

Telephone (01865) 279120

Fax (01865) 790819

The Queen's College
Oxford
OX1 4AW

July 2016

Dear Fresher

We are delighted that we were able to offer you a place at Queen's, and we look forward to seeing you again in October. In the meantime we thought you might welcome some information about how best to prepare for your first year's study at Oxford.

Your first year will be taken up with work for the Preliminary Examination in Modern Languages which will be sat in June, at the end of the Trinity Term. For those reading French with another language or subject the Examination will consist of four papers, two on language and two on literature (as set out below). For those reading only French the Examination will consist of these four papers, and also three others (detailed at the end of this letter).

Language Papers:

- I. This paper will consist of (a) French grammar (20 short sentences for translation into French); (b) a prose passage for translation into French; and (c) Synthesis: a summary in French of a passage of French dealing with one of the texts prescribed for Paper IV (see below).
- II. This paper will consist of (a) a prose passage for translation into English; and (b) Translation: translation of a passage from one of the texts prescribed for Paper IV, excluding *La Chastelaine de Vergi*.

Literature Papers:

- III. Short Texts. For this you will be required to study six brief but self-contained works (listed below), arranged in three contrasting pairs. In the examination you will be asked to write commentaries on three passages, one from each section (A, B, and C):
 - A. Montaigne, 'Des cannibales', from the *Essais*
Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*
 - B. Baudelaire, 'Spleen et idéal' from *Les Fleurs du Mal* (30 poems only are set: see list printed at the end of this letter)
Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*
 - C. Racine, *Phèdre*
Beckett, *En attendant Godot*
- IV. French Prose Fiction. For this you will be required to study four texts (as listed below). In the examination you will be asked to write essays on three of these, from a choice of questions on each text:

La Chastelaine de Vergi
Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*
Sand, *Indiana*
Proust, *Combray*

How should you prepare?

1. Language Work

While you are at Oxford, you will be improving your knowledge of the French language not only by reading literature but by engaging (in weekly language classes) in a number of different linguistic exercises. For these a secure grammatical grasp of French is presupposed, including knowledge of verb paradigms for all tenses (including the past historic) and moods (including the subjunctive), and an ability to reproduce the full range of constructions. The harder you work on this aspect of your studies before you come up, the more enjoyable you will find your language work during the first year.

You may be using a French grammar already which will supply you with the information you need: e.g. Whitmarsh, Ferrar or Mansion. Equally recommended and more thorough is Glanville Price, *A Comprehensive French Grammar* (Blackwell), which also contains definitions of the basic terms of grammar.

For a range of helpful monolingual exercises, Roger Hawkins, Marie-Noëlle Lamy, and Richard Towell, *Practising French Grammar. A Workbook* (2nd edn, 2001), which is a companion volume to Hawkins and Towell, *French Grammar and Usage* (2nd edn, 2001).

2. Literature Work

There will be lectures on the Short Texts during the first term and on the novels during the second term. In the first term you will have tutorial work on four of the Short Texts; in the second term, on the remaining Short Texts and on the first two novels; and in the third term, on the remaining two novels. The second half of the Trinity Term will be given over to revision.

It will be essential for you to have read the texts in advance of the lectures, and so you should have read all the Short Texts before you arrive. Since the Christmas Vacation is not very long (for the amount of reading you are likely to have), it will be as well to have read at least two of the novels before October also.

We enclose a list of recommended editions. If you can afford them, it is probably best to buy your own copies of the set texts because you will want to make notes in the margins. [If your local bookshop is unable to supply you with any of the books you require, you may find it helpful to order them from Grant & Cutler Ltd., 55-57 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 2AY, or on-line from them, Amazon UK, or Amazon France.] It is important to read and annotate (whether in the text itself or on separate paper) as thoroughly as possible so that you retain a detailed memory of the text. The more slowly you read the text the first time round, the more quickly you will be able to reread it later when you have to produce a commentary or essay on it for your tutorial. It is vital that you read the texts in the original French, even if you do require a translation to hand for reference.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Professor Seth Whidden
Fellow and Tutor in French

Dr Kate Rees
Lecturer in French

French Paper III:

Poems prescribed for study from the 'Spleen et idéal' section of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*

Au Lecteur

3	Elévation
7	La Muse malade
10	L'Ennemi
19	La Géante
21	Hymne à la Beauté
23	La Chevelure
25	'Tu mettras l'univers entier dans ta ruelle'
28	Le Serpent qui danse
29	Une charogne
31	Le Vampire
36	Le Balcon
40	Semper eadem
44	Réversibilité
48	Le Flacon
49	Le Poison
50	Ciel brouillé
53	L'Invitation au voyage
62	Moesta et errabunda
66	Les Chats
69	La Musique
74	La Cloche fêlée
75	Spleen ('Pluviôse, irrité contre la ville entière')
76	Spleen ('J'ai plus de souvenirs')
77	Spleen ('Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux')
78	Spleen ('Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle')
81	Alchimie de la douleur
83	L'Héautontimorouménos
84	L'Irrémédiable
85	L'Horloge

Recommended editions for Papers III and IV

III Montaigne, *Essais*, Livre I

[There are several good paperback editions of Montaigne's *Essais* – Garnier Flammarion, Folio etc ; 'Des Cannibales' is in volume I. The 'Pochothèque' version modernises the spelling and does not distinguish between 'layers' of the text: it should not be used as a reference edition for Prelim. A useful alternative is the recent edition of both 'Des Cannibales' and 'Des Coches' (with facing modern French translation) edited by Michel Tarpinian (Paris : Ellipses, 1995).]

Diderot, *Supplément au 'Voyage' de Bougainville*, ed. M. Delon (Paris, 2002)

Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, ed. G. Chesters (Bristol Classical Press, Duckworth, 1995)
or *Les Fleurs du Mal*, ed. J. Dupont (Flammarion, 1991)
or *Les Fleurs du Mal*, ed. C. Pichois (Gallimard [Poésie], 1972, and 1996)

Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Présence africaine, 1983)
Return to My Native Land, trans. M. Rosello and A. Pritchard (Bloodaxe, 1993) [The bilingual edition may be of help for points of vocabulary, and has an excellent introduction, although it is *essential* to read the text in full in the original French.]

Racine, *Phèdre*, ed. R. Parish (Bristol Classical Press, Duckworth, 1996)

Beckett, *En attendant Godot* (Editions de Minuit, 1952)
[there is an excellent edition by Colin Duckworth, published by Harrap in 1966, but which is out of print. You might just find it in a second-hand bookshop.]

The most useful source of information about French versification is the Introduction to Peter Broome and Graham Chesters, *The Appreciation of Modern French Poetry 1850-1950* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).

IV *La Chastelaine de Vergi*, in *Nouvelles courtoises*, ed. Suzanne Méjean-Thiolier and Marie-Françoise Notz-Grob (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997)

Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, ed. R. Pomeau (Garnier-Flammarion, 1964)

Indiana [1832], ed. by Béatrice Didier (Paris: Folio Gallimard, 1984)

Proust, *Combray*, ed. L. Hodson (Bristol Classical Press, Duckworth, 1996)
or in *Du côté de chez Swann* (which is the first volume of *A la recherche du temps perdu*),
ed. Antoine Compagnon (Gallimard, Folio, 1987-8)

May 2012

Additional Papers for those reading only French

Paper XI Introduction to French Film Studies

Henri-Georges Clouzot: *Le Corbeau* (1942)
Jean-Luc Godard: *Vivre sa vie* (1962)
Bertrand Blier: *Les Valseuses* (1974)
Agnès Varda: *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000)

Introductory reading:

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art. An Introduction* (McGraw Hill, 1979, and later editions)

Robin Buss, *French Film Noir* (Marion Boyars, 1994, 2001)

Paper XII Introduction to French Literary Theory

Paul Valéry, 'Questions de poésie' and 'Poésie et pensée abstraite', in Valéry, *Œuvres*, vol. 1 (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) (Gallimard, 1957), pp.1280-1293, 1314-1339 (Photocopies enclosed)

Jean-Paul Sartre, sections I-II of *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Gallimard (Folio), 2001 ('Qu'est-ce qu'écrire?', 'Pourquoi écrire?'))

Roland Barthes, *Critique et vérité* (Editions du Seuil, collection 'Point Essais', 1999 [first published 1966])

Tzvetan Todorov, 'La Notion de littérature', 'L'Origine des genres', 'Les Deux Principes du récit', and 'Introduction au vraisemblable', in *La Notion de littérature et autres essais* (Editions du Seuil, 1987)

Paper XIII Key Texts in French Thought

René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, ed. L. Renault (Garnier-Flammarion, 2000)

J.-J. Rousseau, *Discours sur l'inégalité*, ed. J. Starobinski (Gallimard (Folio), 1989)

Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Presses universitaires de France, 'Quadrige', 2007), chapters 1 and 1 only.

Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (2 vols, Gallimard (Folio), 1996): vol. I, 'Introduction' (pp.9-32), 'Mythes' (pp.237-408); vol. II, 'La Femme mariée' (pp.221-329), 'La Mère' (pp.330-391). N.B. Both the French 'Idées' collection and the English translation have sections missing and cannot be relied on.

July 2016