

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

ITALIAN

Welcome to Oxford!

It will be a pleasure to have you here as one of our Freshers. As you will quickly find out, terms here are rather intense so it is always better to prepare as much as possible in advance. Please find below some advice on how to do this in view of the start of your first year.

In the autumn term (called Michaelmas), you will be working on your four narrative works and naturally on your language. I suggest you might want to focus on those aspects of our curriculum.

Language

(a) For those with A-level Italian or equivalent:

You should consolidate and extend your knowledge of Italian in any way possible, whether through regular reading of Italian newspapers, through reading of books beyond the preliminary course, or simply through careful study of prescribed texts. You should also spend time building up your knowledge of Italian grammar, however uninspiring this may sound. To that effect, you are encouraged to use a good review grammar, such as Marcel Danesi, *Using Italian Vocabulary* (Cambridge UP, 2003) or G Lazzarino-A Moneti, *Da capo* (Harcourt Brace, 1996)

(b) For near-Beginners, or GCSE level:

Since, at the end of the first year, you will take the same language examinations as post-A-level students, you must make substantial progress with your language before coming to Oxford. You should follow the advice given in (a), and give priority to acquiring a firm grasp of the grammar. You should also use a good method, such as P Frassica-A Carrara, *Per modo di dire* or K Katerinov-M C Boriosi, *La lingua italiana per stranieri*, or C Speroni-C L Golino, *Basic Italian*, or E Lebano, *Italian: A Self-Teaching Guide*.

A more traditional approach is used in F J Jones, *Modern Italian Grammar*, or D Lennie-M Grego, *Italian for You*.

A very good reference book which will be used during your first year at Oxford is Marcel Danesi, *Using Italian Vocabulary* (Cambridge UP, 2003)

The Pre-sessional course before the start of Michaelmas Term will give you a great boost but in order to benefit from it you need to arrive with an already well-developed knowledge of Italian.

Recommended dictionaries:

- Monolingual: Zingarelli; Bilingual: Hazon-Garzanti

Courses in Italy:

Spending some time in Italy during the summer before you come to Oxford is probably the best way to prepare for your first year here. Even better if you attend a language course.

Useful information on language courses in Italy can be obtained from the Italian Cultural Institute, 39 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8NX,

Website: <http://www.italcultur.org.uk/> Tel: 020.72351461

Reading, speaking and/or going to Italy will be much more rewarding if based on a formal grounding in grammar. The need to work as hard as possible at this task cannot be emphasized enough.

Literature and Cinema

Each of the two papers has a set of prescribed texts:

1. "Modern Italian Narrative and Cinema"

Prescribed texts (any edition of the following):

- (1) Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*
- (2) Anna Maria Ortese, *Il mare non bagna napoli*
- (3) Natalia Ginzburg, *Lessicofamigliare*
- (4) Italo Calvino, *Il barone rampante*

Prescribed film:

- (5) Marco Tullio Giordana, *I cento passi*, available in DVD (Medusa, 2001)

A very good and necessary introduction to Italian history and culture is Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (Cambridge UP, 1994). An excellent introduction to modern Italian literature is Robert Gordon, *Introduction to 20th C. Italian Literature* (Duckworth, 2005). For film studies, you might want to familiarise yourself with the subject through the following: David Bordwell and Kirstin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (McGraw Hill, 2008)

2. "Aspects of Italian Lyric Poetry"

- (1) *The Italian Sonnet from the Middle Ages to the present*. A selection of around forty sonnets, which will be available at a later date in the Modern Languages Faculty Office, will be studied as an introduction to Italian poetry, and as exercise of close critical commentary.
- (2) G Ungaretti, selections from "L'allegria" and "Sentimento del tempo", in *Vita d'un uomo: 106 poesie (1914-1960)*, published by Mondadori. The work of this poet will be studied in detail for close commentary and essays.

Italian books can be easily be ordered on the web (*Internet Bookshop Italia* is a reliable and secure site) or at any of these bookshops:

B H Blackwell Ltd
Broad Street
Oxford OX1 3BQ
Tel: 01865-792792

Grant & Cutler Ltd
55-57 Great Marlborough St
London W1V 2AY
Tel: 020.77342012

The Italian Bookshop
Cecil Court
London WC2N 4EZ
Tel: 020.72401634

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at Pembroke.

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