

Studying Modern Languages – Comparative Literature at Oxford

Comparative Literature is changing. Its Eurocentric heritage has been challenged by various formulations of World Literature, while new media and new forms of artistic production are bringing urgency to comparative thinking across literature, film, the visual arts and music. The resulting questions of method are both intellectually compelling and central to the future of the humanities.

Modern Languages – Comparative Literature study combines a focus on European traditions of comparative philology and literary studies with contemporary questions around postcolonialism, globalization, and world literature. In the course of your studies, you can develop an enhanced awareness of the complexity of literary communication across linguistic and cultural borders and develop your cultural imagination through understanding the creative modes of transfer that are translation and adaptation.

Studying Modern Languages – Comparative Literature at St Anne's

Visiting students who are already studying English and American Literature, or comparative literature may be interested in studying comparative literature at St Anne's.

A number of St Anne's Faculty members are active participants in the Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation Research programme. We run seminars, workshops, a postgraduate-led discussion group, an annual conference and stage public events and edit a book series.

Study durations

You can apply to study Modern Languages – Comparative Literature as a joint subject only.

	Ext AY	AY	Fall Term	Hilary and Trinity terms	Studied with other subjects
Modern Languages – Comparative Literature	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒ Classical Archaeology and Ancient History; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Classics; English Literature; History; History of Art; Medical Humanities; Modern Languages; Music; Philosophy; Economics; Law; Politics; Computer Science; Experimental Psychology; Maths

Courses

Courses are taught in a mix of fortnightly seminars and tutorials, for which essays will be set and graded. The courses are taught broadly chronologically, but also by theme and by genre.

Themes include: individual and society; nature and technology; literature and politics; realism, naturalism and symbolism; the battle of the ancients and the moderns; epic and fragment; literature, politics and the state. Genres include: Poetry; Theatre; Fiction; Philosophy and Aesthetics; literary collaborations (with art, music, etc).

The Avant-Garde and the European Modernism courses overlap and are designed to teach the development of European avant-garde Literature in the period 1880 to 1930. All literature will be taught in translation, but some knowledge of original languages will be useful. The major languages whose literatures you will study are French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian, though texts from the Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and Hungarian may also be studied. The course

is also designed to map European literary movements in a context that aligns with American literature (e.g. Walt Whitman's influence on French literature, Ezra Pound and Italy, etc.).

European Avant-Garde: Literature in the Age of Manifestos

One term in Michaelmas, Hilary or Trinity term

The following is a list of manifestos and declarations covering a range of European movements. Seminars are devoted to individual movements such as Symbolism, Naturalism, Futurism, Acmeism, Socialist-Realism, Imagism, Expressionism etc.

Whistler, 'The Ten O'clock lecture' (1885)

'Aux Lecteurs!', Anatole Baju, *Le Décadent littéraire et artistique*, 1886 (issue 1.1)

'Manifeste du Symbolisme', by Jean Moréas (1886)

'The Poets and the People', Oscar Wilde (1887); see also preface to *Portrait of Dorian Gray*

'Le Tragique Quotidien', Maeterlinck (on theatre)

Mallarmé, interview with Jules Huret in *Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire* (also in M's *oeuvres complètes*)

V. Bryusov, 'Keys to the Mysteries'

The Futurist Manifesto, by Marinetti (1909)

'The Art of Noises/L'Arte dei Rumori', Luigi Russolo'

'Vorticist Manifesto', Wyndham Lewis, from *Blast*

'Vortex', by Ezra Pound, *Blast*

Apollinaire, Preface to *Les Mammelles de Tirésias* and 'Picasso'

Kandinsky and Marc, Preface to *Der Blaue Reiter*

Mandelstam, 'The Morning of Acmeism'

'A few don't by an imagiste', Ezra Pound (see

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pound/retrospect.htm

Francis Picabia, 'Dada manifesto'

Surrealist manifestos, by André Breton, 1924

Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*

Many of these manifestos are found in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of isms* (Nebraska, 2001). The rest can be found in online resources.

Seminars will discuss not just the content of manifestos but their cultural politics and their place in literary history, along with examples of the literature that the manifestos pertain to. Students will choose a manifesto and present on it in seminar for general discussion. Subjects for individual essay-writing and follow-up tutorials are then chosen between the Tutor and the student.

European Modernism

Taught over one, two or three terms; Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity and can also be combined with the European Avant-Garde: Literature in the Age of Manifestos course.

Prose:

J-K Huysmans, *Against Nature*

Georges Rodenbach, *Bruges-la-Morte*

Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*

Djuna Barnes *Nightwood*

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

Endre Ady, *Neighbours of the Night*

Mihail Sebastian, *For Two Thousand Years*

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

André Breton, *Nadja*

Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

Poetry:

Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

Mallarmé, *Poems* (trans. Peter Manson)

Rimbaud, *poems*

Laforque, Poems
TS Eliot, The Waste Land, The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock
Hope Mirrlees, Paris
Mayakovsky, Poems
Lynette Roberts, Collected Poems
Apollinaire, Poems
Ungaretti, Poems
Ezra Pound, Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, Draft of XXX Cantos

Theatre:

Maeterlinck, The Blind, Interior, The intruder
August Strindberg, Ghost Sonata, Dance of Death
Ibsen, Hedda Gabler, A Doll's House, Brand
Jarry, Ubu Roi
Büchner, Woyzeck
Brecht, The Good Lady of Sechuan, The Caucasian Chalk Circle
Synge, Playboy of the Western World
Beckett, Endgame
Ionesco, Rhinocéros
Chekhov, The Seagull

Queer Perspectives

Taught over one or two terms

This course explores literature and film by and about LGBTQ+ individuals from across the globe. It begins with reflections on how queer identities have been constructed and contested in theoretical debates, before looking to the imaginative ways queer lives have been sketched in print and on the big screen. It examines the clichés of queer representation as well as how writers and filmmakers working in different regions have responded to and made use of different aesthetic traditions and socio-cultural contexts in their craft. Whilst it would be impossible to cover all the global variety of queer expression, this course intends to go beyond the white, male voices that have tended to gain most visibility.

Topics might include:

- Representing AIDS
- Victims and Villains
- Melodrama
- Queer Pastoral
- Imagining the Queer Past
- Queer Hagiography
- Crossing Genders
- Narratives of Becoming
- Staging Queers

If you have any questions, please email visiting.students@st-annes.ox.ac.uk