



PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR

BA IN EUROPEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES

This document describes the European and Middle Eastern Languages Joint School, in which students combine the study of One European and One Middle Eastern Language and their Literature.

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1. Awarding institution/body	University of Oxford
2. Teaching institution	Faculties of Oriental Studies and Modern Languages
3. Programme accredited by	n/a
4. Final award	BA (Hons)
5. Programme	European and Middle Eastern Languages
6. UCAS codes	RTX6 BA/EuMEL4
7. Relevant subject benchmark statement	Languages and related studies

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/languages07.asp>

8. Date of programme specification	November 2003 (last updated Nov. 2008)
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9. Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to enable its students to:

- Achieve a high level of competence in the spoken and/or written language(s) they are studying;
- Acquire a knowledge of one or more foreign culture(s), characterised by range, depth and conceptual sophistication;
- Develop the skill of independent thinking and writing, drawing on technical skills in cultural, historical, literary and linguistic investigation, and on a sensitive understanding of foreign cultures in the past and/or in the present;
- Engage and enhance their critical skills, imagination and creativity as an intrinsic part of an intense learning experience.

10. Programme outcomes

A. Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- Relevant linguistic skills;
- A broad range of cultural, historical, literary and linguistic topics related to the language(s) studied;

- How primary evidence is employed in historical, literary, linguistic and philological analysis and argument.

Related teaching/learning methods and strategies

- Students have a variety of language classes throughout their course, and most also spend time abroad to develop their written and (in appropriate cases) oral skills in the language(s) studied.

- Students may study broad topics related to the language(s) of their choice, and in some degrees there may also be a further range of courses to choose from that focus on more specific topics.

- The detailed study of linguistic structures, texts and other artefacts (as appropriate) is essential to the course. Literary works are read in their original language, as is some of the associated critical writing.

Assessment

Examination

Most aspects of the required knowledge and understanding are tested through written examinations held at the end of the first and final years of the programme.

Coursework

Within a range of Special Subjects studied, some options involve coursework. All students write an extended essay bridging their two subjects.

Oral Examination

In appropriate cases, oral language skills are tested in examinations in the first and final years of the course. Extensive preparation for the organisation and communication of such knowledge and understanding is provided in both weekly classes and practice examinations.

Tutorials and Classes

Understanding is particularly assessed on a continuous formative basis through the weekly tutorial or seminar and through language classes. Performance in tutorials and classes is assessed at the end of each 8-week term, and reports are checked by college tutors and discussed individually with the students concerned.

B. Skills and other attributes

Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:

I. Intellectual skills

The ability to:

- Exercise critical judgement and undertake sophisticated analysis;

- Argue persuasively, coherently and with relevance, both in writing and orally.

- Approach problems with creativity and imagination;
- Develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticise accepted opinion.
- To translate a wide variety of types of oral and written material (including literary and journalistic texts) from two unrelated languages into English and vice versa.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- There is emphasis throughout the programme on the skills relevant to the careful and critical assessment of primary material. The ability to gather, sift, synthesise and interpret secondary material is also recognised as making a particular contribution to the development of sophisticated analytical skills.
- Practical rhetorical skills are honed within the weekly (or bi-weekly) tutorial context, and in the classes associated with some elements of the course. Student essays and presentations must display the ability to identify issues, to formulate arguments that are susceptible to demonstration, and to marshal evidence and analysis in a logical and coherent way.
- Developing the creative thinking and encouraging the exercise of disciplined imagination of all students is integral to the course. These attributes are regarded as essential if students are to comprehend the values and expectations of present and past societies, and foreign cultures and languages.
- The study of a foreign culture develops an awareness of contrasts with our native culture. All our learning strategies are designed to inculcate independence of thought, most particularly the vigorous argument that we seek to encourage in our regular tutorials. Students are expected to acquire familiarity with different and sometimes conflicting approaches and interpretations, and to develop their own views through critical engagement with the work of others.

Assessment:

The formative assessment provided by regular tutorials, seminars and language classes is critical to the development and monitoring of the intellectual skills set out here. Students receive regular scrutiny of these skills through their presentation and defence of written essay material in front of an established academic and, usually, one or more of the student's peer group.

II. Practical skills

The ability to:

- Write well, both in English and in foreign languages, in a manner which can be adapted for a variety of audiences and contexts;
- Engage in oral discussion and argument with others, in a way that advances understanding of the problems at issue and the appropriate approaches and solutions to them;
- Ensure that a range of evidence and opinion can be brought to bear on a problem, and to develop research skills to this end;
- Employ advanced language skills in oral and written contexts.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- The continuous scrutiny of written work, whether produced for tutorials, seminars, language classes or examinations, aims to promote writing which is marked by well-structured and coherent argument, in a prose that is clear, appropriate and fluent.
- The weekly tutorials, classes and seminars provide ample opportunity to develop and refine high-level skills in oral presentation and discussion.
- Emphasis is placed on showing a familiarity with a variety of bibliographical resources and on demonstrating an ability to identify and retrieve primary sources and secondary literature in English and other languages.
- A range of language classes is provided throughout the undergraduate course. For appropriate languages, conversation, discourse and comprehension classes, often with native speakers, develop oral and aural skills in formal and informal contexts. Classes on the written language teach formal grammar and extend students' accuracy and knowledge of different registers through translation into and out of the language(s) studied, and through essay composition and other exercises.
- Particular emphasis is placed on training students to find appropriate equivalents, in terms of vocabulary and style, when translating texts in a variety of linguistic registers from one language to another.
- The wide range of lectures available to students provides extensive opportunities to encounter different subjects and types of material for selective assimilation within students' developing understanding.

Assessment

Formative assessment through the weekly tutorials, seminars and language classes enables a continuous monitoring of the development of practical skills. Termly reports from tutors and language teachers identify both points of excellence and of concern, while more formal assessment through termly college-based examinations ('collections') provides opportunities to monitor and provide feedback on skills associated with timed written examinations.

III. Transferable skills

The ability to:

- Find information, organise and deploy it;
- Draw on such information to consider and analyse complex problems, in ways that are imaginative and sensitive to the norms and traditions of other cultures;
- Work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others;
- Structure and communicate ideas effectively in a variety of written and oral formats;
- Plan and organise effectively;
- Employ language skills at an advanced level;

- Digest and analyse a variety of material in at least three languages (including English) and present in oral or written form, in any of these languages, a reasoned assessment and criticism of this material.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- Information retrieval from printed materials, together with the regular use of IT (library catalogues, etc.), is integral to all aspects of the course.

- The tutorial system is designed to promote independent research skills, while faculty- and college-based seminars for certain options encourage collaboration.

- Fostering the ability to present ideas effectively and to respond constructively to the ideas of others is integral to the nature and construction of the course.

- Students who are expected to produce several pieces of written work per week (tutorial essay plus language work) learn how to organise their time very efficiently.

Assessment

The transferable skills identified above are essential elements of this course. As such they become the focus of much of the regular comment provided by tutors and language teachers in their weekly contacts with students, and in the various modes of formal feedback provided to students throughout the course.

11. Programme Structures and Features

Learning Year 1

Subjects

Two languages are studied, one from Modern Languages (French, German, Italian, Russian and Slavonic, Spanish, Portuguese, Modern Greek, Linguistics and Celtic) and one Middle Eastern language (Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Hebrew). For both languages, intensive language training and introduction to culture are carried out.

Assessment

Preliminary exams

Three papers (European language) Two or three papers (Middle Eastern language)

1st year, term 3

2nd year

The second year of the course is spent abroad, usually in a Middle Eastern country appropriate to the Middle Eastern language of study.

Assessment on return to Oxford: Language collection in the Middle Eastern language.

3rd year and 4th year

Continued study of one Modern Language and one Middle Eastern Language, although more emphasis can be given to one of the languages, if preferred, with their associated literatures.

Assessment

Final Honours

9 written papers, and one essay of up to 10,000 words bridging the two subjects, to be written in students' own time.

Oral proficiency examination (both languages, but not Hebrew)

12. Support for Students and their learning

Library resources:

The Taylor Institution Library is the biggest research library in Britain devoted to modern languages. This library is open to undergraduates for reference purposes. The Modern Languages Faculty Library is a large lending library specifically designed to cater for undergraduate needs. All relevant college libraries also have holdings in modern languages.

On the Middle Eastern side students have access to a wide range of extensive library holdings. The Bodleian Library has a number of Oriental collections (including Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew), and the library of the Oriental Institute has extensive holdings on open shelves and borrowing facilities; there are relevant collections in some college libraries, particularly the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, and students also have access to the libraries of other faculties and to that of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.

The OLIS cataloguing system incorporates the holdings of all major university and faculty libraries and most college libraries. Multiple copies of essential titles are provided.

IT Resources:

The network of IT resources and support within Oxford is extensive, especially the Oxford University Computing Services which provides facilities for undergraduates and graduates, and an extensive range of training programmes.

The faculty Computing Officer is available on-site to provide advice and assistance on all IT matters.

Colleges provide excellent IT resources and Support Officers prepared to train and assist students.

Language Centre:

Extensive facilities for language development for both curriculum and personal development purposes are available through the University's Language Centre.

Advice on course content/options etc.:

The main source of advice for undergraduates on course content/options, etc., will come from their faculty tutors, as well as from their college tutors. Other sources of information include extensive induction sessions provided by faculty/departments and colleges, handbooks and information on websites.

College support:

Academic and pastoral support are provided by officers in each college (Senior Tutor, Dean, and subject tutors). The welfare support provided by colleges is extensive and formalised at many levels (JCR welfare officers, Junior Dean, Dean, College Doctor/Nurse, and College Advisors who may be academic and non-academic members of staff).

Financial support and advice is usually provided by the College Bursar, who administers funds available to students with unforeseen difficulties. The Senior Tutor and subject tutor within a college will monitor the progress of each student, and may also be responsible for disciplinary procedures such as probation, designed to monitor under-performing students more closely against clearly-defined criteria.

13. Criteria for Admission

No previous knowledge of an Oriental language is expected prior to admission; the instruction provided in the Middle Eastern language takes account of this.

Normally an A-level or equivalent is required in the European language.

School/College leavers

- Applications are made to colleges of the University via the Oxford Colleges Admissions Office, not to either of the faculties concerned.
- Grades required are usually AAA at A-level, or equivalent marks on the Scottish Highers or the IB. Other international qualifications are assessed according to the guidelines issued by the Oxford College Admissions Office.
- Offers are made on the basis of students' academic record and their performance in interviews held in colleges and in the Oriental Institute in December. Two samples of written work, one of which should be in the relevant European language,

Arabic, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish, applicants will be required to undertake a language aptitude test before interview. A half hour grammar test will also be required in the Modern Language. College tutors will discuss this work, as well as the students' personal statements on their application forms.

- Interviews in Middle Eastern languages are held initially in the Oriental Institute, and the Faculty of Oriental Studies has a Chairman of Admissions, who oversees the organisation of interviews and decisions, and co-ordinates the placing of successful students at colleges if the college of their first choice is unable to take them. In Modern Languages interviews are held in the colleges.

- The purpose of the interviews is to determine those students, from an excellent cadre of applicants, who might best benefit from the intensive, tutorially based learning methods employed in the University.

Mature and overseas applicants

Applicants in these groups, and those who have completed any prior qualifications offered at the Department of Continuing Education, are considered on an individual basis, but the submission of written work, and its discussion in interview would be equally important to the Admissions process.

14. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning

Evaluation and development arises from a variety of sources, including:

Student feedback

- Student feedback on lectures, classes and courses for review by the relevant faculty officer/committee;
- There are various channels for communicating student concerns, e.g. regular meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee, representation on faculty committees, specific consultation on new course proposals or suggested changes to the curriculum.
- Student comment on tutorial provision is requested by their colleges and is reviewed by the Senior Tutors of the colleges.

Monitoring procedures

- regular procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of courses and course structure, including meetings of faculties and sub-faculties, and at University level meetings of academic committees.
- any internal regular monitoring of courses, including consideration arising out of the reports of examiners and external examiners, reviews relating to curriculum changes and changes in regulations, and regular updating of handbooks and websites (any amendments to the Examination Regulations must also be approved by the Humanities Divisional Board and by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee of Council);
- changes in regulations require divisional and EPSC approval;
- any reviews initiated by the relevant division;
- External reviews of learning and teaching (EPSC reviews, QAA subject reviews, divisional subject reviews)
- Attendance at the courses provided by the Oxford Learning Institute, which all staff are invited to attend, and which are now compulsory for new appointees.
- University appraisal scheme (each member of the faculty is assigned to an appropriate appraiser).

- Joint committee for the BA in EMEL, reporting to the Boards of Oriental Studies and Modern Languages.

15. Regulation of assessment

Final Examination

Full details relating to assessment are set out as examiners' conventions and are issued to students in Hilary Term each year. They are also displayed on the faculty's website.

Responsible bodies are responsible for establishing and approving any changes to examining conventions for the courses under their control. Responsible bodies also nominate the internal and external examiners on the Examination Boards for each of their degree courses, subject to approval by the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors on behalf of the University.

- Boards of Examiners, under their elected Chairs, are responsible for setting all papers, and marking the scripts of the examinees. They may appoint Assessors to assist in the setting and marking of the more specialist papers. After scripts have been marked, the Board of Examiners meets to classify the students.
- External Examiners are appointed in order:
 1. to verify that standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards of comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and otherwise appropriate;
 2. to ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards has been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Board of Examiners. This will entail signing the Class List as an endorsement that the processes of examination and classification have been fairly conducted.

External Examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover all the following points:

- the standards demonstrated by the students
- the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award
- the design, structure and marking of assessments
- the procedures for assessment and examinations
- whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgments
- students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses
- the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them
- the basis and rationale for any comparisons made
- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort
- the quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance

- The Report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and will be considered by the relevant divisional board, the faculty/department and by the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee.
- Where an external examiner's report contains particular suggestions or criticisms, it is the responsibility of the faculty/department to ensure that full consideration is given to these, to institute further discussion or action, and to inform the external examiner within a reasonable time of what is done.

Marking Scale		
I	70 - 100	A performance which exhibits the qualities mentioned above to a very high degree, and which is outstanding in some way.
II.1	60 - 69	A performance which exhibits these qualities to a high but lesser degree, which is fully competent but not outstanding.
II.2	50 - 59	A performance which exhibits still fewer of these qualities but in which acceptable answers appear to be predominant.
III	40 - 49	A performance which fails to exhibit these qualities to a significant degree, but which nevertheless contains an adequate proportion of acceptable answers.
Pass	30 - 39	A performance in which the student shows only a marginal level of knowledge and competence.
Fail	29 - 0	Any other performance.

16. Indicators of quality and standards

Faculty of Oriental Studies

- Independent review of the quality of educational provision in the Faculty of Oriental Studies by the (then) Teaching Quality Agency in November 1997 awarded the Faculty 22 out of a possible maximum 24 points.
- The Research Assessment exercise of 2001 carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council of England awarded the relevant part of the Faculty a mark of 5* for the quality of research amongst its staff. In 2007 the Humanities Division and EPSC undertook a thorough review of all aspects of the Faculty's teaching, research, administration and provision and the Faculty has been implementing the recommendations since.

Faculty of Modern Languages (this information is currently under review)

- The last independent teaching review (TQA) of the Faculty was undertaken in January-February 1996. The Faculty achieved the highest grade in 4 out of the 6 categories of the review (Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Student Progression and Achievement; Student

Support and Guidance; Learning Resources). The two areas which were judged less satisfactory by the TQA were Curriculum Design, Content and Organization; and Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

- The role of the External Examiners has been redefined in order to allow them to concentrate on their moderating and quality assurance roles. Their reports addressing issues relating to quality and standards are taken as indicators of quality.
- The Humanities Divisional Board and the Educational Standards and Policy Committee, with external representation conducted a review in Trinity Term 2008.
- There is also an external Advisory Panel (set up in 1999) of relevant experts from other universities and from industry, which offers comments on course quality and standards.
- A less formal measure of the quality of graduates from this programme is the fact that of all humanities disciplines taught at Oxford it is modern languages graduates, according to recent figures, who enjoy the lowest rate of unemployment one year after graduation.

EMEL Programm specifications.

Last revised 16 November 2008