish

"It is vital for citizens of the world, which is increasingly what our students are, to be equipped to understand that world, its cultures, and its diversity. There can surely be no better training for this than the knowledge of other languages."

.....
Professor Andrew Hamilton,
Vice-Chancellor of the University
of Oxford

In the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (2008), two of Oxford's Modern Languages departments obtained the highest quality profile score in the country and one came second.

What courses in Modern Languages are available at Oxford?

There are three ways of studying European languages at Oxford:

A: you can focus on one language;

- ◆ If you study one language on its own you will take some compulsory Linguistics papers in your first year, except in French or German as described below.
- ◆ In French you take the usual language and literature papers, plus papers in French Film Studies, Literary Theory and Thought; in German you take the usual language and literature papers, plus papers in German Film Studies, Medieval Studies and Thought.

B: you can study two languages;

- ◆ If you study two languages at Oxford you take both up to the same level.

C: or you can do a Joint Degree combining one language and a different subject.

- ◆ There are six Joint Degrees available: these combine a European language with Classics; with English; with a Middle Eastern Language; with History; with Philosophy; and with Linguistics.

For more information on all these courses, see the *University Prospectus*; or you will find details on the web at <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/courses/>

Why study languages at Oxford?

- ◆ The course is intellectually challenging, exciting and enjoyable.
- ◆ Recent studies indicate that an increasing number of British employers realize the value of recruiting trained linguists, and Oxford Modern Languages graduates regularly go into interesting and well-paid jobs in such highly competitive areas as the City, international banking, the Law, management consultancy, big business, accountancy, international press agencies, the media, advertising, the Civil Service, Foreign Office and the performing arts. Employers value our graduates because they are competent in one or two languages, have acquired a range of

Doing languages at Oxford is probably the most fun degree you can do. You will never be bored. The amazing books I read made me understand much better why people act the way they act and why they think what they think. It allowed me to look at history and the present in complex ways.

Understanding literature and talking about it isn't easy. But the training you'll get will make you formulate your thoughts and force you to argue with someone who is not only intimidatingly intelligent but who is also probably the leading expert in the field. It sounds scary. But they will take you seriously and it will encourage you to think critically about everything you ever read. That skill will stay with you for life.

You will also end up fluent in whatever language you chose. And learning languages is absolutely essential. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* can never be as great in translation. But it is very practical, too. I currently work as a broadcast journalist at Russia Today TV in Moscow. Of course I use my Russian every day. But German, as well, I use on a regular basis. For example when the German Chancellor came to St Petersburg I was asked to simultaneously translate her speech live on air. Without the long hours of translation classes I could never have done it.

.....
Marina Zarubin. German and Russian

transferable skills, and have first-hand experience of other cultures.

- ◆ Many others go on to do postgraduate work in a wide range of subjects (Law, Literature, Accountancy, Theatre, International Relations etc.). Others become language and literature teachers in a variety of schools at home and abroad, university teachers, professional translators or interpreters.
- ◆ Modern Languages have been taught in Oxford since 1724, over which time the Faculty has built up two large libraries: the Taylor Institution Library and the Faculty Library. Both are situated in the city centre. The Taylor Library is the largest research library in Britain devoted to Modern Languages and is part of the Taylor Institution (founded in 1845), the building in which many of the Faculty's lectures and classes are held.



The Taylor Institution Library

- ◆ Oxford's Modern Languages tutors are scholars of international standing and you will come into constant contact with them through tutorials, classes, seminars and lectures.
- ◆ Because of the college and tutorial system, there is almost certainly more individual and small-group teaching in Oxford by full-time staff than in any other British university.
- ◆ Oxford offers a very wide range of language combinations, and most students study to a high level two of the following languages: French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Czech with Slovak, Greek, and Portuguese.
- ◆ Oxford Modern Languages students have access to the University's excellently equipped Language Centre.
- ◆ Oxford has funds to support applicants and students with a range of disabilities. Information is available at www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das

I have lived and worked in Brussels with an international lobbying and PR company for the last 5 years. There is no way I would be where I am without languages. The company would not dream of hiring anyone who couldn't speak a second language, and English is often taken for granted. I have interviewed several UK candidates for good positions with us, but in all cases despite being strongly interested in EU affairs and well-qualified, if they only spoke English we did not take them on.

Our working environment is extremely international, and in any gathering of three people no-one will be from the same country. Not surprisingly therefore, languages and cultural awareness become second nature. Outside work, social life is made ever more enriching on a day to day basis by the sheer diversity of cultures and languages. So-called cultural clashes, far from being a conversation-stopper, actually help stimulate discussion and lead to an increased mutual understanding – and ultimately lasting friendships.

.....
Robert Francis (French and German), Senior Account Manager, Grayling

What part does language work play at Oxford?

- ◆ Language is the keystone of the Oxford course. Language papers form about 50% of the Preliminary (First-year) and Final Examinations. The First-year language course is designed to improve your command of grammar and broaden your vocabulary. The Final Examination includes a range of oral and aural tests as well as written exercises.
- ◆ The course aims to teach spoken fluency in colloquial and more formal situations, the ability to write essays in the foreign language, and the ability to translate into and out of the foreign language with accuracy and sensitivity to a range of vocabulary, styles and registers. The increased use of e-mail and the World Wide Web means that proficiency in the written language is as important in the work-place as oral proficiency.
- ◆ The French and German Departments now offer optional Finals papers in advanced translation.
- ◆ The Language Centre possesses a collection of printed and digital materials that are specifically tailored to the needs of Modern Languages undergraduates. It also has a library of self-instructional courses in all major European languages and a large collection of reference works. It is equipped with satellite TV that receives broadcasts in eight languages, and with computer-assisted language learning facilities. Its library contains over 15,000 audio and visual resources, covering over 140 languages. For further information see: <http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk>.
- ◆ The Faculty employs native speakers of French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian as Language Instructors and/or Lectors who offer courses on grammar, essay-writing and oral/aural skills. Additionally, most colleges employ one or more native speakers as Lectors in French and German.
- ◆ Each year, the Faculty awards on a competitive basis up to 15 travelling scholarships. Further travel grants are offered by the Faculty and many colleges.



Studying in the Language Centre

Photo: Edward Nye

'I was particularly taken by the innovative nature of the oral examination, in which candidates were given a short period of time in which to select and prepare an unseen topic and then talk on it for 15 minutes. This was a very tough and demanding test of linguistic ability, but one to which the majority of candidates responded very competently, and a handful exceedingly impressively. It is a distinct improvement on the traditional Finals oral (often little more than a generalised chat), and could well serve as a model for other institutions.'

.....
External Examiner in German

Studying literature is how I learned about making art. When I make dance works what I go back to is all those wonderful books that I read while I was here at Oxford, which taught me about structure and story-telling, and image-making, and motif. When I think and talk about the kind of work that I want to make, I always think of those books that I read time, and time, and time again.

.....
Joanne Parkes, choreographer

But doesn't the Oxford course emphasize literature?

- ◆ Yes, on the grounds that the study of literature is enjoyable, personally and linguistically enriching, and intellectually challenging. It gives you an understanding of other cultures that cannot be acquired solely through learning the language, and it leads you into areas such as theatre studies, aesthetics, anthropology, art history, ethics, history, philosophy, politics, psychology, theology, gender issues, and popular culture. The *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (2000) suggests that such cultural understanding forms a valuable complement to linguistic proficiency in the work-place.
- ◆ Precisely because the study of literature can take you in so many, often surprising, directions, many students who have done little or no literature during their A-level course become enthusiastic about and committed to it once they encounter it at university. It certainly presents few difficulties for able linguists; you will have the opportunity to investigate some of the most interesting products of human imagination and thought, and will be given expert guidance by tutors.
- ◆ The Oxford course allows you either to study a broad chronological range of literature or to focus your studies on the medieval, the early-modern, or the modern period right up to the present day.
- ◆ The Oxford course also offers a wide range of options in non-literary subjects.

What are those options?

- ◆ **Linguistics.** This is the study of language in its own right. Language is probably human beings' most distinctive characteristic, since it arguably distinguishes us from animals and underlies almost all our achievements. Linguistics looks at how words are formed (morphology), how sentences are constructed (syntax), how we make and hear sounds (phonetics), and how these sounds behave in particular languages (phonology). Linguistics investigates how age, sex and social status affect language use (sociolinguistics); how children learn to speak (language acquisition); how languages change (historical linguistics); and how the same language can vary according to where it is spoken (dialectology). Linguistics examines how words and sentences mean what they mean – and how they sometimes don't mean what they seem to mean (semantics and pragmatics)! In short, Linguistics provides us with ways of understanding such diverse areas as the language of poetry, children and computers, the (in)efficiency of social communication, and the acquisition of our mother tongue or a foreign language.
- ◆ **Philology.** Oxford is uniquely equipped for the study of this branch of Linguistics which deals with the history of languages, the common ancestry of "families" of languages, the evidence for earlier stages of language history, and the principles of language change. Philology involves the study of the earlier stages of languages and throws unexpected light on their modern forms. For example, the reasons why so many European languages use both 'to have' and 'to be' as auxiliary verbs in compound tenses appear mysterious until you delve into their history. And if you take definite and indefinite articles for granted, then you will be surprised to learn that they did not exist in the early forms of most European languages. As you find the solutions to such historical puzzles, so you also discover much that helps you to achieve a fuller understanding of contemporary linguistic usage.

Europe past and present . . .



A 16th-century French manuscript in the Bodleian Library

- ◆ **Advanced Translation.** This final-year option in French and German invites you to think about the principles of translation. It also has a pronounced practical bent so that you will find yourself working on everything from theatre to marketing and subtitling to strip cartoons.
- ◆ **Film Studies (European Literature and Cinema).** This final-year option gives you the opportunity to explore some of the inter-relationships between the literature side of your course and cinema. The work of such directors as Sergei Eisenstein and Fritz Lang lays the foundation for later developments in European cinema which you may study via a number of topics. These include *auteur* theory, spectatorship, adaptations of literary texts, and the work of literary authors writing for the screen.

The study of modern languages helped me in many ways. It taught me how to analyse large amounts of information and synthesise them quickly – critical to any business venture. It also helped me manage a multilingual and multicultural company as lastminute.com expanded across Europe.

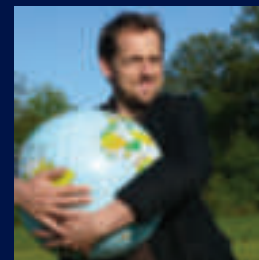
.....
Brent Hoberman, co-founder of lastminute.com

What is meant by “transferable skills”?

- ◆ The ability to assemble information, analyse questions, formulate an argument, and present it lucidly, concisely and interestingly, both orally and in writing.
- ◆ The ability to research a problem and retrieve information.
- ◆ The ability to perceive new problems and arrive at imaginative solutions.
- ◆ The ability to work in small groups and listen both critically and creatively to what other people have to say.
- ◆ The ability to organise your time well and work sensibly under pressure.
- ◆ Oxford’s tutorial system, which involves the regular production of closely-argued essays and personal contact with tutors, is particularly good at teaching students these skills.



Professor Umberto Eco lecturing in Oxford



A languages degree from Oxford gives you the skills, the outlook and the contacts you need to make a splash in the exciting world of international business. I've benefited tremendously from my time at Oxford – not only did my language skills improve immeasurably, but I also gained the ability to process information quickly and efficiently. Another benefit was the exposure to other people – all from different backgrounds, but with a shared calibre and drive to make a mark. After leaving Oxford, I set up Lingo24, a leading translation company, with friends I'd met at the university. The company's gone from strength to strength, and we now employ over 100 full-time staff in countries as diverse as New Zealand and Panama. I couldn't have achieved this without the grounding Oxford gave me. The transferable skills and contacts you make at Oxford will set you up for life.

.....
Christian Arno, co-founder of Lingo24

Photo: Rob Judges

It was impossible to read Racine, Pascal, Baudelaire, Unamuno and Lorca without feeling at home in their worlds. The result was a sense of belonging in foreign cultures that opened easy doors to fun and jobs – films in Rome, music in France, a radio station in Germany and eventually starting a serious career in journalism in Iran. It is scarcely decent any more to be monoglot. I am glad that the modern Oxford course gives proper coaching in oral skills. But it takes more than Berlitz to make the world feel like your oyster.

.....
Dame Liz Forgan, Chair of Arts Council England



Photo: Edward Nye

A tutorial

How is the course structured?

- ◆ Your *first year* is closely structured. If you study two of the languages from the upper list on the front cover, you will attend oral classes and courses on the grammatical structure of both languages, translation into and out of both languages and, in some of the languages, comprehension. You will also attend introductory lecture courses and participate in seminars and/or tutorials on literature. If you study only one of those languages, you will attend the same courses in that one language, with additional courses depending on your subject combination.
- ◆ After you have passed the Preliminary Examination at the end of your first year, your *second year* gives you much more freedom to choose your own areas of study. You will normally have a total of 1-2 tutorials per week. You would also normally have 2-3 hours of language classes per week in each of the languages being studied. You will also attend lecture courses offered by the Modern Languages Faculty and, indeed, by other Faculties.
- ◆ Your *third year* is normally the one you will spend abroad.
- ◆ During the first two terms of your *fourth year*, you continue the course that you began during your second year, and you take Finals in the second half of the third term.
- ◆ There are no second-year University examinations, but individual colleges and languages set informal examinations at the start of most terms to help prepare you for Finals.
- ◆ You may submit an extended essay based on your own research as part of Finals and some options allow for a certain amount of marked coursework in the Finals assessment.
- ◆ You can study Czech (with Slovak) with any of the other languages from the upper list on the front cover or as part of a Joint Degree course, but you cannot study Czech (with Slovak) on its own.
- ◆ Catalan, Galician, Polish, Provençal and Yiddish are not available as full Modern Languages degree subjects, but you can study them as optional papers at Finals and/or in certain subject combinations. After the preliminary examination, you can study Polish as one third of your degree course, in combination with one of the languages from the upper list on the front cover. The course is open to beginners as well as existing speakers of the language.



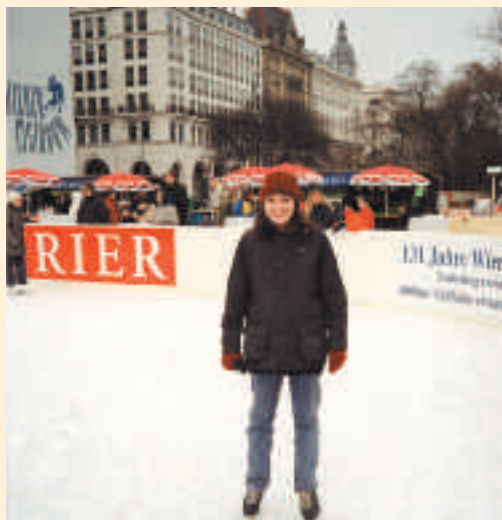
Playing football in Germany

What can you tell me about the year abroad?

- ◆ You can spend the year abroad in one of three ways: as a foreign language assistant in one country; as a university student in one or two countries; working in a paid or voluntary job in one or two foreign countries. Students studying Russian often spend part or all of the year abroad on Russian language courses that are run in Russian cities by a national organisation called Russian Language Undergraduate Studies.
- ◆ If you decide to be an assistant, your college will help you to apply for a post through the British Council. Language assistants receive a reasonable salary and (under certain circumstances) are eligible both for a waiver of the Oxford tuition fee and for a supplementary monthly grant from the European Union. Their host schools frequently help them find reasonably priced accommodation.
- ◆ If you wish to study abroad, your tutors will normally be able to give you help and advice since college tutors often have contacts with foreign universities. Oxford's German Department has an exchange scheme with the University of Bonn. The Italian Department has similar arrangements with the Universities of Siena and Pavia. The French Department has special arrangements with the Sorbonne and Sciences Politiques in Paris, and ENS in Lyon. The Greek Department has close links with the University of Thessaloniki.
- ◆ If you wish to work abroad, your tutors will often be able to give you help and advice.
- ◆ During your year abroad you will be expected to con-

solidate the work that you did during the second year; follow a course of study agreed beforehand with your tutors; keep in regular touch with your tutors; and prepare for your final year. If you wish to submit an extended essay as part of Finals, the year abroad is the ideal time in which to do the preparatory work.

- ◆ Oxford Modern Languages students have spent their year abroad at theatre school in Moscow, teaching in Brazil, and working for a medical charity in Ecuador; others have studied at universities in Paris, St Petersburg, Heidelberg and many other major European cities. This could be your opportunity to work for a NGO in Senegal, help your friends sell salmon along the Trans-Siberian railway, gain work experience with Reuters in Paris, contribute to a drug rehabilitation scheme in provincial Russia, improve your singing technique by taking singing lessons in Salzburg, travel to the French-speaking Caribbean, develop your expertise by working for an Italian art gallery, work with handicapped children in South America, take a one-year course in Political Science at the Sorbonne, get a placement with KPMG, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Goldman Sachs or JP Morgan in one of their major European offices; or write some poetry... Tutors and returning students will be able to give you advice and make suggestions, so that you can shape the year to suit your preferences and academic needs.



Skating in Vienna

"World-class excellence involves more than getting by in English. The globalisation of markets, the accelerating rate of international communications and the rapid flow of cross-border mergers and acquisitions are creating an environment where a highly skilled, mobile and internationally adept workforce is a priority - and the ability to communicate across cultures a key skill. The ability to operate in other languages and cultures should be part of the portfolio of skills possessed by all graduates. To meet their own and the country's needs, they will need to be effective communicators and citizens in a multilingual, multicultural world, regardless of the area of specialist study. For many, using languages will be a regular supporting feature of their work, in areas as varied as global finance, defence, diplomacy, public administration or voluntary associations. Learning to use another language is about more than the acquisition of a useful skill - it reflects attitudes, conveying respect for the identity and culture of others and tolerance of diversity."

The Nuffield Languages Enquiry, 2000. © The Nuffield Foundation

As last year, I was impressed by the standard of student work, particularly those at the higher end of the scale. I was particularly impressed by the joint students, whose management of two disciplines was excellent. I also wish to commend the thoroughness and fairness of the marking, and the obvious dedication to student development and well-being evinced by staff.

Examiner for the Joint Degree in English and Modern Languages

How hard is it to get into Oxford to study Modern Languages?

- ◆ In recent years, about one out of every three applicants has got a place at Oxford to read Modern Languages, and between one in four and one in six in the joint degree. See http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/undergraduate_admissions_statistics for up to date information.
- ◆ This ratio varies from college to college, but a sophisticated scheme is in operation which allows good candidates who have applied to over-subscribed colleges to be interviewed and accepted by other colleges.

What is expected of a potential student?

- ◆ A good command of the basic grammar of the language(s) you are studying at A-level or equivalent and intend to study to degree level, evidence of interest and motivation to study languages you hope to start from scratch (see below).
- ◆ A keen interest in language, literature, and culture.
- ◆ Even if you have done little or no literature at school, you are not necessarily at a disadvantage since your

"I had always wanted to apply to Oxford: the collegiate system appealed to me and the breadth and flexibility of the course, particularly the opportunity for the study of literature, was unmatched. My school was very supportive of my application although, in my opinion, the best preparation for interview is reading around your subject. I came to visit the college (Lady Margaret Hall) and found the open day very useful and a real chance to talk to students and get a feel for college life.

I was quite nervous about coming to interview at Oxford; however on arrival the atmosphere was pleasantly relaxed and lots of people were at hand to answer any questions. I was interviewed by both language tutors individually for about twenty minutes. The experience was a lot less formal than I had expected and included short passages to translate, discussion in the target language and an opportunity to talk about my particular interests and ask any questions.

Applicant

interviewers will be trying to discover whether you read naturally, independently and intelligently. This includes reading English literature and/or foreign literature in translation.

Can I start a language from scratch?

- ◆ Yes. A lot of people who study Czech, Greek, Italian and Portuguese are admitted as beginners. The first-year course provides the necessary language teaching to reinforce the student's linguistic competence and develop it to the level needed for the Preliminary Examination at the end of the year.
- ◆ Russian has a separate entry stream for beginners. Students pursue an intensive language course in their first year and spend the second year in Russia.
- ◆ In Czech, Greek, and Portuguese there are special classes designed for beginners right from the start of the Preliminary course.



Linguistics class on the resonance of vibrating tubes

Photo: Edward Nye



Photo: Edward Nye

Computer-assisted Language learning

- ◆ For further advice on these languages, please contact the Modern Languages Faculty Office, 41 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JF, or write to us at reception@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk, and your enquiry will be forwarded to the relevant tutor.

I chose Oxford because of the tutorial system. I also chose Oxford in order to be in an environment where everybody cares about the progress of their studies. The selection procedure is easy. If you've got good predictions for A-level and think you'd thrive in the environment, you just send off your UCAS form. You have to take one or two grammar tests, depending on how many languages you want to study and have already been doing at school. When you're called for interview it's a great experience. I was invited to come for interview and given a room to stay in for two days. I met some great people, who I kept in touch with and am still friendly with. The tutors and students in the College put you at your ease. In the two interviews I was given texts in the foreign languages to read and discuss. Then I went home, kept in touch with my new friends, and received a letter within two weeks offering me a place.

Applicant

What is the entrance procedure like?

- ◆ The University's *Undergraduate Prospectus* and booklet on *Interviews at Oxford* (available from the University Admissions Office, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD or at: <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk>) explain our entrance procedures clearly and in detail and you should begin by looking there. But the following points are of particular importance.
- ◆ You submit written work - often this will be one piece of marked work in the language(s) to be studied, and one piece of writing in English (perhaps on literature, or history, or some other subject you are studying).
- ◆ You will be asked to sit a 30-minute written test(s) in the language(s) you intend to study at Oxford that you are taking to A2 (or equivalent) level. Depending on your choice of course, you may be required to sit a language aptitude test, or a test for another subject if you are applying for a Joint Schools degree: for full details of all test requirements and specimen test papers, see <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/tests/languages>
- ◆ You will have one or more interviews, depending on the college to which you apply. Because different colleges have different practices, it is hard to generalise about interviews. But because we want to find out as much as possible about your intellectual interests and academic potential, you may be asked, for instance, about your reading, your interest in the culture of the relevant country, or the work you have submitted. You may also be given the opportunity to speak in the relevant foreign language(s) or asked questions about a short passage in English or the relevant foreign language(s). As far as possible, interviewers will try to let you show your strengths, interest in the subject(s) you intend to study, and reasons for applying to Oxford.
- ◆ If you apply for one of the Joint Degrees, you will be interviewed by tutors in both subject areas.
- ◆ For a variety of reasons, you may be interviewed by more than one college.
- ◆ Not all colleges accept students for all the languages listed on the front cover of this *Prospectus*. Details of these restrictions are given in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*.

I was apprehensive about applying to Oxford because it seemed very remote and unachievable to me. I was studying at a small, state sixth-form college outside Cambridge which did not send students to Oxford and Cambridge as a matter of course. There were several students in my year who were thinking about applying, however, and, as a group, we met with one of our teachers after school several times to discuss the application form, interview techniques, and what we might expect to encounter at Oxford or Cambridge. When I came up to Oxford for the interview I was terribly nervous, but I enjoyed the experience too. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate to Oxford tutors your ability and the skills you have been developing for years at school. The tutors at my college did their best to put candidates at their ease. I had 3 interviews, so we had, in effect, several chances to make a good impression. What surprised me most was how helpful tutors were during the interview. I was particularly worried about applying to do Russian because I was not studying for 'A' levels, but following an International Baccalaureate course. The standard of my Russian was not as high as that of 'A' level students, and I thought that this might count against me when I applied to Oxford. Because my situation was rather unusual, I wrote to tutors in Russian before I applied to ask what they thought my chances were of being accepted on the course. Several tutors wrote back and encouraged me to go ahead and apply, which gave me much more confidence when it came to the application process.

Final Year Student

UNIQ Summer School.
About 500 people from a range of subjects take part and all accommodation, teaching and travel costs are met by the Helsington Foundation.

Do you accept people who plan to take a gap year?

- ◆ Yes, but different colleges have different policies on this question and you should approach the Admissions Tutor of colleges you are interested in before filling in your UCAS form.
- ◆ It is quite common, but not obligatory, for candidates to defer for a year in order to get a new language up to the necessary standard.

How can I prepare myself for the entrance procedure?

- ◆ Thoroughly revise the basic grammar of the language(s) you intend to study post-A-level.
- ◆ Try to read some books in the foreign language or in English translation, and go and see films or plays by foreign authors.
- ◆ Think about what you have read or seen. Ask yourself, for example, what you liked or disliked about a book or film, and what you learned from them; why you prefer one book or author to another; whether the books you enjoy reading have anything in common.
- ◆ Come to our Faculty Open Days in May, our Information Day in September or to one of the Open Days that are organised for individual languages or by colleges. Please consult the *Undergraduate Prospectus*, or contact the University Admissions Office for more details (01865 270211), or check the web site (<http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk>). On these Open Days you will be able to meet tutors, talk to current students, and receive answers to any questions you may have.

The UNIQ Summer School

- ◆ If you are at a maintained school with little or no experience of sending people to Oxford, and if you want to get the feel of studying languages at Oxford, you can apply to take part in the Summer School which the University organises over a week in July. About 500 people from a range of subjects take part and all accommodation, teaching and travel costs are met by the Helsington Foundation. For more details contact the University Admissions Office.



Photo: Rob Judges

Students at the Oxford University Summer School

Joint Degree Courses

- ◆ The six Joint Degree courses listed on the front cover are a particularly attractive and challenging aspect of Oxford's Modern Languages programme. You can combine one modern language with Classics, English, a Middle Eastern Language, Modern History, Philosophy or Linguistics.
- ◆ You can either divide your time equally between the Modern Language and the other subject, or you can devote slightly more time to one of the two subjects.
- ◆ All six courses allow you to choose options which relate to and complement one another in a variety of ways.
- ◆ All six courses normally involve a year abroad.
- ◆ If you wish to study Classics and Modern Languages, two courses are available. The more usual one (option 1) is for people who have studied Latin or Greek, as well as a modern language, to a good standard at school and involves the study of both the modern and the classical language throughout the course. If you have not studied Latin or Greek at school and wish to start one of these languages from scratch, we offer an alternative course (option 2) in which only Classics is studied in the first five terms, and the entire course (including the year abroad) lasts five years.
- ◆ If you wish to study European and Middle Eastern Languages you will normally have an A-level in the European language, but you need have no previous knowledge of the Middle Eastern language (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish). During the first year, you concentrate intensively on the Middle Eastern language and keep the European language going by means of a regular amount of language work and a

The information in this Prospectus is correct at the time of printing. For fuller, updated information please consult the web Prospectus at: <http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk>



Winter in St Petersburg

reduced amount of literary study. The second year is spent abroad.

- ◆ More detailed information on the range of options available in each of the six Joint Degree courses is contained in the University's *Undergraduate Prospectus*, or at: <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/courses/>. This will also tell you which colleges do not accept students for some or any of these courses.

A student's year abroad in St Petersburg

"As the end of my second year drew near I became a bit apprehensive about the reality of living in Russia. Unlike France and Germany there is no established scheme for English teaching in schools in Russia. I therefore decided to spend the first three months on a language course at St Petersburg State University. Tuition and accommodation in a university hostel were arranged through a specialist organization for British students of Russian. The advantage of this was that it helped with the administrative nightmares of visas and red tape and also provided me with a group of friends from other universities, with whom I discovered the city and found my feet.

After three months I returned home for Christmas and decided to 'go it alone.' Before I left I set myself up with an evening job teaching students English at the university. I also found a family to live with through one of my teachers. After three months living in the hostel with many other foreign students, I immediately became aware of the advantages of living with a family. I spoke Russian all of the time and learned much more about the Russian way of life over endless cups of tea and by becoming involved with family celebrations. I had a wonderful time for five months working for the English-language newspaper "The St Petersburg Times" as an arts writer and also doing some translation work for "Pulse", a lifestyle magazine. I spent my spare time walking around the beautiful city, visiting the hundreds of museums, galleries and palaces, meeting up with my friends in the evening to go to the ballet or the opera or going out for a drink in one of the many bars and cafes. It is impossible to be bored in St Petersburg - there really is something for everyone but only if you are willing to seize opportunities and face challenges. Although the year is by no means an easy option or a holiday, it is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to live in another country. I feel I have broadened my knowledge of Russian not only from a language point of view but also in terms of my cultural understanding."



I read French and German from 2000 to 2004. 'Read' is the right word; my favourite description of what the Modern Languages degree at Oxford does is that it taught me how to read. How to read between the lines, how to read behind a text; it trains you to see through the words to the time, culture and personality that produced them. Understanding the relationship between these two opens up whole new depths whenever you read a text from then on. I now work for a start-up brand consultancy as a commercial semiotician, a job I had no idea existed until last year. We use semiotics – a literary theory technique I first encountered at Oxford – to analyse the stories that brands tell through the words and visual signs they use,

and how these meanings are affected by, and affect, the ever-changing cultures that surround them. I've worked on all kinds of brands, from telecoms companies and government agencies to cat food brands and online dating sites. Being able to speak three languages also means I get to travel and work internationally. Studying modern languages and literature at Oxford has helped me to read through the surface of the world and try to understand the many different worlds that lie beneath.

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Joel Du Bois (French and German)



One of the main things Oxford teaches you is intellectual self-confidence. The tutorial system enables you to expose and discuss your own ideas with a tutor who will challenge them, point you into new directions and suggest new points of view. Your ideas are taken seriously despite the fact that you are a student: you do not know much, but your intellectual capacity is acknowledged. This feeling of self-confidence has led me to carry on my studies in a different direction, by doing a Masters in Politics and Government in the European Union at LSE. The skills I acquired during my course in Oxford have been very useful even in a different field of study: the capacity of analysing texts and of simplifying complex processes and thoughts in

order to grasp their essence has been of great importance and help. What I most enjoyed in the course were definitely the texts we read, the close relationship to the tutors, my year abroad in Paris and a trip to Germany before Finals. Reading languages and literature had meant a lot to me on many different levels, not least because I am planning to do a DPhil in German literature. The flipside is: my student years have been so brilliant that I have no intention of quitting them just yet.

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Francesca Goll (French and German)



The thing I enjoyed most about my degree at Oxford were the one-on-one tutorials with my tutors. There's something humbling about them: it's hard to bluff through an hour with a senior academic pretending to have read a book that you haven't. Nine out of ten times you'll get found out. At the same time, it can be incredibly empowering. To share your thoughts on often difficult and daunting subject matter with an international expert in the field, and to realise that not all of your observations are laughable, on the contrary, that some of your obscurest comments can be original and enlightening – that kind of realisation can give you a huge confidence boost when you are 19 or 20.

Working as a journalist now, it happens that I frequently write about German literature, arts and current affairs – it's useful to have a niche that you know more about than others. But my degree would have provided me with useful training even if I had wanted to become, say, economics correspondent or TV critic. On a newspaper, you often have to familiarise yourself with a subject matter in a matter of hours – my degree at Oxford taught me what I am capable of if I try hard enough.

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Philip Oltermann (German and English), journalist at the Guardian