



## Reading Lists for English (2018-9)

In your first year at New College you'll be working towards 'Prelims', taken in Trinity Term. This consists of four papers. Paper 1, 'Introduction to English Language and Literature,' will introduce you to the formal study of the English language and to some recurrent problems in literary theory and history. What is literature and who decides? How important is the figure of the 'author' in determining meaning? What makes literary language different from other kinds of language? Much of the teaching for this paper happens through compulsory faculty lectures and classes, and it is assessed by a portfolio of two essays submitted in week 5 of Trinity term. You will also have additional tutorials and classes in college, spread across the three terms. The other papers are Paper 2 (Old English), taught across Michaelmas and Hilary terms; Paper 3 (1830-1910), taught in Michaelmas; and Paper 4 (1910-present) taught in Hilary.

When you come up in October, you will be expected to have read *everything* on the Core Reading List and some of the material on the General List, where you should follow up your own enthusiasms and interests. Tutorials at Oxford operate on Nabokov's principle that 'a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a re-reader.' In term-time, then, we expect you to be rereading the basic primary texts alongside secondary criticism and more specialised material relevant to the essay topics you choose. There isn't time during busy Oxford terms with essays to write, criticism to read, lectures to attend (and any number of other things to do) to be desperately trying to get to the end of *Middlemarch*!

There will be a short test on the Victorian core list in 0<sup>th</sup> week of Michaelmas term just after you arrive, to check that you've done the relevant reading.

### CORE READING LIST

#### Victorian

Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* [unless otherwise specified, I recommend that you buy the Oxford World's Classics editions]

Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations*

George Eliot: *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*

George Gissing: *New Grub Street*

Thomas Hardy: *Jude the Obscure*

'Hap,' 'Neutral Tones,' 'Thoughts of Phena,' 'I Look Into My Glass,' 'Drummer Hodge,' 'The Darkling Thrush,' 'The Self-Unseeing' (I suggest the OWC edition of the *Selected Poems*, ed. Samuel Hynes)

Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'The Caged Skylark,' 'Felix Randall,' 'Carrion Comfort,' 'No Worst,' 'Pied Beauty,' 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves,' 'Spring and Fall,' 'The Windhover' [the OWC includes some useful selections from the prose]

Henry James: *The Portrait of a Lady*

Alfred Lord Tennyson: 'Ulysses,' 'Tithonus,' *In Memoriam*, *The Princess*. [The Penguin *Selected Poems* edited by Christopher Ricks is the best edition to buy]

Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* [I suggest buying the Norton Critical Edition of *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*]

## Modern

W. H. Auden: *Selected Poems* [buy the revised 2010 Faber edition, ed. Edward Mendelson]

Joan Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* [the Fourth Estate edition is fine but if you can afford it, I would recommend the hardback Everyman edition of the collected prose]

T. S. Eliot: All of the poetry up to and including *Four Quartets*. [You should buy the Faber *Collected Poems 1909-1962*.]

E. M. Forster, *Howards End* [I recommend the Norton Critical Edition]

David Foster Wallace, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* [any edition]

James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* [You should buy Jeri Johnson's edition of the 1922 text for Oxford World's Classics.]

Robert Lowell, *Life Studies* [buy the Faber *New Selected Poems*]

Virginia Woolf: *Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse*

W. B. Yeats: all of the poems in the Faber 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, ed. Seamus Heaney

## OLD ENGLISH READING LIST

*A Guide to Old English*, ed. B. Mitchell and F.C. Robinson 8th ed. (Oxford, 2012).

Please read as much of its Introduction possible before arriving.

T.A. Shippey, *Old English Verse* (London, 1972)

S.B. Greenfield & D.G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York, 1986)

*The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed M. Godden & M. Lapidge, (Cambridge, 1991)

*A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. P. Pulsiano & E. Traherne, (Oxford, 2001)

## GENERAL READING LIST

### Victorian

Matthew Arnold: 'To Marguerite—Continued,' 'The Buried Life,' 'Dover Beach,' 'To a Friend,' 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,'  
 Emily Bronte: *Wuthering Heights*, 'Remembrance,' 'The Prisoner'  
 Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *Sonnets from the Portuguese*  
 Robert Browning: 'Porphyria's Lover,' 'My Last Duchess,' 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister,' 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church,' 'Love among the Ruins,' 'Fra Lippo Lippi,' 'Andrea del Sarto,' 'A Toccata of Galuppi's,' 'How it Strikes a Contemporary'  
 Wilkie Collins: *The Woman in White*  
 Charles Dickens: *Hard Times*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend*  
 George Eliot: *Mill on the Floss*,  
 Elizabeth Gaskell: *Mary Barton*, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*  
 Thomas Hardy: *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*  
 Gerard Manley Hopkins: *Collected Poems and Selected Prose* (Oxford paperback)  
 Henry James: *Washington Square*, *The Europeans*, *The American*, *The Aspern Papers*, 'The Middle Years,' 'The Next Time,' *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Golden Bowl*  
 John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*  
 Alfred Lord Tennyson: 'The Lady of Shalott,' 'The Lotus-Eaters,' 'Break, Break, Break,' 'Frater Ave Atque Vale,' *Maud*.  
 Bram Stoker: *Dracula*  
 Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 'The Critic as Artist'

## Modern

Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*, *Murphy*, *Watt*, *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, *All That Fall*  
 Joseph Conrad: *Lord Jim*, *The Secret Agent*, *Nostramo*  
 Ford Madox Ford: *The Good Soldier*  
 E. M. Forster: *The Longest Journey*, *A Passage to India*  
 Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*  
 Christopher Isherwood: *Berlin Stories*, *Prater Violet*  
 James Joyce: *Dubliners*  
 D. H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, 'The Woman Who Rode Away,' *Women in Love*  
 Katherine Mansfield: 'Bliss,' 'The Little Governess,' 'The Tiredness of Rosabel,' 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel,' 'The Fly'  
 Ezra Pound: 'Homage to Sextus Propertius,' 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', *Cantos I-XVI*  
 Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*, *The Waves*, *Between the Acts*, 'A Sketch of the Past' (in *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind). Non-fiction prose: 'Character in Fiction,' 'Modern Fiction,' *A Room of One's Own*

Among post-1950 writers, you should know the work of some of the following:  
 Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis, Sybille Bedford, Saul Bellow, J. M. Coetzee, Bret Easton Ellis, Allen Ginsberg, William Golding, Seamus Heaney, Frank O'Hara, Ted Hughes,

Ian McEwan, Philip Larkin, Doris Lessing, Robert Lowell, Vladimir Nabokov, V. S. Naipaul, Harold Pinter, Sylvia Plath, Philip Roth, Tom Stoppard, John Updike, Derek Walcott.

At this stage, I don't think it is helpful to focus on secondary reading (beyond the introductory essays to your editions of individual texts). But if you want to get an overview of *some* of the historical and cultural issues we will discuss, I recommend Robin Gilmour's *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-90* (Longman, 1994) and Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane's *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (London: Penguin, 1991).

For Paper 1, it would be useful to get copies of Jonathan Culler's *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000) and David Crystal's *Making Sense of Grammar* (London, 2004).

**Paper 1: Important information from the English Faculty:**  
**Prelims Paper 1: Introduction to English Language and Literature**

This paper has two parts: Section A, 'Approaches to Language', explores the history and sociolinguistic aspects of the English language; Section B, 'Approaches to Literature', covers various fundamental topics such as the nature of literature, intentionality, 'character' in literature, and ways of reading poetry and drama. For this paper, it's strongly recommended that you purchase the following:

**For Section A:**

Sara Thorne, *Mastering Advanced English Language*. The second edition of this text was published in 2008, but you may also use the first edition, secondhand copies of which are available very cheaply online. I strongly recommend that you read Chapter 1 - 'The structure of English', pp. 3-46 -- before you come up in October. It gives you a comprehensive summary of English grammar, which will be useful to you for both Prelims 1 and 2. It begins very basically, and then progresses to some of the more complex aspects of syntax. Take it slowly and re-read it several times: it will provide you with essential analytical tools, taking you on the first step towards a nuanced and accurate critical vocabulary.

To supplement your summer reading you may be also interested in the following: Stephen Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (London: Penguin, 1995 and subsequent editions). This short, informative and highly engaging book, much loved by students, introduces a wide range of concepts from the study of language, asking such questions as: How do we learn to speak? Why there are so many languages? Do we think in our mother tongue? Who decides what is correct English? How did language evolve?

Another popular and highly accessible introduction to the subject of language is E. M. Rickerson and Barry Hilton, *The 5 Minute Linguist: Bite-sized Essays on Language and*

*Languages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Equinox, London, 2012). The book consists of short (around 700 words) essays, written in a fun and lively manner, on such topics as: What is the difference between dialects and languages? What was the original language? Why do languages change? Is British English the best English? Why do people fight over language? What does it mean to be bilingual? Is Latin really dead? Where did English come from? Can you use language to solve crimes?