



WADHAM COLLEGE  
OXFORD

## STUDENTS WITH OFFERS TO READ FRENCH

17th June 2025

Dear incoming student,

We are delighted that you have been offered a place to come to Wadham in October. We are writing to you now with your course reading lists with all the primary texts that you will study in your first year. Once term begins, you'll be busy with critical reading and you won't have time to read the core texts. It's therefore essential that you read the core texts that you'll study in your first term over the summer.

The Oxford academic year is divided into three eight-week terms: Michaelmas (October-December), Hilary (January-March), and Trinity (April-June). Over the course of the year, you will prepare two literature papers and three language papers for your preliminary examinations at the end of Trinity. The first of the literature papers (Paper III) will consist of commentaries taken from 4 short texts set for study from the 16th to the 20th century. We will start studying them in your first term. The four longer texts will be studied in Hilary and Trinity Term.

The first-year texts have been chosen to introduce you to a wide range of different authors, periods and genres, but above all to be a pleasure to study. Please purchase the recommended versions of the book and buy hard copies. This will allow you to note down the words you look up and make notes on the texts in the margins. Please don't worry if you find these texts confusing or if you don't understand every detail. We'll go through them bit by bit once you are here.

Over the summer, we would like you to write a **300-word summary** of the first three texts that you'll study: Montaigne, Racine, and Verlaine. We will be in touch by email when you arrive and you can send us your summaries then.

The required editions can be obtained from websites including [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), [amazon.fr](https://www.amazon.fr), [chapitre.com](https://www.chapitre.com), [fnac.com](https://www.fnac.com). Those of you doing French Sole may also wish to purchase the set films on DVD, though they will be readily available in the Wadham library.

We very much look forward to seeing you in October.

Dr Emily McLaughlin  
Tutor in French, Wadham.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **PRELIMINARY READING LISTS:**

### **PAPER III: SHORT TEXTS (COMMENTARY PAPER)**

Many students begin the course without having had the opportunity to undertake much formal study of French literature. Both literature papers require you to undertake a close reading in the original French of a range of literary texts so that you will gradually build up your reading speed and learn how to write critical commentaries and essays. This will provide a sure grounding for the literary study you will do from the second year onwards.

#### **Michaelmas Term weeks 1-8:**

1. Montaigne, 'Des Cannibales' from *Essais*, vol. 1 (recommended edition: *Essais: 'Des cannibales' et 'Des coches'*, ed. by Tarpinian, Éditions Ellipses. 1994)
2. Jean Racine (1677) *Phèdre*, ed. & commentary by Richard Parish. Bristol Classical Press.
3. Verlaine, *Romances sans paroles* (recommended edition by Arnaud Bernadet, GF-Flammarion, 2018 [2012])

#### **Hilary Term weeks 1-2:**

4. Marie Ndiaye (1953) *Papa doit manger*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

### **PAPER IV: NARRATIVE FICTION:** (Hilary weeks 3-8 & Trinity weeks 1-2)

#### **Hilary Term weeks 3-8**

1. *La Chastelaine de Vergy* (c. 1271-1288) in *Nouvelles courtoises*, ed. S. Mejean-Thiolier & M-F Notz-Grob. Paris: Livre de Poche, 1997.
2. Pierre Choderlos de Laclos (1782) *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Garnier Flammarion or Folio editions.
3. Georges Sand (1832) *Indiana*, ed. Béatrice Didier. Paris: Folio classique.

#### **Trinity weeks 1-2**

4. Maryse Condé (1992) *Traversée de la Mangrove*. Paris: Livre de Poche.

## **LANGUAGE PAPERS:**

Our language tutor would like you to learn or revise *le passé simple* over the vacation. You can use Hawkins and Towell (listed below) to do this. Please purchase the following books for your language classes:

Roger Hawkins, Richard Towell & Marie-Noëlle Lamy, *French Grammar and Usage*, (London: Hodder, 2010).

Roger Hawkins, Richard Towell & Marie-Noëlle Lamy, *Practising French Grammar* (London: Hodder, 2010).

Jean H. Duffy, *Using French Vocabulary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

If you are concerned about any aspect of your French grammar and would like to revise some basic points before you arrive, you will find Hawkins and Towell very useful. If Hawkins and Towell is difficult at first and you would like to revise some more basic points, you will find it useful to read: William Rowlinson, *Oxford French Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) (out of print but available online to buy second-hand).

## Prelims French Single Honours ('Sole') Reading List 2024-25

Please note: the following reading lists are for students of French Sole only.

Students taking the French Sole course take French papers I-IV along with other students studying French. In addition, they take the three papers described below. A brief outline is given here, and for each paper your lecturers/seminar tutor will also provide you with topic-specific reading lists and essay titles.

### 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 analyse a 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 realising 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:

- Jean-Luc Godard: *Pierrot le fou* (1965)
- Maurice Pialat: *À nos amours* (1983)
- Claire Denis: *Beau Travail* (1999)
- Céline Sciamma: *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu* (2019)

The teaching for this paper takes place in Michaelmas Term (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.

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 Michaelmas 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:

- Paul Valéry, 'Questions de poésie' and 'Poésie et pensée abstraite', in *Théorie poétique et esthétique*, part of *Variété: Oeuvres, vol. I* (Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade) [both essays are available electronically on Canvas, accessible via Single Sign-On once you get to Oxford]
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Folio) [Sections I and II only]
- Roland 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 Canvas, accessible via Single Sign-On]

The teaching for this paper takes place in Hilary Term (second term), in weeks 5-8 and Trinity Term weeks 1-4, 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.

## 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:

- René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, edited by Laurence Renault (Garnier-Flammarion)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (Folio)
- Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Folio), vol. 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)
- Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme, suivi de Discours sur la Négritude* (Présence Africaine).

The teaching for this paper takes place in Michaelmas Term weeks 5-8 and Hilary Term weeks 1-4 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.

