



NEW COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Dear Student,

Congratulations on your offer of a place to read French at New College! We very much look forward to seeing you in Oxford in October, and hope you're excited to get started. We write now to give you some preliminary information about the Literature Papers in French Prelims (first year), so that you can set about getting hold of the books and reading them before you arrive in October.

We *strongly* recommend that you read all of the works once through before arriving in Oxford. We'll move swiftly through the syllabus once term starts, and your day-to-day workload will make it impractical to read each work as you come to study it. You'll also be attending University lectures on some of the texts before studying them in classes and tutorials in College, so you'll need to be familiar with them in advance. (This applies to all the texts for commentary listed under Paper III which are covered in the first term.)

You must buy (or very long-term borrow) physical copies of all of the texts. Kindle and e-books are not acceptable. Most of the texts are available in fairly cheap and reliable editions, and can be ordered from the Modern Languages Department of Blackwell's, the main University bookshop (Broad Street, Oxford). Blackwell's sometimes has second-hand copies, and it's worth exploring other online sources, such as AbeBooks.co.uk, where you might also find second-hand copies. The easiest method by far, however, is to order the books directly from amazon.fr.

As regards language work, we recommend that you have William Rowlinson, *French Grammar* (OUP, 1994) and, ideally W. F. Whitmarsh & C. D. Jukes, *New Advanced French Course* (Longmans, 1971). We strongly advise you to have the latest Collins-Robert French Dictionary or (failing that) the Oxford-Hachette dictionary. Be sure to get the full-size one, and not a 'compact', 'concise' or 'pocket' version. You should also consider investing in a monolingual French dictionary; *Le Petit Robert* is the best single-volume example. Happy reading, and we look forward to seeing you in October.

Finally, Dr Counter will be on leave—though around!—in 2019-20. His replacement will be appointed later on this year, and we'll write to you all to make introductions at that time.

Andrew Counter  
Fellow and Tutor in French

Emma Claussen  
Career Development Fellow in French



## Modern Languages, First Public Examination ('Prelims'): Literature in French

The literary element of the Prelims course in French is made up of two papers, numbered III and IV. For Paper III, you read three pairs of short texts, and write a commentary on a passage from one of each of the pairs in the exam. Paper IV is an introduction to the study of prose fiction, for which you read four longer works, and write an essay about any three of them in the exam. The set texts for each paper are listed below, and it's *essential* to have read these before you arrive at College in Michaelmas.

In some cases, we have suggested which editions we think most useful. In all cases, you should buy serious scholarly editions by reputable French publishers (this usually means Gallimard or Garnier-Flammarion). Do *not* buy cheap, print-on-demand versions, which are often inaccurate and incomplete.

### Paper III Paired short texts for commentary

#### **First pair: philosophical prose**

Montaigne, 'Des Cannibales' from *Essais I*

[The Flammarion edition of *Essais I* (ed. Micha) is best. 'Des Cannibales' is Chapter 31. Montaigne wrote in 'middle French' in the late sixteenth century (slightly earlier than Shakespeare). You may wish to consult the modern 'translation' by Michel Tarpinian (Paris: Ellipses, 1998) but it should not be your main reference as many of the modernisations are misleading. The 'Pochothèque' version modernises the spelling and does not distinguish between 'layers' of the text: it should therefore not be used as a reference edition for Prelims.]

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

#### **Second pair: poetry**

Charles Baudelaire, 'Spleen et Idéal', the first section of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, either Gallimard (ed. Pichois) or Flammarion (ed. Dupont) editions.

[When you arrive you'll receive a list of the poems that may be set for the exam, but in the first instance you should read *at least* all of 'Spleen et Idéal', plus the opening poem 'Au lecteur'.]

Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, (Présence africaine, 1983).

[The bilingual edition, *Return to my Native Land*, with translations and notes by Rosello and Pritchard, published by Bloodaxe, London 1993, is good, but should not be relied upon.]

#### **Third pair: drama**

Jean Racine, *Phèdre*, in *Théâtre complet*, (Paris: Garnier, 1980); the Bristol Classical Press edition (London: Duckworth, 1996) has a detailed commentary on each scene.

Marie NDiaye, *Papa doit manger*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2003).

### Paper IV: Prose Fiction

*La Chastelaine de Vergy*, in *Nouvelles courtoises*, ed. S. Méjean-Thiolier and M-F. Notz-Grob, (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997).

Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, ed. Pomeau (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1996).

George Sand, *Indiana*, ed. Béatrice Didier (Paris: Folio Gallimard, 1984)

Marcel Proust, 'Combray', in *Du côté de chez Swann*, the first volume of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Antoine Compagnon (Folio Classique)