



Programme Handbook for:

MSt in Modern Languages

and

MPhil in Modern Languages

2025-2026

Applies to students commencing their studies in 2025-26

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WELCOME

Welcome to postgraduate study in the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, which belongs to the Humanities Division at the University of Oxford - we hope you will enjoy your studies with us!

Please note that from the start of the 2025-26 academic year, the Faculty has relocated to the new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter.

This handbook provides an overview of the teaching and assessment on your course, and a guide to other University services which may be relevant to you. You do not need to read it in one sitting, but please do familiarize yourself with the contents in case you need to refer to it at any time during the year.

This handbook applies if you are commencing your studies in 2025-26, and should be read alongside the 2025-26 special subjects and method options guide. Other detailed course information can be found on [Canvas](#), the University's virtual learning environment.

The [Oxford Students website](#) is also a key source of information about the rules applying to, and the services available to support you in, your studies.

Your key Faculty contacts:

Dr Rajendra Chitnis, MML Director of Masters Courses dmc@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk oversees the MSt and MPhil in Modern Languages.

Prof. Catriona Seth, MML Director of Graduate Studies dgs@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk oversees the provision of doctoral study and chairs both the Graduate Studies Committee and Graduate Joint Consultative Committee. She also oversees admissions and funding processes for both PGT and PGR courses.

Graduate Studies Office graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk

The people behind this email are: Sandra Beaumont, MML Graduate Studies Officer, and Daniel Dolley, MML Graduate Studies Assistant. They can help with queries about any aspect of your on-course administration – they may need to refer you to staff at your College in order to initiate some processes.

Other important contacts:

Graduate Tutor or Academic Office at your College. You will be assigned a College Advisor, who can provide guidance on pastoral matters.

Depending on the time of year, your Special Subject tutor (Michaelmas/Hilary Term) or your Dissertation/Thesis supervisor (Trinity Term)

Student representatives: postgraduate student reps are elected for each course, and for each language sub-faculty, to ensure students have a voice on key committees. Their names are published on [Canvas](#). If you would like to stand for election as a student rep, look out for emails from the MML Graduate Office at the start of the academic year when we ask for volunteers.

GETTING STARTED

Congratulations on becoming a student at the University of Oxford. You can find lots of information and advice to help you settle into life as an Oxford student on the University website here: [New students | University of Oxford](#)

Take a look around the website to familiarise yourself with the information there: the sections on 'before you arrive' and 'your first few weeks' will be particularly useful in the first instance. You should also take a look at the 'getting started with IT' web pages: [Getting started | IT Services](#) and make sure you know what to do so that your University card can be issued, and you can set up your access to IT facilities and fully register on your course.

[Graduate study guidance](#) is an especially useful section of the Oxford students website, and you will also need to access various processes via the [Student Self Service](#) page.

COURSE STRUCTURES

MSt students

This is a one-year course: you will complete two special subjects, a method option, and a dissertation over the course of the year, as follows:

Michaelmas Term (MT)	Hilary Term (HT)	Trinity Term (TT)
Special Subject 1 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>MT Week 10</i>	Special Subject 2 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>HT Week 10</i>	MSt Dissertation <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>TT Week 7</i>
Method Option <i>Assessment submission HT Week 10</i>		

MPhil students

This is a two-year course: you will take two special subjects and a method option in your first year, and a further special subject and a thesis in your second year, as follows:

	Michaelmas Term (MT)	Hilary Term (HT)	Trinity Term (TT)
Year 1	Special Subject 1 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>MT Week 10</i>	Special Subject 2 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>HT Week 10</i>	Dissertation/thesis workshops
	Method Option <i>Assessment submission HT Week 10</i>		
Year 2	Either Special Subject 3 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>MT Week 10</i>	Or Special Subject 3 <i>Assessment submission</i> <i>HT Week 10</i>	
	MPhil Thesis <i>Assessment submission TT Week 7</i>		

Award requirements

All of the programme components must be passed – i.e. you must achieve a mark of at least 50% for all assessments - in order to qualify for the award of MSt or MPhil. The following award classifications are available:

Award classification	Overall average mark
Pass	50% or above
Merit	65% or above
Distinction	70% or above

The **overall average marks** are calculated as follows:

MSt: the two highest marks from the three special subject and method option courses taken count for 50%, and the dissertation mark counts for the other 50%, of the overall average mark.

For example, a student with the following marks profile would have an overall average mark of 70.8 (discounting the 68 for the method option) and therefore an award classification of Distinction:

Special Subject 1	72
Special Subject 2	71
Method Option	68
Dissertation	70

MPhil: the three highest marks from the four special subject and method option courses taken count for 45%, and the thesis mark counts for 55%, of the overall average mark. For example, a student with the following marks profile would have an overall average mark of 68.8 (discounting one of the 64 scores) and therefore an award classification of Merit:

Special Subject 1	73
Special Subject 2	72
Special Subject 3	64
Method Option	64
Thesis	68

If any component is **failed** at the first attempt*, you are entitled to resit it once (the resit submission date is 12.00pm on the last Monday of the September following your first attempt). The mark awarded for a resit is capped at the pass mark for the course (50%); and you should note that if *any* course components are passed at resit, rather than at the first attempt, you cannot be considered for an overall award classification of Merit or Distinction.

*If you do not submit any work by the deadline without permission (i.e. an extension), or within the timeframe given by the Proctors for making an application for mitigating circumstances (14 days from the approved deadline) you will fail the course.

Where exceptional circumstances, e.g. for late or non-submission, are accepted by the Proctors, or a dispensation granted by Education Committee, allowances may be made in respect of resit attempts. You can find the Student Guide to mitigating circumstances on the [problems completing your assessment](#) webpage.

Transferring between courses

As you can see, the MSt and MPhil courses follow the same curriculum structure for the first two terms; so students can, in theory, transfer between the MSt and MPhil up until the start of Trinity Term, at which point the courses diverge. If you are thinking about transferring between courses, please let us know, as you will need the permission of the DMC. You will need to complete a form via the 'My Student Record' section in [Student Self-Service](#), which requires you to have discussed the

proposed programme change with your supervisor and your college. For a move from the MSt to MPhil, assurance that you have the necessary funding and permission to remain in the UK for an additional year (as necessary) will also be required. If you are a student visa holder wishing to transfer from MSt to MPhil, please take advice from the [visa and immigration](#) team (email student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk) before you start your application.

Withdrawal or suspension of studies

If you encounter circumstances which prevent you from pursuing your studies for a period of time, which mean that you need to suspend your studies, please seek advice from your College and the MML Graduate Office.

Applications for suspension of status should be made via the 'My Student Record' section in [Student Self-Service](#). If the application is approved, you will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension and will automatically resume your former student status at the end of the period (you will need to complete a return from suspension form via the 'My Student Record' section in [Student Self-Service](#) prior to your return). MSt and MPhil students are generally expected to return at the equivalent point of the following academic year, but this should be discussed with the Faculty prior to submitting the application form, depending on the circumstances and the point of the programme at which you suspend your studies.

Should it prove necessary to withdraw from your course, you will need to complete the GSO.29 withdrawal form, which is also available via Student Self Service.

You can find more information about changes in student status on the University website here: [Changes in student status | University of Oxford](#)

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The emphasis of the MSt and MPhil courses is on self-directed learning. The courses provide a framework within which you are encouraged to develop your own programme of study based on your academic interests, and teaching is tailored accordingly.

Your progression from the Special Subjects to the dissertation/thesis should enable you to discover and define your own interests and to explore them with increasing independence. You may already be clear about the topic you are interested in, in which case the Special Subject enables you to begin investigating it in depth. Or you may be looking for a research topic, in which case a broadly defined Special Subject promotes wide but focussed reading within a general area. The theoretical/methodological seminars open up a range of critical perspectives which should both enlarge your understanding of your field of study and equip you with research skills for further study. Finally, the dissertation, which usually develops a theme from your Special Subjects, allows you to write a substantial piece of original scholarly work that benefits from the new perspectives opened up by the theoretical/methodological seminars.

Students are free to attend any lectures and seminars advertised on the [Lecture List](#), as well as the various Humanities seminars and events that are advertised throughout the year. You also have access to the UG course resources via your [Canvas](#) dashboard.

Both the MSt and MPhil programmes are intensive and challenging courses. Graduate students should look upon their study as a full-time occupation and be prepared to commit at least 40 hours each week. While you may wish to take on additional non-academic commitments (e.g. paid work) the University recommends that this be limited to a maximum of eight hours per week. Further information can be found on the [Paid Work Guidelines for Oxford Graduate Students](#) web page.

Supervision

Your supervisor will change each term, depending on the courses you are taking, so that special subject tutors and dissertation supervisors can all write reports on your progress through the year (GSR – see below). In Michaelmas and Hilary terms, your supervisor will be your tutor from the special subject you are taking that term, while in Trinity Term your supervisor will be your dissertation or thesis supervisor.

GSR, or Graduate Supervision Reporting, is a system used by students, supervisors, college and faculty staff to track your progress through your course. You are strongly encouraged to take the opportunity to review and comment on your academic progress, any skills training you have undertaken or may need to undertake in the future, and on your engagement with the academic community. When reporting on academic progress, you should review progress during the current term, and measure this progress against the timetable and requirements for your programme of study. You should also reflect on the skills required to undertake the work you intend to carry out and identify any skills you wish to gain or strengthen through further training. Your tutor/s should discuss these reports with you, as they will form the basis for reviewing your progress and agreeing plans for the term ahead.

Access to GSR is via [Student Self Service](#) - you are asked to report between weeks 7 and 9 of each term. You will be sent a GSR automated email notification with details of how to log in at the start of each reporting window, and who to contact with queries; however, should you need additional support, please contact the Graduate Studies Office in the first instance.

Once you have completed your sections of the online form, it will be released to your Special Subject tutor/s for completion in Michaelmas and Hilary terms, and your dissertation or thesis supervisor in Trinity term. When the tutor/supervisor's sections are completed, you will be able to view the full report, as will the Director of Graduate Studies and your College Advisor. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision takes place, and this is one of the mechanisms they use to obtain information about supervision. College advisors are a source of support and advice to students, and it is therefore important that they are informed of your progress, including concerns (expressed by you or your tutor/supervisor).

Special subjects

Details of all the Special Subjects (and method options) offered in 2025-26 can be found in the options brochure which accompanies this handbook and on the relevant language sections of the [MML graduate studies web pages](#).

Each Special Subject runs in either Michaelmas or Hilary Term, and normally involves four meetings, which will take the form of seminars (where there are three or more students) or tutorials (where there are one or two students). These meetings may be weekly or fortnightly. Seminars are generally delivered as 4 x 1.5-hour meetings; while tutorials will be 4 x 1-hour sessions.

Formative feedback for Special Subjects may take a number of forms, including oral comments on oral presentations, annotations on draft bibliographies, email responses to proposed research questions, and so on (as appropriate). The Special Subject tutors will normally read and give formal written feedback and indicate a predicted mark range (pass, merit, distinction), on one or two pieces of written work during the term; where these pieces are subsequently revised and presented as a portfolio for assessment, the Special Subject tutors should not generally offer additional written comments on the revision. In cases where the proposed submission for assessment differs very substantially from the piece/s submitted during the term, the Special Subject tutors may also read,

comment on, and indicate a predicted mark band for this piece too, provided the work is submitted for comment by Friday of 8th week at the latest.

The portfolio you submit for summative assessment is usually either one or two essays, as you prefer, to a total of 5,000-7,000 words; however, some courses specify a required format for the portfolio (e.g. a single full-length essay or two essays) so you should check with your course convenor.

Method Option courses

You will take one of the following four Method Option courses:

- German Cultural Theory: The critical tradition from Schiller to Arendt and Jaeggi
- Key Questions in Critical Thought
- Spaces of Comparison
- Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities

Details of the method options offered in 2025-26 can be found in the options brochure which accompanies this handbook.

The Method/Theory course runs through both Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, and involves a series of hour-long lectures and - depending on student numbers - either seminars or tutorials lasting up to 2 hours, in which students give presentations to their tutor/s and peers. In Week 10 of Hilary Term, you must submit a 5,000-7,000 word essay. The topic of your essay will arise out of the issues and/or be an analysis of the topics explored in the lectures or during the seminars. The Method Option convenors provide students with guidance on their essays, but they should be independently produced pieces of research.

Summative Assessment for Special Subject & Method Option courses

We aim to send out the provisional grades and feedback for the summative Michaelmas Term Special Subject option assessment by the end of Week 6 of Hilary Term.

We aim to send out the provisional grades and feedback for the summative Hilary Term Special Subject and Method options by the end of Week 6 of Trinity Term.

Dissertation/Thesis

The MSt dissertation is 10,000-12,000 words in length, and contributes 50% to the overall award classification. You will normally start working on it after you have made your Hilary Term coursework submissions, but you will be allocated a dissertation supervisor earlier in the year (around the start of Michaelmas Term) according to the proposed topic/title you gave in your application, and you should have a preparatory meeting with them by mid-Michaelmas Term (they will not be set up formally as a supervisor until Trinity Term).

The MPhil thesis is 20,000-25,000 words in length and contributes 55% to the overall award classification. You will do most of the work on it in your second year, but preparatory work will start in the first year, with the initial allocation of supervisors and a workshop run by the Director of Master's Courses.

You will be asked to confirm your dissertation/thesis title early in Hilary Term – the deadline for response will be in HT Week 4 – on the basis of which examiners with the appropriate academic expertise will be assigned. It is still possible to make changes to your title after this time, but you must notify the Graduate Studies Office (graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk) of your intention, as a significant change in topic may require new examiners to be found. You should discuss any potential changes of focus with your supervisor, who will be able to advise whether this will be necessary.

ASSESSMENT

Rules and regulations

Students for the MSt and MPhil in Modern Languages are examined entirely on the basis of submitted work. Make sure you understand the rules governing the assessment of your course – apart from this handbook, the key sources of information are:

- Examination regulations – find them on [Canvas](#) (under ‘Assessment and Feedback’) or on the [Exam Regulations](#) web pages:
[MSt Modern Languages regulations 2025-26](#)
[MPhil Modern Languages regulations 2025-26](#)
- Examination Conventions – will be published on [Canvas](#) from week 5 of Michaelmas Term (under ‘Assessment and Feedback’). This is the formal record of the specific assessment standard for the course and it governs the examination process for these courses. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at an overall classification for your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, progression, resits, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-long work.
- Guidance on the format of assessed work and how to avoid plagiarism, which you can find on [Canvas](#), under ‘Assessment and Feedback’.
- [Problems completing your assessment](#) website – guidance on what to do if you experience difficulties with meeting assessment requirements.
- Examinations and Assessment Framework – this is primarily procedural guidance for examiners and other staff who manage the assessment processes, but you can download it from the [Academic Support website](#)

Note on English C courses

If you are taking an English course in place of your Michaelmas Term or Hilary Term Special Subject, you will be assessed according to the relevant Faculty of ELL examination conventions – staff in the English Faculty Graduate Office can provide you with these – contact them on graduate.studies@ell.ox.ac.uk

Marking

All submissions are ‘blind double-marked’, with two markers making an initial assessment independently of each other, and then meeting to agree on a final mark for the work. For Special Subjects, the first marker will be the course convenor (or one of them if it is taught jointly by two or more academics) and the second marker will be the PG examiner for the relevant language. For Method Options, first and second markers may be the course convenors (where a course is jointly taught), or the course convenor and a second member of staff with academic expertise that is relevant to the topic you have addressed in your portfolio. For the dissertation/thesis, first markers are assigned on the basis of the title/topic you notify us of in Hilary Term, and a member of the board of examiners will usually be the second marker, unless the PG examiner for your language was your supervisor, in which case an alternative second marker will be appointed.

An external examiner is provided with samples of assessed work and marksheets, in order that they can make a judgement on the standards of marking and of student achievement, and provide assurance about the fairness and integrity of the assessment process. The external examiner for the Modern Languages courses is currently Professor Ita Mac Carthy of Durham University.

Entering for assessment

You must formally enter for your assessments with the Examination Schools - see [Examination entry | University of Oxford](#). This should be done by Thursday of Week 4 of Michaelmas Term. You will receive instructions in an email inviting you to log in to Student Self Service to enter your assessment selections. If in doubt, consult the Tutor for Graduates or Academic Office at your college, as failure to enter for the correct assessment units on time will incur a fee.

Submitting your work

Submission of essays is due **by 12 noon on Thursday** of the specified week for each assessment:

- Michaelmas Term Special Subjects: Week 10 of Michaelmas Term
- Hilary Term & Method Options: Week 10 of Hilary Term
- Dissertation / thesis: Week 7 of Trinity Term

All assessments are submitted electronically via Inspira. Please do take time to read through the guidance on how to submit your coursework on Inspira, as making an error in uploading/submitting your work is not accepted as a reason for missing a deadline. Full information is provided on the student web pages: [Submission of coursework assessments | University of Oxford](#)

You can find guidance on [Canvas](#) in relation to the format of work – some of the key things to remember are that your work should be submitted as a pdf file and it should be identified only by your **candidate number**. Please note that your candidate number is different from your Student number and University Card number. You can find your Candidate Number by logging on to your [Student Self-Service](#) Account. Please note that your Candidate Number will not be available on Self-Service until after you have formally entered for your examinations.

A word count **must** be declared on the first page of your submission. Don't forget to insert page numbers throughout your document – this makes it a lot easier for markers to give feedback on specific points.

Penalties – late submission or exceeding word limits

Penalties will be applied for late submission without permission from the Proctors or a dispensation from the Education Committee. You can find these penalties listed in the examination conventions (section 3.7). They accumulate with time, so that a submission which is after the deadline but submitted on the same day would incur a penalty of -5 marks, and would incur a further penalty of -1 mark for each additional calendar day late, up to a maximum of 14 days late (-18 marks). A submission more than 14 calendar days after the deadline would incur a Fail.

If you can't submit your coursework on time, i.e. due to a short term illness, you can apply directly for an extension of 7 calendar days (1 week) without providing independent evidence via [Student Self-Service](#) (go to 'My exams', select 'extension requests' and click on 'start self certification application'). All other applications for extensions must be applied for via your college and must be supported by independent evidence. For further information, please see: [Problems completing your assessment | University of Oxford](#)

Students are expected to manage their workload and take into account the impact of an extension on their other assessments. Extensions could delay the release of final results if the examiners are not able to mark the student's work in time for the final Board of Examiners meeting, which may also delay the student's graduation ceremony. Results that aren't able to be confirmed at the final Board of Examiners meeting may not be released until at least the following September, which may impact

applications for further study or applying for the Graduate visa route to remain in the UK for work after your studies.

Penalties are also applied to submissions which exceed the word limits – these are also set out in the examination conventions (section 3.8). As noted above, the word count* must be given on the first page of all submissions.

*The word count includes:

- Main text of the essay
- Headings of each section of the essay, such as 'Introduction' or 'Conclusion'
- Content of footnotes (including works cited but excluding English translations of quotes given in the original language within the main text)

It does not include:

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- Captions to illustrations
- Acknowledgements
- Bibliography or works cited
- Page numbers
- Footnote numbers
- Headers repeated at the top of each page (e.g. containing page numbers, candidate number, assessment unit number, etc)
- English translations in footnotes of quotes given in the original language within the main text.

As noted in section 3.5 of the examination conventions, there are no specific penalties for a submission which is shorter than the lower end of the word count range. However, work that is significantly under-length is more likely to be inadequate in its coverage and content in the context of the marking criteria.

Language of submission

Work for the MSt and MPhil in Modern Languages is normally written in English, but may be submitted in an appropriate language other than English, with the permission of the Director of Master's Courses. The application form is available on [Canvas](#), which you should complete in discussion with your course tutor and return to the Office for sign-off by the DMC.

The following restrictions in respect of language of submission apply:

- Method Options: the essays submitted for the courses on Key Questions in Critical Thought, Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities, and Spaces of Comparison must be written in English. Those written for the German Cultural Theory course may be written in English or German;
- At least one of the pieces of written work you submit over the course of the programme must be in English.
- A lack of competence in academic English is not an acceptable reason for requesting submission in another language.

Before seeking permission to write in a language other than English, you should consult with your course supervisors and give careful consideration to the wider implications of your request. It is important to recognise that the language of the thesis will to some extent determine the opportunities for subsequent publication and, ultimately, future career choices.

Mitigating circumstances

If you are experiencing issues which are impacting on your ability to complete your assessment on time, please refer to guidance on the website: [Problems completing your assessment | University of Oxford](#). Your college can also offer advice and guidance if you are experiencing difficulties with your studies.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism (e.g. presenting the work or ideas of others as your own) is a serious breach of the examination regulations which can result in severe penalties if you are referred to the Proctors and found to be in breach. You can find out more about the definitions of plagiarism and how to avoid - deliberately or inadvertently - being guilty of this form of cheating on the [plagiarism web page](#) of the Oxford students website. There are also a range of [study skills guides and courses](#) available to help you develop good academic practice in your studies.

Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against a decision made by an examination board. It may only be made on certain grounds (for example, there was an error or bias in the decision-making process), and not on the basis that you disagree with the academic judgement of the examiners who marked your work. You can find out more about the grounds for appeal, and the process you should follow, on the [complaints and academic appeals](#) web page on the Oxford students website. **You should NOT contact the assessors or examiners directly about an academic appeal.**

If you have extenuating circumstances which require an adjustment to the examination regulations that apply, you may also apply for a [dispensation](#) from the Education Committee.

STUDY SUPPORT AND WELFARE

Guidance on AI

The purpose of this guidance on AI is to set out the principles that define the faculty's engagement with AI. It is not intended to be comprehensive or definitive, but it is designed to address both issues of a general nature and questions specific to Modern Languages. This is a rapidly evolving field, and we anticipate that the guidance will be updated at regular intervals. It is also important that it is read in conjunction with the other documents to which it provides links.

Led by the [Russell Group Principles](#) on the use of generative AI tools in education, the faculty supports students who may wish to use AI to complement their learning, and at the same time, wishes to ensure that students are aware of the limitations and biases associated with AI which can result in misleading or incorrect information, as well as the risks of committing academic misconduct.

Definitions of AI for the purposes of this guidance

Basic AI – where an AI tool is simply automating tasks e.g., sorting data, generating graphs, or analysing trends, and the focus is on automation and analytics rather than creating new content.

Generative AI – where an AI tool provides substantial intellectual contributions e.g., generating summaries, insights or interpretations, where the focus is on creating new content. Generative AI models such as ChatGPT work by predicting text based on the information on which they have been trained. These models (currently) have no understanding or consciousness and simply generate the next most likely word based on probabilities.

Using generative AI for exploratory purposes

The faculty recognises the value of students using generative AI critically, particularly for exploratory purposes and non-assessed tasks, and there are some good examples and suggestions on the university website of how to use generative AI tools for particular outcomes e.g. [Use of generative AI tools to support learning | University of Oxford](#).

Using generative AI in tutorial work, submitted assessments (special subjects and dissertations), and exams

There are two important points to consider when using information generated by AI. Firstly, the accuracy and integrity of the information generated, and secondly, how that information is then used to inform submitted work for assessment. If used, generative AI tools must support learning rather than replace independent thinking or critical analysis. These tools can enhance understanding and improve clarity, but are not substitutes for original work or intellectual effort. The university has a policy specifically for staff and students using generative AI in research:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/research-practice/policy-generative-ai-research>

It is imperative that students understand that **submitting work for assessment that contains AI-generated content as their own work constitutes a breach of academic integrity and is considered plagiarism**, a disciplinary offence [Plagiarism | University of Oxford](#).

Using AI responsibly

Generative AI applications may store or use the data students upload to improve their models, depending on the platform's terms of service. Before using tools like ChatGPT or Claude, students are advised to review their privacy policies to understand how their data will be handled.

Students should not share unpublished work by others on AI platforms without their explicit permission, as this could violate their intellectual property rights and privacy.

Students should always exercise caution when inputting sensitive or private information into AI tools and only collect the data necessary for the task, anonymising information wherever possible.

Once shared, AI-generated content becomes the responsibility of the initiator and any uncredited use, including over-reliance, may constitute academic misconduct under [Statute XI of the University's Code of Discipline](#) and result in disciplinary action.

FAQs on the appropriate use of Basic AI and Generative AI tools in coursework and assessments

1. Can I use basic AI tools such as spelling and grammar checkers, text prediction or design suggestions in my written work?

Yes, AI tools that focus on automation and analysis, rather than creating new content, may be used for **supporting tasks** e.g., to check for spelling and grammatical errors in English, and improve the clarity and consistency of English prose.

However, submitting assessed work created by writing assistants such as GrammarlyGO is prohibited, because these tools go beyond simple grammar checks and can rewrite sentences or even generate full paragraphs.

You should not use spelling and grammar checkers or text predictors when writing essays in the target language, because making mistakes and learning to correct them is an essential part of the learning process. For the same reason, you should not use these tools for translation, either into the target language or into English (see point 3 below on more sophisticated AI translation tools).

You are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the content of your submitted work, which should reflect your original thinking and your own proficiency in the target language.

2. Can I use generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to generate ideas or outlines for my essays, or to summarise content?

You may use generative AI tools to assist with brainstorming for ideas, gathering information, organizing your thoughts, or refining your research direction. However, the ideas, analysis, and final work must reflect your own critical thinking, creativity, and writing style. AI should support your process, not replace your unique insights and learning.

You may use AI tools to summarise portions of text, e.g. to aid your comprehension of secondary reading material, but not at the expense of reading the text in full. You should not use AI tools to produce plot summaries of primary texts, not least because these are liable to be inaccurate. You should be aware at all times of AI's tendency to produce 'hallucinated' elements, including false quotations and bibliographies. Any information generated by AI should always be double-checked using reliable secondary sources.

3. Are AI tools allowed for translation and transcription purposes?

The use of AI translation tools, e.g. Google Translate, is permitted for reference purposes such as understanding unfamiliar words or phrases or checking grammar in secondary sources (e.g. articles or book chapters written in the target language). Students should be aware of the variable accuracy of these tools, especially where language is being used figuratively, idiomatically or creatively.

Students are not permitted to use AI translation tools for their own translations, either into English or into the target language. Where critical reflection on a translation is required (e.g. for the papers in Advanced Translation), AI tools must not be used to generate textual analysis.

Given the varying levels of accuracy of transcription tools, they should only be used with the advice of the supervisor/tutor, and always acknowledged. Students using such tools ought to check for the accuracy of the results, and be aware of the importance of appropriate training in palaeography.

4. When do I need to cite AI tools if I use them in my written work?

If you are using AI for the purposes outlined in points 1-3, you do not need to cite it, unless your tutor has requested that you do so, or the specific assessment requires it.

If AI tools contribute significantly to your work (e.g. automated transcription, topic-modelling, or other forms of text analysis), and your tutor has approved their use or the specific assessment requires it, you must acknowledge and cite their use.

Example citation:

[Artificial Intelligence - Managing your references - Oxford LibGuides at Oxford University](#)

[Cite Them Right](#)

5. Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about using AI tools in my work?

Your tutor or supervisor should be your first point of contact. They will be able to clarify what constitutes acceptable use of generative AI for your particular assessment, with reference to the faculty and university guidelines.

Library and study guidance

As a MML student, you have access to the Taylorian library, which is the largest and best resourced Modern Languages library in the country. Find out more about the library and its collections here: [Taylor Institution Library | Bodleian Libraries \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

It is important to make yourself familiar at an early date with all the bibliographical tools of research available in Oxford. Many of these will be found in the Catalogue Room of the Bodleian. Many books on European languages and literatures (not only pre-nineteenth century books) are in the Bodleian. The Bodleian itself contains a world-famous collection of manuscripts, both medieval and later. Books can be borrowed from the Taylorian and from college libraries. The holdings of the older college libraries may also be of interest, especially to those working on pre-1800 literature (request for access should be addressed to the librarian). In addition, the library of Rhodes House contains material of considerable importance for modernists.

If you feel you would benefit from study skills training or guidance to help you perform to your best ability on your course, check out the courses and resources available to you here: [Study skills and training | University of Oxford](#)

Help and Feedback on Writing – Royal Literary Fellow

We are pleased to advise that, for the 2025-26 academic year, the Faculty has a dedicated Fellow in post to assist students with their writing skills and academic literacy.

MML students at **any** level of study (from first year to postgraduate) – and staff – are welcome to book a session with our Royal Literary Fund Fellow, **Elizabeth Lowry**. Sessions are in-person in Room 30.513 at the MML Faculty, Schwarzman Centre, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6GG.

Elizabeth Lowry is a professional writer who can help you improve your academic writing and make the whole process more enjoyable. Each session lasts 50 minutes and is free and confidential: this service is independent from university services for students.

Possible **topics** we might discuss include:

- understanding the title and scope of the question
- planning your essay, dissertation or report to meet the word count
- critical thinking
- writing clearly, including help with grammar and sentence structure
- using AI appropriately
- rewriting and editing your work so that **you continue to gain in confidence**

You are very welcome to contact me with any specific needs you have. Please note, though, that I do not undertake proofreading or EAP and TEFL tuition.

Appointments are available **Tuesday & Wednesday**, between 10am and 5pm (last appointment 4pm) during term time. Please only book one session at a time. Sessions are in-person in **Room 30.513 at the Schwarzman Centre**, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6GG, but you may enquire about an online session if you cannot travel (however, you must be in the UK at the time).

To enquire or book your online session, email: elizabeth.lowry@rlfeducation.org.uk

By making an appointment you indicate that you understand and accept the following:

Disclaimer:

The Fellow is not employed by the university or funded by it; the Fellow is a self-employed published writer and provides an independent service as a non-academic expert in writing; the Fellow is

required to work within parameters established and monitored by the Royal Literary Fund (RLF), organiser and funder of the service; the Fellow may therefore be unable to assist with certain types of enquiry and, with reference to these parameters, has the right to refuse to provide the service to any student; the Fellow and the RLF do not accept any liability for any direct, indirect, special, consequential or other losses or damages of any kind arising from use of the service by a student; students retain sole responsibility for their own work.

Privacy

The Royal Literary Fund stores the data you provide for the duration of the Fellowship. The Fellow also completes and retains a record of each tutorial session. This data is stored electronically. We collect and store this data solely for the purposes of providing the Fellowship service and monitoring the effectiveness of that service, and retain it only as long as is necessary for these purposes. Only RLF staff and contracted personnel have access, and that data is not shared with any third party. The university/college and its staff are not given access to your personal data.

Graduate Study Spaces

There are dedicated study spaces for graduate students on Floor 1 and Floor 2 of the Humanities Library in the Schwarzman Centre: on each floor a 32-seater room for individual study and an 8-seater room for individual or group study (bookable - arrangements to be confirmed). This provision complements graduate study space in the Schwarzman Centre and general study space elsewhere in the Humanities Library.

There is also a graduate reading room in the [Taylor Institution Library](#).

Wellbeing

The University's unique and close-knit collegiate system provides a wealth of pastoral and welfare services for students to support engagement with studies and University life, promoting student wellbeing by providing opportunities for social interaction and sport and arts. Additionally, the central Student Welfare and Support Services department offers professional support that complements provision in colleges and departments.

Information about the student welfare services available can be found on the [Welfare and Wellbeing pages](#) on the University website:

- The [Disability Advisory Service](#) (DAS) can provide information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support.
- The [Counselling Service](#) is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. The counselling team is committed to providing culturally sensitive and appropriate psychological services. Students can request to see a male or female therapist, a Counsellor of Colour, or to attend a specialist group such as the LGBTQ+ or Students of Colour Groups. All support is free and confidential.
- The [Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service](#) provides a safe and confidential space for any student, of any gender, sexuality or sexual orientation, who has been impacted by sexual harassment or violence, domestic or relationship abuse, coercive control or stalking, whenever or wherever this took place.
- A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the [peer support network](#) and [Nightline](#). The Oxford Student Union (SU) also offers free, confidential and independent information, advice and guidance on navigating college and university processes. They have a wide range of online resources available on their [website](#) and

if you need further support you can get in touch with them via their [Online Form](#). There is also a wide range of [student clubs and societies](#) to get involved in.

- Additionally, every college has their own systems of support for students, including the college tutor for graduates, a designated college adviser for each student, the Chaplain, and the college nurse and doctor. In addition, there is peer support from the Middle Common Room (MCR), which elects student officers with special responsibility for welfare. Please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college.

Equality and diversity

“The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected. We recognise that the broad range of experiences that a diverse staff and student body brings strengthens our research and enhances our teaching, and that in order for Oxford to remain a world-leading institution we must continue to provide a diverse, inclusive, fair and open environment that allows everyone to grow and flourish.” [University of Oxford Equality Policy](#)

As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy and consideration.

The [Equality and Diversity Unit](#) works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with and without the ‘protected characteristics’ of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Visit our [website](#) for further details or contact us directly for advice on equality@admin.ox.ac.uk

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central [Harassment Advisory Service](#). The harassment officers in the Faculty of MML are: Alice Brooke, Alejandra Crosta and Seth Whidden.

There are also a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. For more information visit the EDU’s [religion and belief](#) page.

DEVELOPMENT AND FURTHER STUDY

Funding

The Faculty encourage graduate students to make visits abroad, familiarise themselves with library resources, make contact with scholars in their field, and attend conferences (particularly if giving a paper). There are a number of prizes and awards available to Modern Languages graduate students – a list is available on the Graduate Studies [Canvas](#) site.

Modern Languages students may also be eligible for funding from the wider University. You should consult the [student fees and funding website](#) for more information.

Careers

The University's Careers Service offers a range of advice on potential next steps after your Master's course, and continue to provide support for two years after you have graduated – take a look at their web pages at [Home | Oxford University Careers Service](#)

The [Humanities Researcher Development and Training Programme](#) is open to all postgraduate students (Master's and DPhil) and early career researchers (including college appointments and those on teaching-only contracts) in the Humanities Division. An extensive programme of opportunities runs throughout the academic year, arranged into a number of training pathways. You can find the [training and resources available to Master's students](#) on the website, or email the Humanities Researcher Development and Training Manager, Caroline Thurston, at training@humanities.ox.ac.uk if you have any queries.

Further study

In Michaelmas Term, the DMC and DGS host a workshop for Master's students on applying for a DPhil – look out for the email from the MML Graduate Office. If you wish to apply to stay in Oxford to do a research degree, you should start thinking about this early in the academic year and begin talking to relevant people as soon as possible. Consult with your Special Subject tutors, dissertation supervisor, the Director of Masters Courses, and the Graduate Studies Office for advice in Michaelmas term. Applications should normally be made in the first submission round (i.e. the January deadline) to be considered for funding support. Applications made in the March submission round cannot be considered for funding support. Admission to the DPhil depends primarily on your mark in the MSt/MPHil dissertation/thesis, where a mark of 67 or better will normally be expected.

Graduate conference

Each year the student reps (through the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee) organise a conference for all graduate students, with speakers invited from around the world. Look out for the emails advertising the event and calling for papers.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Oxford University is a world-leading centre of learning, teaching and research, and is committed to providing a high quality educational experience, fully supported by academic and administrative services and facilities, to all of our students. However, we recognise that occasionally things can go wrong, and measures are in place to address student concerns about different aspects of their experience.

We always try to resolve any problems locally in the first instance, so if your concern relates to teaching or services provided by the Faculty, please bring it to the attention of the Director of Graduate Studies (dgs@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk). If you are not happy with the outcome of the local investigation, you may escalate your concern to the Proctors – the procedures to be followed are set out on the [complaints and academic appeals web page](#) on the Oxford students website.

General concerns affecting the student cohort should be brought to the attention of your student reps, who can raise the matter at the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC), Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), or with the Committee on Library Provision and Strategy (CLiPS).

Appendix: Special Subject & Method Options Guide 2025-26

FACULTY OF
**MEDIEVAL
AND
MODERN
LANGUAGES**



**MSt & MPhil in Modern Languages
Special Subjects & Method Option List**

2025-26

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INTRODUCTION

All MSt and first-year MPhil students must take two special subjects, one in Michaelmas Term and one in Hilary Term, as well as **one Method option** which runs across both Michaelmas and Hilary terms.

Second-year MPhil students must take **one** special subject to study in either Michaelmas or Hilary term of their second year.

This booklet is provided to help you make your choices for the 2025-26 academic year.

Special subject choices in each term can be made from the Faculty of MML language-specific or interdisciplinary and comparative options, or from selected courses offered by the Faculty of English Language and Literature (see section below).

Please note you may only choose from the language-specific courses for the language(s) you are admitted for.

You should submit your choices via [our online form](#) by 22 August 2025.

The form requires you to select a first, second and third choice for each of your two special subjects and your method option. We will do our best to allocate your first choices, but please note that a cap system will be in operation for many options, so you are asked to select reserve choices for all courses.

You will be notified by the Faculty's Graduate Office on the outcome of your option choices in early September; please be patient while we process all the choices.

Reading Lists: Not all courses publish reading lists in advance, as many Convenors prefer to contact students directly to agree reading lists and any preparatory work. Therefore, any reading lists indicated may not necessarily be final, and some may be updated closer to the start of the academic year.

Students are welcome to contact the course Convenors directly with any course queries – you can find staff profiles and contact details on the [Faculty website](#).

ENGLISH LITERATURE C COURSES

MSt and MPhil Modern Languages students may apply to take **one** special subject from the list of English Literature **C-courses**, provided in a separate booklet, in place of **one** of your Modern Languages special subjects.

Please note that places on these courses are limited, as the options are open to many students across different Humanities faculties, and English graduate students have priority. Please note that English C option coursework assessments are submitted to the English Faculty – deadlines and examination conventions may differ from those in Modern Languages so, if you are successful in securing a place on an English course, you should obtain information on the coursework requirements and the regulations which apply from the English Graduate Office.

METHOD OPTIONS

The Method Option courses are taught throughout both Michaelmas and Hilary terms, with the summative assessment of a 5-7,000 word essay submitted in Week 10 of Hilary term.

MSt and first-year MPhil students must take one course from the following four options:

- German Cultural Theory: The critical tradition from Schiller to Arendt and Jaeggi
- Key Questions in Critical Thought
- Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities
- Spaces of Comparison: Approaches to Comparative Literature

Detailed course descriptions are given below:

German Cultural Theory: The critical tradition from Schiller to Arendt and Jaeggi

Convenors: Prof. Ben Morgan and Prof. David Groiser

This course is taught by a series of lectures and by a series of seminars in the first and second terms. Graduates from all languages are welcome; readings have been chosen that are available in both German and in translation. The course deals with historical writers such as Kant, Schiller, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, Arendt and Adorno, and also with contemporary thinkers such as Rahel Jaeggi and Hartmut Rosa. Every student is expected to make at least one short presentation (no more than ten minutes) to the seminar.

The submission for this course may be written in English or German. No application for permission is required.

Key Questions in Critical Thought

Convenors: Prof. Jane Hiddleston, Prof. Barry Murnane, Prof. Bernhard Malkmus, Dr Emily McLaughlin (Lecture Series Convenor: Prof. Jane Hiddleston)

This is taught by a lecture series Key Questions in Critical Thought during Michaelmas term, and by three seminars in Michaelmas followed by two seminars in Hilary. You will then have an individual meeting with one of the course tutors to discuss your essay. The course covers a range of topics including feminism and gender, post-colonialism and globalisation, affect theory, eco-criticism and the new materialism, ethical criticism, and the debate about humanities and education. The seminar provides a forum for detailed discussion of some of the issues that have been raised in the lectures and that students want to explore further. Every student is expected to make a short presentation (no more than fifteen minutes) to the seminar.

Palaeography, History of the Book and Digital Humanities

Convenor: Prof. Henrike Lähnemann

The course provides hand-on training in dealing with manuscripts, books and digital resources across different historical periods and European languages. The aim is to combine philological training with project work which takes seriously the material turn in Modern Languages and will

enable students to do editorial work in the age of Digital Humanities. Within the framework of knowledge exchange, the Method Option is taught in Michaelmas Term through a series of workshops and masterclasses in cooperation with colleagues and institutions around Oxford, particularly Emma Huber for Digital Editions. In Hilary Term, students develop a self-devised project based on holdings in the local libraries. This unlocks the unparalleled richness of Oxford resources, especially the Taylorian Institute and the Bodleian. The course has its own blog, [History of the Book](#), which features the work of students throughout the year. Further examples of past work from the course can be found at: [editions.mml.ox.ac.uk](#), in blog posts presented on the [Teaching the Codex blog](#), and the [Conveyor](#).

Spaces of Comparison: Approaches to Comparative Literature

Convenor: Prof. Karen Leeder

In 1827, Goethe stated provocatively that 'National literature has become rather meaningless. The time has come for world literature'. This view may seem once again particularly pertinent today, in an age of globalisation. Yet there is little sign that literature is becoming homogenised or flattened. For some of us, our limited linguistic competence and our specific cultural identities entail that we are most familiar with the literature of our own culture, and that other literatures are 'foreign' to us. The historical events and developments that help to shape literature differ between nations, and each literature has its own major authors and texts acting as models to be emulated or refuted. But this does not mean that literature is constrained by national or cultural boundaries. Writers and readers move between literatures and bring them into play with each other. This course proposes that reading comparatively is a rich way to think about cross-cultural understanding in the world today.

This course brings together graduates with expertise in different literatures and periods, providing an opportunity to engage in debate on theoretical and methodological questions central to comparative work. The course will be taught in five fortnightly seminars (in weeks 1, 3, 5 of Michaelmas Term and weeks 1 and 3 of Hilary Term, with one-to-one sessions on your essay in week 4). Students should also attend weekly lectures on comparative literature and critical translation (in weeks 1-6 of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms – these are available alongside the students for the Masters in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation). We will explore debates central to the field such as the question of national and world literatures; translation; and engagements with the marginal, minor or periphery. (NB: we will not fall into easy generalisation about languages and difference: we will be focussing on reading texts and responding to the arguments of other scholars.) We will also spend some time engaging with recent work by scholars working in comparative literature, and thinking about the different models of reading they propose.

Each student will be expected to contribute one short presentation to the seminar, and the course will be examined by one essay submitted at the end of Hilary Term.

MML SPECIAL SUBJECTS

MSt and first-year Mphil students must take **two** special subjects from the listings in the following sections: **one to study in Michaelmas term, one to study in Hilary term.**

Second-year MPhil students must take **one** special subject to study in either Michaelmas or Hilary term.

Special subjects are either language-specific or cross-Faculty, and one may be taken from the English C courses, as described on page 2. **Please note** you may only choose from the language-specific courses for the language(s) you are admitted for.

Each course has one summative assessment point, consisting of a 5-7,000 word essay or a portfolio of two shorter essays totalling 5-7,000 words, depending on the course requirements, to be submitted in Week 10 of Michaelmas term and Week 10 of Hilary term respectively.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS: INTERDISCIPLINARY AND COMPARATIVE OPTIONS

These special subjects offer students an opportunity to study comparative options in a carefully curated cross-linguistic framework. Students may choose to follow one of the specialisms across both terms, or may choose alternative options in either Michaelmas Term or Hilary Term.

The courses in this category that are available in 2025-26 are given below, along with descriptions:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Enlightenment Studies	Enlightenment Debates	Michaelmas
	Writing the Enlightenment	Hilary
Comparative Options	Rethinking Subjectivity: Technology, Ecology, Critique	Michaelmas
	Contesting Colonialisms: Theories, Practices, and Texts	Hilary

ENLIGHTENMENT STUDIES

Enlightenment Debates (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Catriona Seth

This special subject invites students to consider the question 'What was Enlightenment?' by exploring some of the key debates in the history of the ideas as found in the writings of a range of thinkers from across Europe. The special subject is taught by colleagues from French, German, Italian, and Russian in four seminars, in which all students will have the chance to give presentations. Topics may include: The Public Sphere; Savagery and Politeness; Gender and Sexuality; Nation and Cosmopolitanism; God and Nature; Origins; Aesthetics; Print Culture; Science; Commerce and Money; Luxury; Tolerance.

Writing the Enlightenment (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Catriona Seth

This subject focuses on achievements in various literary forms and genres, including the novel, the dialogue, the philosophical tale, dictionaries and encyclopedias, travel writing, epic, pornography,

satire, theatre. Texts may include: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*; Graffigny, *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*; Voltaire, *Candide*; Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew*; Goethe, *The Sufferings of Young Werther*; Moritz, *Anton Reiser*; Richardson, *Pamela*; Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*; Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments*; Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveller*; Mozart's Operas and Da Ponte's Libretti.

COMPARATIVE OPTIONS

Rethinking Subjectivity: Technology, Ecology, Critique (Michaelmas Term)

Convenors: Prof. Barry Murnane and Dr Conor Brennan

Over the last twenty years, ecological and technological developments have prompted a rethinking of human subjectivity: in the age of the Anthropocene and an increased hybridisation of technology and biology, we are no longer sure about the limits of the human subject. As Rosi Braidotti therefore writes: 'We need a subject position worthy of our times' (Posthuman Knowledge (2019)). These seminars interrogate what such a subject position might look like through the study of literature, film and philosophy from the last couple of decades, but also going back to earlier texts that may inspire new approaches to the present challenges. Engagements with late-Enlightenment writing and Romantic natural philosophy reveal thought-provoking parallels with contemporary debates in ecology and pharmacology. Likewise, modernist engagements with biology and technology in literature and film remain a key reference point for current theories of non-human subjectivities and speculative materialisms. This special subject will discuss key questions such as: are we still 'human', were we ever 'human', and if so, what did and does 'we' mean? Topics and names discussed may include: cybernetics, general ecology, the world brain, science fiction, cyborg, contagion, pharmaceuticals, posthumanism and transhumanism, Gregory Bateson, Gilbert Simondon, Gilles Deleuze, N. Katherine Hayles, Donna Haraway, Isabelle Stengers, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Franz Kafka, and Alain Resnais.

Contesting Colonialisms: Theories, Practices, and Texts (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. María del Pilar Blanco

This cross-disciplinary special subject introduces candidates to authors and texts from the nineteenth century to the present that consider and critique the ideologies and institutions of colonialism and ethnocentrism, and that propose and/or problematize different modes of anticolonial or decolonial thinking. The study of texts from across periods, languages, and traditions will enable students to gain a fuller understanding of the distinct historical, racial, cultural, and political contexts that give rise to critique of colonial systems and also their comparability.

Please note that the assessment for this option comprises a portfolio of two essays, totalling 5-7,000 words.

Instructors: María del Pilar Blanco (Spanish); Ben Bollig (Spanish); Jane Hiddleston (French); Phillip Rothwell (Portuguese)

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - FRENCH

The French language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Medieval French	Brief Encounters: Medieval Short Narratives	Michaelmas
	Writing Women in the Middle Ages	Hilary
Early Modern (1500-1800)	Early Modern Inventions	Hilary
Modern (1800-Present)	The Birth of Modern Poetry	Michaelmas
	Contemporary French Thought: Paths of Deconstruction	Michaelmas
	Francophone Postcolonial Literature	Michaelmas
	Poetry & Ethics	Hilary
	Reality, Representation & Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century Prose Writing	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

MEDIEVAL FRENCH

Brief Encounters: Medieval Short Narratives (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Sophie Marnette

Short narrative forms have been much less studied than their longer counterparts (the *roman* or *chanson de geste*, for example), but are the locus for significant experimentation with and development of storytelling practice. This course considers a range of genres, in both verse and prose, to explore modes of storytelling, and the specificities of their brevity, across *lais*, fabliaux, exemplary literature (including fables and miracles), and *nouvelles*. You will also study the presentation and circulation of tales in manuscript compilations.

Writing Women in the Middle Ages (Hilary Term)

Convenors: Prof. Sophie Marnette and Prof. Helen Swift

Whether as patrons, addressees, characters, or even authors, women were absolutely central to Medieval French and Occitan Literature. The main focus of this course is twofold, considering women as objects of writing, typically in male-authored texts (including writings with a fairly misogynistic bias such as *Le Roman de la rose*), and women as writing subjects (such as the *Trobairitz*, Marie de France and Christine de Pizan). It also considers the issue of gender fluidity in comic and courtly narratives such as *Trubert* and *Le Roman de Silence*.

It is strongly recommended that students choosing this option have a knowledge of French and that they let the course convenor know as early as possible of their intention to choose the topic in order to access background resources in Medieval French Literature.

EARLY MODERN (1500-1800)

Early Modern Inventions (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Wes Williams

For this paper, we'll be working on a wide range of materials (mainly in French) from the 16th and 17th Century: books, maps, mechanical instruments and visual art (drawings and paintings). The term invention denotes both the faculty of devising, finding out, contriving and making up, and the products stemming from these processes. It involves discovery and deceit, creativity and contrivance, inspiration and heresy, theory and fiction. Invention is, in historiographical terms, an actor's category, which means that it played an important part in the way in which the early moderns themselves conceived of their own age. It remains central the ways in which scholars reflect on, and assess, the many changes that took place in the early modern period.

This seminar takes invention as its guiding thread to understand crucial changes across the early modern period, and winds its way through Renaissance literary theories of copia, wit, and wordplay to the rise of the mechanical 'arts' (from architecture through shipbuilding and theatre to warfare); we also track the emergence of the 'New Science' (John Donne) born from new techniques of observation and the rise of the experimental method across a wide range of texts and practices. This option should appeal to those who want to work on sixteenth or seventeenth century culture either for the first time or to develop their knowledge of it. Four sessions will take place in the first four weeks of Michaelmas term: 1/Introduction: what was 'invention' for the early moderns? 2/ Printing the world 3/Literary invention, 4/Mechanical inventions.

MODERN (1800-PRESENT)

The Birth of Modern Poetry (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr Katherine Lunn-Rockcliffe

The nineteenth century constituted a period of intense and innovative activity in the field of verse poetry, and this course of seminars will focus on selected works from a diverse group of poets, including Desbordes-Valmore, Lamartine, Musset, Vigny, Hugo, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Mallarmé. The century also witnessed the emergence of 'prose poetry', and during its last three decades in particular the time-honoured conventions of versification — together with the very distinction between poetry and prose — were subverted and overturned. The aim of this course will be to examine and debate, on the basis of close textual readings, the various ways in which poets sought to find a new language and new poetic structures with which to express an increasingly varied and disturbing spectrum of conscious and unconscious perceptions.

Contemporary French Thought: Paths of Deconstruction (Michaelmas Term)

Convenors: Prof. Ian MacLachlan and Dr Emily McLaughlin

This course on key strands in French thought of recent decades focuses particularly on paths to and from the notion of deconstruction associated with Jacques Derrida. Besides Derrida, we will examine

texts by Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Emmanuel Levinas, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Luc Nancy and Catherine Malabou, and these readings will raise fundamental issues relating to language, subjectivity, alterity, community, embodiment, materiality, and affect.

Francophone Postcolonial Literature (Michaelmas Term)

Convenors: Prof. Cecile Bishop and Dr Hannah Scheithauer

French colonialism profoundly altered perceptions of national and cultural identity, while decolonization was one of the most momentous upheavals of the twentieth century. In this course, you will explore the impact of France's changing relationship with her colonies and ex-colonies, as envisioned by writers and intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Exoticist works by writers such as Segalen and Loti will be compared with postcolonial literatures emerging from Africa, North Africa and the Caribbean (possible authors for study include Djébar, Chraïbi, Chamoiseau, Condé, Kourouma, Bâ, Oyono). Emphasis will be placed both on the interaction between literature and history, and on the aesthetic originality of the works themselves.

Poetry & Ethics (Hilary Term)

Convenors: Dr Carole Bourne-Taylor and Dr Emily McLaughlin

Poetry & Ethics brings together various strands of *poétique*. In the modern period poets have sought to articulate the relationship between poetry and forms of life (in its widest sense) with a view to foregrounding its ethical potential. Experience is the crux of these various poetic practices whose restrained lyricism reveals a far-reaching agenda centred on a commitment to the world. This course investigates how poets such as Marie-Claire Bancquart, Andrée Chédid, Jacques Roubaud, Valérie Rouzeau, Philippe Rahmy, Michel Deguy, Emmanuel Merle, Philippe Jaccottet, Yves Bonnefoy or Patrick Chamoiseau rethink human relationships in exciting new ways, challenging how we've traditionally defined notions like love or community, or re-evaluating ingrained assumptions about human and nonhuman agencies. This course explores the diverse range of innovative formal practices that these poets use to interrogate and to transform our relationships to ourselves, other people, and the physical world. Students will tackle a diverse range of themes - love, death, the body, the natural world, human and nonhuman beings - and will be introduced to a diverse range of poetic and theoretical movements, from New Elegy to Ecopoetics.

Reality, Representation and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century Prose Writing (Hilary Term)

Convenors: Prof. Tim Farrant and Prof. Jennifer Yee

This course of seminars will be concerned with examples of prose writing by a wide range of authors (Chateaubriand, Constant, Balzac, Stendhal, Mérimée, Gautier, Sand, Nerval, Flaubert, Zola, Maupassant, Huysmans, Rachilde) and will focus on a number of interrelated theoretical and literary-historical issues concerning 'schools' (Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism), genres (the fictional memoir, the novel, the short story), relationships (fiction and history, fiction and science, literature and the other arts, prose and poetry), thematic preoccupations (the individual and society, the fantastic, etc.), and narrative techniques (narrative structures, narratorial point of view, imagery, tense usage, etc.). The aim will be to explore the many different ways in which prose writers of the nineteenth century represented the world of human experience and reflected in theory and practice on the means and the implications of their representations.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - GERMAN

The German language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Medieval	Women's Writing in Medieval Germany	Hilary
Modern	Jews & Judaism in German Literature from 1740 to the Present	Michaelmas
	Literature and Medicine 1770-1930	Michaelmas
	Hölderlin in the World	Michaelmas
	The History of the Future	Michaelmas
	Nietzsche and His Impact	Hilary
	Cinema in a Cultural Context: German Film from 1930–2020	Hilary
	Translation: Theory and Practice (German into English)	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

MEDIEVAL

Women's Writing in Medieval Germany (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Henrike Lähnemann

Within a German-speaking context, women's writing happens in a variety of forms and formats: visions and mystical revelations, life writing, religious song and poetry. One of the key works is the C13 'Fließendes Licht der Gottheit' by Mechthild of Magdeburg, but the Special Subject also offers scope to explore life writing (e.g. in the 'Schwesternbücher'), narrative forms, or religious song. The texts represent forms of 'including the excluded', and the course encourages an investigation of gender-specific aspects of female authorship, as well as issues such as the public and private dimensions of literature, the role of the vernacular, the reception of pre-modern writing on modern literature. The focus will be on texts in German, but it is also possible to study this option on the basis of a combination of Latin and German material.

MODERN

Jews & Judaism in German Literature from 1740 to the Present (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. David Groiser

This course examines the discourses around Jews and Judaism in Germany and Austria against the background of the history of Jewish emancipation, the resurgence of antisemitism, the Holocaust, and recent attempts to confront and comprehend this history. Within this framework, students may wish to give particular attention to one or more of the following: the participation of Jewish writers in the culture of the Enlightenment, as well as the forging of a specific Jewish form of religious Enlightenment in response to the challenges of modernity; the development of a complicated philosemitism within the discourses of emancipation and toleration, and of ant-Jewish and antisemitic images from the Romantics onwards, present within a wide range of texts whose overt ideology was often far more liberal; the complex Jewish identities of such writers as Mendelssohn, Maimon, Heine, Freud, Kafka, Schnitzler, Stefan and Arnold Zweig, Buber, Rosenzweig, Lasker-Schüler,

Döblin, Roth or Kraus; the relationship between Jews in eastern and western Europe; attitudes to Hasidism and Kabbalah, neo-orthodoxy and reform; German Jews and the First World War; the 'renaissance' of Jewish culture in the Weimar Republic; languages of Judaism, particularly the relationship between German and Yiddish; the emergence of Zionism and Jewish nationalism; and representations of and responses to the Holocaust; conceptions of exile; and the question of whether a Jewish culture exists in present-day Germany and Austria.

Literature and Medicine 1770-1930 (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Barry Murnane

The relationship between literature and medicine is an important source of aesthetic developments in the modern era, helping to shape literary movements as diverse as *Empfindsamkeit* and Poetic Realism, Romanticism and Naturalism and helping to link writers like Goethe, Novalis, Büchner, Fontane, and Mann. There is no formal prescription and the course will allow you to examine a range of genres and writers including poetry and prose, scientific texts, and encyclopaedic literature, focusing on particular authors, periods, or on historical developments across the period as a whole. Comparative approaches are encouraged, with the opportunity to read developments in German culture alongside other European literatures. There is also opportunity to take a more theoretical focus, looking for example at issues such as affect, corporeality, and aesthetics. Some possible topics for discussion are: how literature deals mimetically with medical matters (death, concepts of illness and wellness, therapy); theories of imagination and feeling around 1800; the co-evolution of psychology in literature and clinical discourse; narrating illness; literature as medicine; depictions of medical practitioners; literature and drugs.

Hölderlin in the World (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Charlie Louth

Hölderlin's work is both rooted in his native Swabia and unusually receptive to the way the local is bound up in the distant, the removed and the foreign. This goes beyond his deep interest in Ancient Greece and his attempts to see German and Germany in Greek terms. The world of his poems is permeable and full of references to places remote in time and space, including London, Tahiti and the Americas. Hölderlin was fascinated by journeys and the way they connect distant points and allow one to think of them in relation to one another. As well as the many actual journeys made and reflected on in his poems, there are the courses of rivers and mountain ranges, crossing and making borders and readable as signs of how history might develop. He pays particular attention to bird-flight. All these things reveal the world to be deeply interconnected, so that every landscape, real or cultural, is a hybrid landscape, both of its place and elsewhere.

Hölderlin is primarily a poet, and his poetry will form the main focus, but – partly via his friendships with Schelling and Hegel – he was closely involved in the development of post-Kantian philosophy, and his fragmentary philosophical and theoretical writings have also been returned to by many later philosophers. His poetry has drawn a large number of key 20th and 21st century thinkers, from Heidegger onwards, as well as poets from around the world. So this special subject offers an opportunity to read and write about Hölderlin's work from a variety of perspectives, including comparative ones, noting the multiple relations that traverse it, run out into contemporary preoccupations and continue to make their way in the world today.

Initial reading list:

Theodor Adorno, 'Parataxis: Zur späten Lyrik Hölderlins', in *Noten zur Literatur III* (Frankfurt, 1965) and elsewhere

David Constantine, *Hölderlin* (Oxford, 1988)

Winfried Menninghaus, *Hälfte des Lebens: Versuch über Hölderlins Poetik* (Frankfurt, 2005)

The History of the Future (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Bernhard Malkmus

Many of us regard the human sense of the future as being relatively fixed over the course of history. However, a closer engagement with social and cultural histories shows the degree to which the human understanding of the future has shifted over centuries. Especially since the Enlightenment, the relation between what the historian Reinhart Koselleck calls our 'space of experience' and our 'horizon of expectation' has changed significantly in European cultures. This development has gathered even more momentum since the end of WWII – the period on which will focus in this seminar. Through close readings of literary texts and cultural theories, we will investigate how concepts of the future have changed in the light of the Great Acceleration, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, digitisation and the unfolding global ecological crisis.

How have these changes shaped our perception of reality our and engagement with the present? How do our imaginaries of the future relate to specific cultures of memory? In what ways does the German intellectual tradition contribute to a deeper understanding of the histories of the future humans narrate to each other in a global context? What kind of role do literature and the arts play in present-day concepts of the future?

We will engage with a selection of modern literature ranging from Friedrich Nietzsche to W.G. Sebald and Iris Wolff, films from Werner Herzog to the Berlin School, cultural theories from Hannah Arendt to Ulrich Beck and Yuval Harari. With the help of these writers and thinkers we are asking ourselves: What kind of future are we as humans imagining in an increasingly humanoid and anthropomorphic world?

Nietzsche and His Impact (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. David Groiser

Though largely ignored during his lifetime, Nietzsche was soon recognised as the philosopher of modernity. More radically, honestly and intelligently than anyone else, he explored the consequences that must follow if traditional religious belief and moral constraints are jettisoned to make way for a view of the universe based on scientific knowledge and the individual will. While his ideas about how to fill the resulting moral vacuum have been controversial, he is widely recognised as one of the most interesting – and entertaining – philosophers and 'cultural critics'. He is also among the most brilliant of German stylists.

When Nietzsche began to be widely read in the 1890s, his ideas were found stimulating and liberating in the most varied quarters. There were Nietzscheans on the radical right and the revolutionary left, in the women's movement and among Zionists. He was read avidly, but also critically, by writers as varied as Thomas Mann, Kafka, Rilke, Musil, Gottfried Benn, Alfred Döblin, Hermann Broch and Hermann Hesse, within cinema, as well as by theorists in many fields, from philosophy to political and critical theory, sociology, legal theory, psychoanalysis, literary and cultural theory, classical studies, anthropology, semiotics and even theology. Outside Germany, he was engaged with seriously by Yeats, Lawrence, Joyce, Stevens, Gide, Malraux, Camus, Belyi, Solvyov, D'Annunzio, and many others.

Students will be expected to know the following books by Nietzsche in particular detail: *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), and *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), and to

have read more widely in Nietzsche's works. They will also study his reception, looking closely at a text or texts by one or more subsequent writers in relation to Nietzsche.

Cinema in a Cultural Context: German Film from 1930–2020 (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Ben Morgan

The course has two possible points of focus. The first is the study of German cinema between the coming of sound and the arrival of New German Cinema: 1930-1970 (the first German talkie was made in 1929; by 1970, Fassbinder had already made 4 feature films). The second is the cinema of the Berlin Republic, with a particular focus on the films of the Berlin School.

Topics for the period 1930-1970 will include propaganda and entertainment films in the Third Reich, the realism of the Rubble Films of the late 1940s, the different strategies for remembering and coming to terms with the past in the popular films of the 1950s and 1960s. German films of the period will be put in dialogue with relevant Hollywood productions of the period. The period includes the political ruptures of 1933, 1945, 1968, and the aesthetic 'new beginning' of the Oberhausen manifesto in 1962. But the focus of the course will be the continuities that can be observed in film style, narrative techniques and in the way film is used as a medium for reflecting on everyday problems during the period.

The Berlin School is the name given to a group of film makers who mostly studied at the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin with the filmmaker Harun Farocki (1944-2014) and who came to prominence at the start of the new millennium. Key figures include Thomas Arslan, Angela Schanelec, Christian Petzold, Christoph Hochhäusler, and Maren Ade. Arslan first gained recognition with his migrant trilogy *Geschwister-Kardesler* (1997), *Dealer* (1999), and *Der schöne Tag* (2001). But like many other Berlin School filmmakers he is also interested in productive interrogations of genre film, such as the gangster film *Im Schatten* (2010) and the film *Gold* (2013), starring Nina Hoss, which re-imagines the Western. Nina Hoss is a recurring figure in the films in which Petzold explores the social landscape of a globalised world, and re-visits key moments from the recent past in search of counterfactual alternatives. Hoss features in Petzold's *Jerichow* (2008), a re-making of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946) which adapts the conventions of film noir for a 21st-century globalised capitalism. Other films to be studied would include Schanelec's *Marseille* (2004) and *Orly* (2010); the tv-trilogy *Dreileben* (2011) which Hochhäusler made with Petzold and Dominik Graf (b. 1952) as part of an exchange between the three filmmakers about the uses of genre cinema; Maren Ade's *Alle Anderen* (2009) and *Toni Erdmann* (2016); Petzold's films for cinema, such as *Die Innere Sicherheit* (2000), *Barbara* (2012), *Phoenix* (2014), *Transit* (2018), *Undine* (2020), but also his work for tv, such as *Toter Mann* (2001), and the episodes he directed for the police procedural *Polizeiruf 110*. Films are available on dvd and many can also be viewed on streaming services. The films are largely available with English subtitles, so this Special Subject is also suitable for students interested in cultural studies or film studies. Over the 4 sessions, the aim would be to cover 4 or 5 films each time, focusing on a range of filmmakers and issues.

You can start familiarizing yourself with the vocabulary of film studies by reading David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction*, currently in its 12th edition (you can read any edition). Otherwise, the best thing to do is to start watching films. For the 1930-1970 strand: You can work by director (e.g. Käutner, Harlan, Sierck), but it is often more productive to watch films with the same star (e.g. Heinz Rühman, Hans Albers, Ilse Werner, Zarah Leander), or from the same year, to get a clearer sense of continuities in style and approach. Similarly, for the Berlin School: watch as many of the films as you can but watch also films with the stars the directors regularly work with (e.g. Nina Hoss, Ronald Zehrfeld, Matthias Brandt, Paula Beer), or films made in same year as Berlin School productions.

Translation: Theory and Practice (German into English) (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Karen Leeder

This is a hands-on paper for those with a degree-level or native understanding of German, which asks students to work on the theory of translation, to reflect critically on existing translations from German, but also to offer a substantial translation they themselves have done and to reflect on their critical practice. The way the term is organised will depend on numbers subscribing and interests and will either be done in 4 or 6 sessions. A basic model might be something like this:

1. One or two essays on an issue of translation studies: e.g. Untranslatability; domestication/foreignization; gender and translation; invisibility of the translator; prismatic translation; genre and translation etc.
2. Critical Comparison of translations. In this/these session(s) students would write a critical commentary on a translation or a comparative commentary.
3. Practical Translation: students would translate a short piece and offer an Introduction/Reflection on critical practice that engages with theoretical and practical issues.
4. Practical Translation 2: Students would submit two short pieces or one longer piece in any of these modes up to the normal word limit of the special subject. Those interested would ideally need to start keeping an eye out for possible translation material they might wish to work with.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - GREEK

The Greek language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Course Title	Term of Study
[core seminar] Greek Literature and Culture in/after the 19th century: Themes, texts and contexts	Michaelmas
Translation and Adaptation: Texts, Histories, Practices	Michaelmas or Hilary
The Remembrance of National History	Hilary
Greek Literature and Culture in/after the 19th century II	Hilary
Modern Greek Literature in Comparative Frames	Hilary
Cavafy in the World	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

[core seminar] Greek Literature and Culture in/after the 19th century: Themes, texts and contexts Convenor: Prof. Dimitris Papanikolaou This is the core postgraduate seminar in Modern Greek; it runs in Michaelmas term, and counts as one of your Special Subjects. It is advisable that all students interested in the modern period follow this seminar [Students with an interest in the Byzantine and Early Modern periods, should ask further advice before making their final choices.] The aim of the seminar is to discuss and analyse Greek literary and cultural texts of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. To do so, each year's seminar starts from a series of keywords (in the recent past keywords included: "adaptation/adoption", "circulation, transfer, (dis)placement", "family", "the weird", "performance/performativity", "genealogy/ archaeology/ archive"). This year's organizing keyword/concept is "The making of..." As always, the aim is to also cover, from this fresh perspective, key larger themes and debates in Modern Greek studies (such as, for instance, storytelling and community, orality/textuality, the influence of Classics, the making and remaking of a Neohellenic identity, the difference between generations, ethnicity and difference, acts of citizenship and identity, and the appearance of new forms and movements). However, our approach will be more theoretical and, as much as we can, more geared towards creative discussions of literary and cultural texts and their contexts. Students who want to work independently in their second term and devise their own focus of research, will be able to take this option for a second term, adding a subtitle with the specific theme that they will approach in Hilary and list it as: Greek Literature and Culture in/after the 19th century II [followed by a specific subtitle].
Translation and Adaptation: Texts, Histories, Practices (Michaelmas Term or Hilary Term) Convenor: Kostas Skordyles The transference of literary works into another language is increasingly seen as a creative process, blurring the boundaries between translation and adaptation. Translation is often thought of not as a fixed concept but as forming a 'changing' textuality, whose boundaries are historically set by discursive practices and translational norms. In this seminar, students will be guided through key concepts in translation studies and various types of considerations that need to be taken into account in the production and analysis of literary translations. The theoretical work of L. Venuti, E. Gentzler, H. Vermeer, G. Toury, I. Even-Zohar and others will provide the framework for a close

reading of a number of texts and their translations/adaptations into/from Greek. We will start from obvious examples (from the multiple translations of Cavafy into English, Kazantzakis's various editions and translations and the famous translations of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" into Greek by Seferis, Papatzonis and others, to Jenny Mastoraki's Greek translations of *The Catcher in the Rye* or Vassilis Alexakis self-translations between French and Greek). But the students are expected, based on the theoretical and critical literature discussed, to search for new examples and organize presentations and essays on specific case studies.

The Remembrance of National History (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Kostas Skordyles

What does it mean to remember events that one never experienced? Why is the fall of Constantinople or the Asia Minor Disaster still considered traumatic by Greeks today? Why the name Macedonia continues to stir up strong affective reactions in contemporary Greece and beyond? What determines how national history is constructed and commemorated? In this seminar the analysis of mourning and loss, individual and collective memory, trauma and monumentality is combined in the light of a variety of theoretical approaches with a close reading of important moments in Greek history. The work of M. Halbwachs, P. Nora, P. Connerton, A. Erll, J. Assmann, B. Anderson, M. Hirsch, E. Hobsbawm, P. Ricoeur and others informs readings of a variety of cultural texts across the 20th century and ranging across different media: including testimonial literature on Asia Minor (from Doukas and Venezis to D. Papamarkos), performances and celebrations during the military dictatorship of 1967-74, films and Greek graphic novels.

Modern Greek Literature in Comparative Frames (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Dimitris Papanikolaou

This Special Subject aims to encourage the study of 19th, 20th and 21st century Greek literature and culture in a comparative and world literature frame. We will start from the discussion of obvious and well-known case studies, such as: Greek Romanticism and its European counterparts; naturalism and the Greek ιθοϋπα(α; Surrealism in Greece; Greek and other modernisms; European aestheticism and Cavafy; literature/culture during the Greek dictatorship and the global '60s; 'Sung Poetry' in Europe and the case of the Greek Melopoiemene Poiese; postmodernism in Greece and beyond; the reception of Greek literature outside Greece in different historical moments; Greece of the Crisis as a global moment; Greece and the Global South). Students will be asked to contribute their own examples and develop their own comparative perspectives, starting from specific genres, themes, or authors/artists, and moving on to explore movements, parallels, intertextual affinities, creative engagements and the dynamics of reading different texts and contexts together.

Cavafy in the World (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Dimitris Papanikolaou

The aim of this seminar will be to revisit the work of Cavafy, while also taking into account this work's global presence and the way we can see this global presence as an opening to discuss current issues in Comparative and World Literature studies. This is a seminar about Cavafy, Cavafy in comparative contexts, and global Cavafy as a way to review debates on comparison, cultural capital, sexuality and biopolitics, archaeopolitics, worlding and translation. It is also a seminar that aims to discuss very recent fascinating insights on Cavafy (such as the recent special issue by Boundary 2 on Cavafy and postcoloniality; essays on queer Cavafy and Cavafy and cultural capital by Kosofsky Sedgwick, Faubion, Halim, Mendelsohn; the work of M. Boletsi on Cavafian hauntology; or the work by Gourgouris and Emerich on translation and adaptation) alongside older arguments, readings and bibliography; and, of course, alongside Cavafy's poems and our own evolving relationship with them.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - ITALIAN

The Italian language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Medieval & Early Modern	Problems in Dante Interpretation	Michaelmas
	Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Lyric Poetry	Hilary
Modern	Contemporary Archival Imaginings in Italy	Michaelmas
	Literature and Cinema in Italian Culture	Hilary
	Literature and Politics in 20 th Century Italy	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

MEDIEVAL & EARLY MODERN

Problems in Dante Interpretation (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Elena Lombardi

All of Dante's works pose challenges to the reader and have led to diverse, often conflicting critical and scholarly interpretations. This course offers the student the opportunity to concentrate on central issues in the *Divina commedia*, but also to look at other works if desired. Problems that will be given particular attention include allegory, imagery, dating, and Dante's sources.

Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Lyric Poetry (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Francesca Southerden

Italian lyric poetry of the 13th and 14th century displays a remarkable talent for innovation which is carried out through constantly assimilating and reassessing ideas and techniques of preceding generations. Students will have the opportunity to examine the work of major figures from the Sicilians to Petrarch, including Dante and the *stilnovisti*, and also, if they wish, to explore lesser-known names, such as the 13th-century Guittoniani or contemporaries of Petrarch such as Antonio da Ferrara.

MODERN

Contemporary Archival Imaginings in Italy (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Emma Bond

This course will introduce students to new creative ways of engaging with archival materials that shed light on transnational histories of Italian travel, migration, race, empire and colonialism on various scales, ranging from family archives, community archives, historical and state archives to digital archives and archives of transient spaces. Students will be asked to critically reflect on new and traditional theories of archival experiences and archiving practices, and to engage with related creative outputs including literature, film and visual arts. We will interrogate the relationship between archives and systems of individual and collective memory, explore the experience of visiting archives and encountering the materiality of archival things, and analyse the intersections between fiction and history writing in archives.

Literature and Cinema in Italian Culture (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Guido Bonsaver

This option intends to explore the issue of the interrelation between literature and cinema from two viewpoints. First there will be a historical and chronological overview of the development of cinema as a narrative form in constant dialogue with literary texts and with the involvement of literary figures. Secondly, students will be introduced to the main concepts of film adaptation and will be asked to close-study a selection of examples related to contemporary Italian literature and cinema.

Literature and Politics in 20th Century Italy (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Guido Bonsaver

Fascism had a major impact on Italian culture during the 1920s and 30s and has continued to be a central issue in political and cultural debate since the end of World War II. This course will offer students the opportunity to look at the work of significant authors who in different degrees made a commitment to Fascism (such as Bontempelli, Ungaretti and Vittorini), at others who attempted to stand back from it (such as Montale), and at different tendencies within Fascism (in particular traditionalism versus modernism), bearing in mind throughout how views of Fascism and Fascist literature have evolved over the last fifty years.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - PORTUGUESE

The Portuguese language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Modern	The Colonial and Postcolonial Literature of Portuguese-Speaking Africa	Michaelmas
	Lusophone Women Writers	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

MODERN

The Colonial and Postcolonial Literature of Portuguese-Speaking Africa (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr. Catriona Parry

This course will engage with representative texts from Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde. It will examine a selection of authors from different geographical settings for their portrayal of colonial experiences and post-colonial legacies. A first aim of the course will be to investigate the ongoing reflection about issues surrounding national identity, over a period of several decades. A second aim will be to consider how and why African authors incorporate distinctive African dimensions into their work, while simultaneously strategically engaging with and appropriating European literary traditions, be it at the level of themes, form or language.

Lusophone Women Writers (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Claire Williams

This course takes as its starting-point the well-documented isolation and marginality of women writers in both Portugal and Brazil in the first half of the 20th century, before moving on to consider the growing impact of new generations of female writers, from the 1950s onwards and more especially after the return to democracy in both countries. It examines the differing strategies deployed by female-authored texts as they negotiate the minefield of genre and gender, and issues surrounding critical reception. Students will have the opportunity to study major canonical writers, but also, if they so wish, some of the lesser-known writers.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS – RUSSIAN & SLAVONIC

The Russian/Slavonic language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Course Title	Term of Study
Modern Russian Lyric Poetry, Themes and Forms	Michaelmas
The Gulag and the Russian Literary Process	Michaelmas
The Russian Experience of Modernity 1905-45	Michaelmas
Rise of the Russian Novel	Hilary
Gender and Representation in Russian Culture from 1800	Hilary
Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Literature	Hilary
Czech Prose Fiction and Drama since 1774	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

Russian Lyric Poetry, Themes and Forms (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Andrew Kahn

The modern Russian poetic canon is exceptionally rich and diverse. It is full of formal experimentation, original voices, and has proven to be historically and political alert at all times (sometimes underground, sometimes from abroad) and in complex dialogue with the nation's history, European art forms, and larger artistic movements. The course will consist of four sets of primary texts organized under a thematic rubric. Rubrics include Identity/Consciousness, Nature, Art and Objects, Cycles. Given the time available, the approach to texts will be more synchronic than historical with an emphasis more on lines than lives (to use a distinction G.S. Smith articulated). There is an ample and methodologically diverse scholarly tradition that in itself repays study, especially at the postgraduate level, as an education in different schools, including Formalism, Structuralism, semiotics, intertextuality, visual poetry, and, of course, New Criticism. One aim of the option is to encourage the taker to consider (and apply) major approaches in the study of lyric poetry, Western and Russian. The anthology per topic will contain approximately 20 poems, drawn chronologically from various periods and movements. The selection of texts will aim to help the graduate student form a rounded view of the depth of the tradition and to become acquainted with major, second-tier and even minor poets who have written interesting poems. The list of proposed works of poetry will favour poets from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries but may also reach back to the nineteenth century. Topics, authors and readings are adjusted to reflect contemporary trends and individual interest.

The Gulag and the Russian Literary Process (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Polly Jones

This course examines 20th and 21st century Russian and Russophone literature about the Soviet labour camps (Gulag), placing this century-long engagement with the theme within the traditions of older Russian prison narratives, and comparing it with Holocaust fiction where appropriate. It considers the shifting artistic, political and ethical stakes of representing the Gulag, and these texts' role in Soviet and post-Soviet memory politics. Some background reading on the history of the Gulag and on dissidence and samizdat will be helpful, and theoretical readings on memory, post-memory and trauma will be a core part of the paper. Students will also be encouraged to engage with the numerous film and TV adaptations of Gulag literature from the 1990s to the present.

Texts and authors that could be covered, after consultation with students, include: foundational 19th-century texts about incarceration (Dostoevskii, Chekhov); early Stalin-era depictions before the theme

became taboo (the Belomorkanal project; Pogodin); published and samizdat/tamizdat Gulag prose by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*Ivan Denisovich, V krughe pervom, Arkhipelag Gulag*); the samizdat and tamizdat prison narratives of Vasilii Grossman (*Vse techet; Zhizn' i sud'ba*) and Varlam Shalamov (*Kolymskie rasskazy*); perpetrator fiction by Giorgii Vladimov (*Vernyi Ruslan*) and Sergei Dovlatov (*Zona*); post-memory fiction by relatives of prisoners (Bulat Okudzhava, Vasilii Aksenov); and the 21st-century reinvention of Gulag prose by authors including Guzel' Yakhina, Evgenii Vodolazkin, Zakhar Prilepin and Sergei Lebedev.

The Russian Experience of Modernity 1905-45 (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Philip Bullock

The experience of modernity in this period, encompassing as it does revolutions and civil war, two world wars, the establishing of a new society and its subsequent repression, required a radical shift in artistic perceptions and cultural sensibilities. This course will consider the nature of writers' responses to social rupture, the disparate approaches elicited by an evolving political and philosophical discourse and by the rapidly changing relationships between individuals, and between the state and the individual. From the last years of the Silver Age to the imposition of Socialist Realism, literature, whether in formal poetic 'schools', loose associations of prose writers, or in the work of individuals, reflected a conscious search for new forms and found expression in experimental writing over all genres. A wide-ranging, thematic approach will be adopted to the study of the period, allowing students to build on their previous studies whilst exploring new authors. Depending on students' academic background, it may also be possible to consider literature's dialogue with the other arts in the period (music, cinema, theatre, the visual arts), and the relationship between Western theories of modernism and the avant-garde and the Russian/Soviet context will be critically interrogated.

Rise of the Russian Novel (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Dr Panayiotis Xenophontos

The nineteenth century Russian novel constitutes the canon and the core of Russian literature. Many people study Russian to be able to read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in original, many more follow their works through translation. The course studies the novelistic tradition as it unfolded throughout the century. We'll study the early history of the novel when writers such as Gogol' and Lermontov began to explore the possibilities of 'folk' tales, 'society' tales, the prose cycle, framed narratives, historical fiction, the epic and the psychological case-study, the establishment of Russian Realist tradition with the early novels of Goncharov and Turgenev and the full blossoming of the genre under the pen of the giants. The students will read major Russian novels, analyse the emerging genre in European perspective allowing to see the novel as the formative element of Russian literature, Russian culture and in many ways, Russian social life as the generations of Russian readers were brought up on the models and behavioural patterns provided by the novels. The course may also be tailored according to the interests of the students allowing them the choice of the novels to read.

Gender and Representation in Russian Culture from 1800 (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Philip Bullock

Since the 1980s, study of gender and identity has been one of the liveliest areas of Russian cultural history. Among particular issues of concern have been the rediscovery of work by forgotten women writers, and discussion of the particular characteristics of this; analysis of 'the feminine' as a construct, and of its connections with the representation of national identity (especially in the governing myth of 'Mother Russia'); study of the representation of sexuality and the development of 'queer theory' and LGBTQ+ studies; and examination of the link between normative concepts of gender identity and self-expression in literature and other forms of writing, and also in the visual arts (painting, film, etc.)

Those taking the course may specialise in any one area of women's writing in its relation to cultural history over a longer time-span (for example, women's memoirs, 1890-1970); or they may consider several different topics with reference to a specifically denominated historical epoch (for example, women's writing, representations of sexuality in the visual arts, and concepts of gender identity in the era of Romanticism); or they may wish to examine women's writing and feminist criticism in dialogue with masculinity studies and queer theory. They are urged to contact the Convenor well in advance of their arrival in Oxford in order to discuss possibilities, and to obtain a list of preliminary reading in gender theory and in Russian cultural history.

Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Literature (Hilary Term)

Convenors: Prof. Polly Jones and Dr Tamar Koplatadze

This course considers the comparisons and contrasts between late Soviet and post-Soviet culture. The late Soviet literary world was far from 'stagnant', and contained within it many of the literary currents and experimentation that would come out into the open during and after glasnost. Glasnost, perestroika, the abolition of censorship and the disintegration of the USSR brought about fundamental changes in the circumstances of Russian literature. External factors such as political and economic instability, the possibility of travel abroad, changes in the role of literary journals, the collapse of the Union of Writers, Booker and associated prizes, the advent of the computer, have all conditioned authors' subjects and working methods. Although the legacy of the social command and the habit of writing in opposition died hard, the period has produced much experimental writing, post-modernist or avant-garde in nature, as well as more conventionally realistic works. Previously taboo subjects such as the religious revival and explicit sexuality were frequently treated; questions relating to gender were discussed; events and writing of the Soviet period were revisited, and the need to amend or amplify the historical record was keenly felt. Furthermore, Russophone and non-ethnic Russian writers both in Russia and the former Soviet republics (e.g. Tatarstan, Chechnya, Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia) have brought to the fore (post)colonial questions around national identity, race, centre-periphery, migration, language and the environment. The significantly diminished role of the creative intelligentsia in society, together with an overall lack of direction and coherence, has added to the unpredictability and excitement of the latest literature. For the late Soviet period, possible topics include: poetry and prose of the 'Thaw'; samizdat (e.g. Erofeev); Gulag prose and poetry (Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, Grossman, Vladimov); the late Soviet historical novel (Trifonov, Okudzhava, Aitmatov); women's writing (Baranskaia, Petrushevskaia, Tolstaya). For the post-1991 period, possible topics include Russophone writing (Yakhina, Bibish, Bagirov); (post-)colonialism (Makanin, Sadulaev, Ganieva); gender; dystopia and magical historicism (Sorokin, Pelevin).

Czech Prose Fiction and Drama since 1774 (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Dr Rajendra Chitnis

This option covers the rise of modern Czech fiction and drama, from Romanticism and the National Revival, through Realism, Naturalism, Decadence and Symbolism, Modernism, the Avant-garde and Socialism to the present day. Depending on students' previous studies and current interests, the option may take the form of a survey of core texts from throughout the period, or students may choose, in consultation with the convenor, to focus on particular genres, time-periods or themes. In recent years, students have focused, for example, on Czech women's writing, folklore and the fantastic in Czech literature, Modernism and literary experiment, and Czech literature since the fall of Communism.

Since all texts are studied in the Czech original, students need to have existing reading fluency in Czech.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS - SPANISH

The Spanish language-specific special subjects available in 2025-26 are:

Specialism	Course Title	Term of Study
Medieval	Myth, History and the Construction of Identity in Medieval Iberia	Hilary
Golden Age	Cervantes's Experiments in Fiction	Michaelmas
	Drama and Society in the Golden Age	Michaelmas
	Literature and Painting in the Golden Age of Spain	Michaelmas
	Developments in Prose Narrative in the Spanish Renaissance	Hilary
	Faith and Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World	Hilary
Modern Peninsular Spanish	Responses to the Spanish Civil War	Hilary
	19 th and 20 th Century Spanish Women Writers	Hilary
Spanish American	Renaissance and Baroque Poetry in the Hispanic World (colonial America, Europe and Asia), 1500-1700	Michaelmas
	Political Commitment and the Avant Garde in Latin American Literature	Michaelmas
	Ecological Imaginaries in Contemporary Spanish American Fiction	Hilary
	Haunting in Latin American Fiction	Michaelmas
	Decadence, Art, and Science in Spanish America	Hilary

Course descriptions are given below:

MEDIEVAL

Myth, History, and the Construction of Identity in Medieval Iberia (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Geraldine Hazbun

This course will examine the re-imagining of the past in medieval epic and chronicle, with a view to exploring the ways in which the literary reconfiguration of history in these texts shapes the identities of their day, comprising ethnicity, gender, proto-nationalist sentiment, and religious affiliation. Close attention will be paid to the literary strategies which underpin the transformation of history, and to the creative interchange of history and myth. With close reference to the rich cultural background and political history of medieval Iberia, the course will also seek to understand the ideological foundations of the reconception of history.

GOLDEN AGE

Cervantes's Experiments in Fiction (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr Oliver Noble Wood

Cervantes is the great iconic author of Hispanic letters, and his influence on the development of narrative has been incalculable. Indeed, as the American critic Harold Bloom observed, "context cannot hold Cervantes". This course will place Cervantes's fiction in the context of Spain's Golden Age but also look at ways in which it could be said to transcend its age and anticipate modern fiction in its various modes – realist, modernist, and even postmodernist.

Drama and Society in the Golden Age (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. Jonathan Thacker

The main purpose of drama is not to support a dominant ideology. This statement is taken as axiomatic in this course's attempts to test the extent to which Golden-Age drama questioned the dominant world-views of the period. An age which experienced a consolidation of power in church and state and in which many lived in fear of the agents of the Inquisition managed to produce a kind of theatre which could 'decir sin decir', which could subtly undermine the ruling ideologies. As well as examining the relationship of theatre to authority (including its use as propaganda) in the works of the major dramatists of the period, this course traces the history of the reception of Golden Age drama from its early troubles with the moralists through to present day critical orthodoxies.

Literature and Painting in the Golden Age of Spain (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr Oliver Noble Wood

This course explores the close relationship which existed between writing and painting in the Golden Age, one which went far beyond reworkings of Horace's 'ut pictura poesis'. There were poet-painters and painter-poets. Poets also wrote about painters and paintings, or cultivated a highly visual style; dramatists wrote plays about painters, and often use the metaphorical language of paintings. Painters wrote important treatises on painting which make frequent connections between verbal and visual art, while other writers have fascinating things to say about the programmatic nature of particular collections. The Council of Trent's decree on images affected the course of religious art. The long debate about the status of painting – mechanical craft or noble art – caused writers and painters alike to defend its nobility by emphasising the painter as learned in many things (the libraries of El Greco and Velázquez demonstrate how widely they read). The course will look especially at Juan de Jáuregui, José de Sigüenza, Vicencio Carducho and Francisco Pacheco, alongside paintings by Spanish artists of the period, notably El Greco and Velázquez.

Developments in Prose Narrative in the Spanish Renaissance (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. Jonathan Thacker

This course examines the extraordinary innovations in prose narrative in the Spanish Golden Age. This period saw the publication of the first picaresque novels, *Don Quijote*, *Persiles y Sigismunda* and a new type of short fiction (practised by Cervantes, Lope de Vega, María de Zayas and Salas Barbadillo amongst others). The course investigates the history of and reasons for the use and abuse,

acceptance and rejection, imitation and parody of earlier models in prose works short and long. The influence of classical, Italian and native Spanish prose narrative on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century works by a number of authors is traced in some detail.

Faith and Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World (Hilary Term)

Convenors: Dr Imogen Choi

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Spanish-speaking world saw the creation of some of the greatest works of the mystical tradition, as well as a flourishing of religious poetry, drama, music and visual arts. These centuries were also a time of religious reformation, intolerance and persecution, during which Jewish, converso, and Morisco writers within and outside of Spain continued to produce their own literatures, which dealt with themes of exile, identity and the relationship to sacred texts in creative and surprising ways. Topics and authors studied might include Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, Luis de León, sacred epic and lyric, authors of the Sephardic diaspora, colonial devotional poetry and aljamiado Morisco texts, but students are encouraged to follow their own interests and will be introduced to a range of methodological approaches.

MODERN PENINSULAR SPANISH

Responses to the Spanish Civil War (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Dr Daniela Omlor

This option explores the varied responses to the Civil War in Spanish literature across a range of genres. The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) has played an important role not only in the history of Spain and Europe but also within literary and cultural production. During the war, literature and culture were often utilized as propaganda tools on both sides and the war continued to be a point of reference during Franco's dictatorship, both for writers in exile and at home. From the transition to democracy which followed Franco's death in 1975 onwards, Spanish literature has been engaged in a so-called recovery of historical memory which ran in parallel with the passing of the Ley de Memoria Histórica (2006). Students will investigate the various responses to the war and its aftermath in the works of writers such as Javier Cercas and Javier Marías. They will have the opportunity to focus on those issues and genres that interest them the most and are encouraged to employ a variety of different approaches to the study of the subject, including a comparative one.

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Spanish Women Writers (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Dr Laura Lonsdale

The course approaches women's writing from a historical, theoretical, and literary perspective. It is intended to enable students to develop an awareness about questions of canonicity and authorial recognition, exploring issues related to textual representation and sexual politics. Depending on their interests students can choose to focus on the work of one or two authors, or they can read more widely across a variety of authors, genres, and time periods.

SPANISH AMERICAN

Renaissance and Baroque Poetry in the Hispanic World (colonial America, Europe and Asia), 1500-1700 (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr Imogen Choi

This course will explore the development of poetry during the early modern period in the Hispanic world, a time of creative ferment, revolutionary experimentation and complex embedding within the various social, religious, ethnic and geographical contexts of the Spanish empire. Different approaches and comparative perspectives are welcome. Students may choose to focus their work on the acknowledged classics of the period (poets such as Garcilaso de la Vega, Góngora, Quevedo, Sor Juana), explore other poets or consider particular forms, including popular and performative poetry. Close attention will be paid to the historical contexts in which poetry was produced, circulated and received in different Hispanic contexts, and to the ways in which poets interact with the literary currents of their time in Europe or elsewhere and with the classical tradition.

Political Commitment and the Avant-Garde in Latin American Literature (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Dr Dominic Moran

This course would deal with the various ways in which creative artists (poets, novelists and playwrights) have tried to address in their work the problem of combining, without compromising either, aesthetic freedom and basic socialist sympathies. In particular, it will focus on the problematic proposition that radical, avant-garde writing may be more politically potent than more classical forms of social realism – an issue that will be considered in the light of recent critical theory dealing with such matters. Writers studied would/could include Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Julio Cortázar, Tomás Eloy Martínez, Reinaldo Arenas, Jorge Adoum, and Ariel Dorfman.

Ecological Imaginaries in Contemporary Spanish American Fiction (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Dr Olivia Vázquez Medina

Since the 1940s Spanish American narrative has been among the most innovative and vibrant in the world, as is witnessed by the work of such authors as Borges, Asturias, Carpentier, and Rulfo, who were established figures before the 'Boom' of the 1960s and 1970s, by internationally acclaimed 'Boom' writers like García Marquez, Vargas Llosa, Cortázar, and Fuentes, and by several generations of later authors who have been the focus of international attention. While some have been innovative realists, others have sought alternative means of depicting their sub-continent and conveying their personal vision. Students will investigate the various responses to realism seen in the works of modern Spanish American writers; they will, however, be encouraged to concentrate on those areas and issues that most interest them and to employ a range of approaches in their study of this subject.

Haunting in Latin American Fiction (Michaelmas Term)

Convenor: Prof. María Blanco

This course will explore Latin American literature of haunting, ghosts, and revenants in the long twentieth century. Students will be asked to question the use, location, and logic of ghosts in literary fiction. They will also study the ways in which different authors (among them Machado de Assis, Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, Juan Rulfo, and the contemporary Latino writer Junot Díaz) craft

these figures and the events of haunting in order to ask specific questions about the problems of history and its progress. The curriculum will be organized according to different theoretical approaches that have been used to study ghosts, thus offering students the opportunity to perform close readings of key texts, as well as methodological frameworks to debate the critical understanding of this literary phenomenon.

Decadence, Art, and Science in Spanish America (Hilary Term)

Convenor: Prof. María Blanco

In this course, candidates will be able to study the literature, art, cultural, and scientific debates from the transatlantic fin de siècle (1880-1920), their reception in Spanish America and how these affected Spanish American thinking. An exploration of these debates will help candidates situate the emergence and expansion of *modernismo* across the region. Alongside key *modernista* texts such as Martí's *Versos sencillos* (1882), Darío's *Azul...* (1888), *Prosas profanas* (1896), *Los raros* (1896), and *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel* (1900), and Leopoldo Lugones's *Lunario sentimental* (1909), candidates will be able to read a series of essays, chronicles, and treatises on such areas of life as aesthetics, science, and sexuality, which were widely disseminated during this period (among them Darío's "Los colores del estandarte" from 1896, Pedro Emilio Coll's "Decadentismo y americanismo" from 1901, and others like Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, 1892).

Please complete the [online form](#) to record your option choices by 22 August 2025.

You're welcome to contact the course convenors directly with any questions about the course offerings and reading lists. (For contact details please see the Faculty website: <https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/people>)

Alternatively, please contact the Graduate Office at:
graduate.studies@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk.