



Lincoln College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

TO THOSE BEGINNING THEIR STUDY OF FRENCH IN OCTOBER 2025

The Course in French Language

Papers I and II

Paper I consists of translation into French (10 sentences and a short literary or journalistic passage) and a summary exercise in French. Paper II involves translation from French of two short literary or journalistic passages. You will have regular oral classes. You should make every effort to maintain and even improve your level of linguistic competence by any means available to you. Certainly you must equip yourself with a good grammar book, for example Roger Hawkins & Richard Towell, *French Grammar and Usage*, or Granville Price's revision of the standard Byrne & Churchill's *A Comprehensive French Grammar*, or H. Ferrar's *A French Reference Grammar*. You should also obtain a large bilingual dictionary (ca. 2000 pages, ca. 19cm x 26cm, e.g. Oxford-Hachette, or Collins-Robert). You can also buy a monolingual dictionary such as *Le Petit Robert* or *Lexis*, but there is also an excellent dictionary available free online at the following address: <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/>

You will also have free access to the Oxford English Dictionary online once you have your Oxford University email address on arrival in October. Please note that you cannot rely on other, free online dictionaries (mono-lingual or bi-lingual), since they are not good enough for university study.

You will be studying for these two language papers, I and II, throughout the first year.

Oral classes: these will focus on proper pronunciation and intonation, and include discussion in French of texts dealing with issues in contemporary French culture.

Paper III ('Short Texts')

- (i) Montaigne, 'Des Cannibales' from *Essais*, vol. 1 (recommended edition: *Essais: 'Des cannibales' et 'Des coches'*, ed. by Tarpinian, Éditions Ellipses, 1994)
- (ii) Racine, *Phèdre* (recommended edition by Raymond Picard, Gallimard 'Folio', 2015)
- (iii) Verlaine, *Romances sans paroles* (recommended edition by Arnaud Bernadet, GF-Flammarion, 2018 [2012])
- (iv) NDiaye, *Papa doit manger* (recommended edition Éditions de Minuit, 2003)

You will be studying for this paper in your first term, and you should therefore read these texts before you arrive in Oxford.

Paper IV ('French Narrative Fiction'; NB: no particular editions recommended)

Anon., *La Chastelaine de Vergy*
Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*
George Sand, *Indiana*
Condé, *Traversée de la mangrove*

You will study for Paper IV in the second and third terms.

In order to prepare for these two literature papers, III and IV, you will need to obtain and read one of the following 'study skills' guides before arriving in Oxford:

- Phyllis Creme and Mary R. Lea, *Writing at University*, 3rd edn (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2008).
- Stella Cottrell, *The Study Skills Handbook*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
- David B. Pirie, *How to Write Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2002)



Lincoln College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Prelims French Single Honours ('Sole') Reading List 2025-26

The reading list below is for students who will be studying French only (without a second language and without another subject like history or philosophy). In addition to French papers I-IV, you take the following. In the case of each paper, your lecturers/seminar tutor will provide you with topic-specific reading lists when you arrive in Oxford.

Paper XI Introduction to French Film Studies

Introductory reading:

- Michael Temple and Michael Witt (eds), *The French Cinema Book* (British Film Institute, 2004). A detailed introduction to French cinema as an industry.
- David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art, An Introduction* (McGraw Hill, various editions). A very useful introduction explaining all the technical terms that are used to analyze film.

This paper will introduce you to four twentieth- and twenty-first century French film directors. We discuss the concepts of realism, documentary and avant-garde cinema and introduce the basic tools of film analysis.

In your essay writing you will be able to engage with the directors' ideas and with their particular way of realizing them. The films under discussion involve a wide range of themes such as love, power, gender relations and autobiography. Each director has a different style of filmmaking. The focus of the course is the question of how the film medium represents contemporary reality. We will look at the way each of these directors uses devices of storytelling to present a particular point of view upon the world we live in. You will be encouraged to watch more films by each of these directors.

The prescribed films are:

- 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)

The teaching for this paper takes place in the first term, with seminars on the prescribed films in weeks 2, 4, 6 and 8. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay on three

of the films and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. The three-hour examination in the third term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different film. There will be a choice of two questions on each film

In addition to the seminars you must follow the modern languages lecture-series entitled *Introduction to Film Studies* in weeks 1, 3, 5 and 7 in the first Term. These lectures present basic concepts of film analysis – montage, story, self-reference, and spectatorship – in four lectures devoted to four international films. These films are used simply as illustrations for the lectures and are not treated as set texts for examination purposes. The films are: Sergei Eisenstein: *Potemkin* (1925); Alfred Hitchcock: *39 Steps* (1935); Michelangelo Antonioni (1967): *Blow-up*; Claire Denis: *Beau Travail* (1999).

Paper XII Introduction to French Literary Theory

This paper will introduce you to four twentieth-century literary critics. In your essay writing you will be able to engage with their ideas about literature and with their particular way of expressing them. You will be encouraged to apply these ideas to your own reading of texts.

The prescribed authors (note the recommended editions) are:

- Valéry, ‘Questions de poésie’ and ‘Poésie et pensée abstraite’, in *Théorie poétique et esthétique*, part of Variété: Oeuvres, vol. I (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) (Gallimard) [both essays are available electronically on the university’s Canvas platform, accessible when you have a university email address]
- Sartre, *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?* (Folio) [Sections I and II only]
- Barthes, *Critique et vérité* (Seuil)
- Hélène Cixous, ‘Le rire de la Méduse’ in *Le rire de la Méduse et autres ironies*, ed. by Frédéric Regard (Galilée). [essay available electronically on the university’s Canvas platform, accessible when you have a university email address]

The teaching for this paper takes place in weeks 5-8 of the second term and weeks 1-4 of the third term in a combination of lectures and seminars. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay on three of the authors, and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. The three-hour examination in the third term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different author. There will be a choice of two essay questions on each author.

Paper XIII Key Texts in French Thought

This paper will introduce you to four thinkers from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. In both essay and commentary writing you will be able to engage with their ideas and with their particular way of expressing them.

The prescribed texts (note the recommended editions) are:

- Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, edited by Laurence Renault (Garnier-Flammarion)
- Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (Folio)

- Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Folio), I, 'Introduction'; 'Mythes'; II, 'La femme mariée'; 'La mère'. (NB Both the French 'Idées' collection and the English translation have sections missing and cannot be relied upon)
- Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme, suivi de Discours sur la Négritude* (Présence Africaine).

The teaching for this paper takes place in weeks 5-8 of the first term and weeks 1-4 of the second term in a combination of lectures and seminars. You will be required to submit to your seminar tutor an essay or commentary on three of the authors, and to do a seminar presentation on the fourth. Written work should include at least one essay and at least one commentary. The three-hour examination in the third term requires you to answer three questions, each on a different text, one a commentary, the other two essays. There will be a choice of one commentary passage from each text and one essay question on each text.