



'Doing languages at Oxford is probably the most fun degree you can do. The amazing books I read made me understand much better why people act the way they act and why they think what they think. It allowed me to look at history and the present in complex ways' (Marina, Russian & German)



'I was quite nervous about coming to interview at Oxford; however, on arrival the atmosphere was pleasantly relaxed and lots of people were at hand to answer any questions. I was interviewed by both languages' tutors for about twenty minutes each. The experience was a lot less formal than I had expected, and included short passages to translate, discussion in the target language and an opportunity to talk about my particular interests and ask any questions' (applicant for French & Spanish)

### Is this the right course for me?

If you care deeply about being as precise as possible in your use of languages (grammatical accuracy, stylistic felicity, judging register and nuance), you'll really enjoy our rigorous and intensive approach to advancing your language skills. For starting a language from scratch, you'll want to show strong motivation for that particular language and its culture.

Do you really enjoy reading and thinking critically about whatever you read, or about

films or plays that you watch? You will thrive on our course if you have a thirst for literary study and intellectual curiosity for discussing literature, culture, and/or linguistics. Tutors recognise that most applicants haven't had a chance to study literature formally as part of their foreign language course(s) at school or college. Literary study will give you the chance to investigate some of the most interesting products of human imagination and thought.

### What does the application process involve?

- ❖ spend plenty of time researching your subject combination to make sure that it's the best fit with your particular interests. Some colleges don't admit for all combinations (see [www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/mml\\_apps/languages.php](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/mml_apps/languages.php)), but college choice doesn't affect the content of the subject – every student across the University has access to the same range of options;
- ❖ submit your UCAS form (and register for relevant tests) by 15 October: explain carefully your commitment to the particular course in your personal statement; tell us about what you've read, listened to, watched or visited that's fired your enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity;
- ❖ sit the relevant parts for your chosen course of the Modern Languages Admissions Tests (MLAT) in early November: you can best prepare by revising all the grammar points you've covered during your school/college language study. See [www.ox.ac.uk/tests](http://www.ox.ac.uk/tests) and [www.mlatoxford.org.uk](http://www.mlatoxford.org.uk);
- ❖ send us written work by 10 November: a piece in the foreign language (if you're already studying it) and a piece showing how you construct an argument in English. These should be samples of work completed in the normal course of your school or college studies. See [www.ox.ac.uk/writwork](http://www.ox.ac.uk/writwork);
- ❖ over 80% of Modern Languages applicants are shortlisted for interview in December: you will normally have at least two interviews, during which we want to find out as much as possible about your intellectual interests and academic potential.

Tutors make their decisions based on all aspects of your application. Hear a Modern Languages tutor talking about the admissions process: [www.youtube.com/user/ModLangsOxford](http://www.youtube.com/user/ModLangsOxford)

Any questions? See [www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/faqs](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/faqs)

'The study of Modern Languages helped me in many ways. It taught me how to analyse large amounts of information and synthesize them quickly – critical to any business venture. It also helped me manage a multilingual and multicultural company as lastminute.com expanded across Europe'

**Brent Hoberman (French & German)**  
Co-founder of lastminute.com



### What can I do after a Modern Languages degree?

A degree in languages opens up a world of possibilities. Modern Linguists have one of the most successful rates of employment across all subject areas, both at Oxford and nationally. Employers will value your dexterity as a multilingual communicator, transferable skills, and qualities fostered by the experiences of your year abroad.

Recent graduates have gone into careers in the arts, international business, environmental and overseas development, management and communications, journalism, trade marking, advertising and marketing, research or teaching, law, the civil and diplomatic service, and many more. See [www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/careers](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/careers)

### How can I find out more?

Come to an open day to speak with tutors and current students across a range of languages ([www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/open-days](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/open-days)), consult the admissions pages of our Faculty website ([www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk)), or write to us with any questions.

Also have a look at our range of events and activities to foster interest in pursuing languages and give a taster of what it's like to study these subjects at Oxford: [www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_schools](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/working_with_schools)

We participate in the University's UNIQ summer schools, offering strands in French, German, Spanish, and Beginner Languages ([www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_schools](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/working_with_schools))

Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages  
41 & 47 Wellington Square  
Oxford OX1 2JF  
Email: [reception@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:reception@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0)1865 270750

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'Whenever I speak to sixth-formers they always ask: "How can I get into journalism?" I always reply with complete truthfulness that I would not be where I am now if I had not studied Modern Languages'  
**Bridget Kendall (Russian)**  
BBC Diplomatic Correspondent



One of the largest Modern Languages Faculties in the UK, offering an unparalleled range of opportunities to explore the language, literature, and culture of other countries, in Europe and beyond

- BA Modern Languages
- BA Classics and Modern Languages
- BA English and Modern Languages
- BA European and Middle Eastern Languages
- BA History and Modern Languages
- BA Modern Languages and Linguistics
- BA Philosophy and Modern Languages

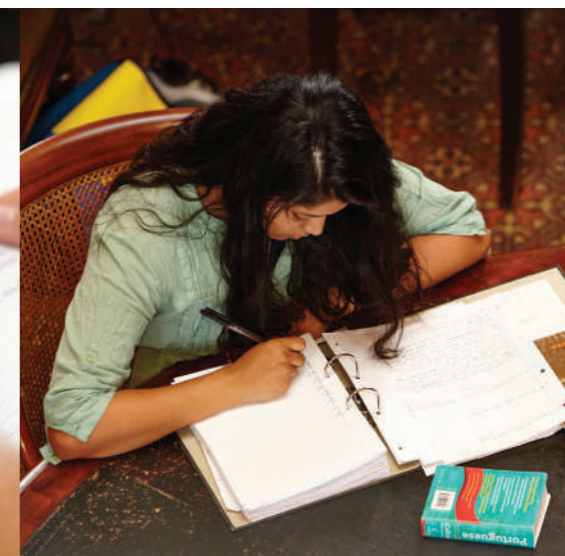
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- French
- German
- Italian
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Czech
- Greek
- Catalan
- Galician
- Polish
- Yiddish



'It is vital for citizens of the world, which is increasingly what our students are, to be equipped to understand that world, its cultures, and its diversity. There can surely be no better training for this than the knowledge of other languages'

**Professor Andrew Hamilton**  
Former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford



## Why study Modern Languages at the University of Oxford?



The study of Modern Languages has never been more relevant, in an era of global communication where fluency and dexterity in at least one foreign language is an invaluable skill. At the same time, a deep and nuanced understanding of cultural imagination, intellectual history, beliefs and attitudes – what people think and how they think – is found in careful study of literature, thought, and linguistics.

Modern Languages have been taught in Oxford since 1724. The Faculty is one of the largest in the UK, with a total intake of more than 250 students a year (including joint courses) and over 100 academic staff constituting a thriving teaching and research community with unparalleled breadth and depth. Working alongside students who share your passion and ambition, you'll relish the opportunity to find yourself discussing a medieval French writer over coffee or debating a Spanish film over popcorn, quite apart from your classes and tutorials.

We offer a wide range of languages, including French, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Portuguese, Modern Greek, Czech and Polish. Some can be studied on their own, they can all be studied in combination with another language, and almost all of them can be studied jointly with another subject.

The main components of the Modern Languages degree are language and

literature. On graduating, you can expect to speak fluently in colloquial and more formal situations, and write and translate with accuracy and sensitivity to vocabulary, styles and registers. The study of literature, new to most students, provides an enriching and challenging experience, offering a context for language study that broadens and nuances your understanding of culture.

The Taylor Institution ([www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/taylor](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/taylor)) is the University's centre for the study of modern European languages and literatures, and is a beautiful and inspiring place in which to work. Its research library contains the largest specialist collection in this field in Britain. The Taylor also houses the Modern Languages Faculty Library, the main lending library for undergraduates. We also have a specialist Slavonic and Modern Greek Library. The University's Language Centre ([www.lang.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk)) furnishes materials for language learning in over 180 languages.

'Being a modern linguist at Oxford means becoming immersed in the literature, language, philosophy, and history of your subject. I'd never studied French literature at school, but it became my favourite part of the course here. Adjusting to new methods of learning was easier than I had anticipated, as the tutors are committed to helping students adapt and thrive. I've developed a curiosity for exploring every facet of French in order to discover my own strengths, weaknesses and preferences' (Emily, French Sole)

## What courses in Modern Languages are available at Oxford?

You can study Modern Languages at Oxford in three ways:

You can focus on one language:

- ❖ French, including Film Studies, Literary Theory, and Thought in your first year.
- ❖ German, including Film Studies, Medieval Studies, and Thought in your first year.
- ❖ Spanish, including Film Studies, Medieval literature and short fiction in your first year.
- ❖ Russian, including Film Studies, Polish and Church Slavonic in your first year.

You can study two languages:

- ❖ Take them both up to the same level, even a language started from scratch.

Or you can do a joint degree combining one language with a different subject:

- ❖ Classics, English, a Middle Eastern language, History, Linguistics, or Philosophy. See [www.ox.ac.uk/courses](http://www.ox.ac.uk/courses)

If you study two languages or a joint degree with another subject, the balance between the two languages/subjects is fairly equal, so it's essential that you're strongly committed to both elements of the course for which you apply.

## What opportunities are there for studying a language from scratch?

Alongside a language that you'll have to A2 or equivalent, you can take up another language from scratch: Czech, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Polish (from the second year), Portuguese, or Russian. You'll have intensive language teaching in small groups, enabling you to make accelerated progress. At the end of the first year, you take the same examination

as anyone who started the course with existing knowledge. For Russian, you spend the second year abroad on a specially designed intensive language and literature course in Yaroslavl. Catalan, Galician, Occitan, Yiddish and most Slavonic languages are available as additional options (e.g. Galician within the Spanish course). See [www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/languages](http://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/languages)

## How is the course structured?

Language is the keystone of the Oxford course, and language exercises (both spoken and written) make up about half of your final examination assessment. You'll develop your grammatical skills and oral proficiency in small group teaching throughout the course, as well as applying your skills to translation activities and essay writing in the foreign language.

The first-year literature course for each language introduces you to different periods and genres of literary writing, including prose, poetry, and drama. Your tutorials and seminars will train you in how to analyse and discuss these texts. You can then use these experiences

to choose what periods, authors and topics you wish to focus on in your second and final years. Options range from the earliest medieval vernacular texts to twenty-first-century writing.

The study of literature raises a broad range of cultural questions; it leads you into areas such as performance studies, aesthetics, anthropology, art history, ethics, gender studies, history, philosophy, politics, psychology, theology, and popular culture. You can also choose from a variety of non-literary options, including linguistics, advanced translation, literary theory, and European cinema.

Your Modern Languages degree at Oxford is usually a four-year course, including a compulsory year abroad (normally the third year)



▲ Lara is being set up for an EEG (Electroencephalogram) experiment to measure electrical activity of the brain in response to language material

## How would I be studying?

Modern Languages students have lots of varied opportunities to learn with tutors and from each other. Each week, you'll attend three to four hours of lectures per language, participate in small group language classes, and have tutorial discussions on essay work that you've prepared on literary or linguistics topics. Tutorials are usually

two or three students with a specialist tutor. Alongside these contact hours, you'll spend independent time reading in libraries, writing your essays, and working on your translations. You may also be in the Language Centre practising your oral or grammar skills, or meeting up with friends to discuss your latest thoughts and ideas.

## What does Linguistics involve?

Linguistics is the study of language in all its aspects. Its practitioners are interested in the structure and history of languages; the meaning underlying instances of language use (semantics); how languages are related; how children learn

language; what goes on when people are speaking; how people understand, mentally represent and generate language; how language is used in literature, the media and by different social groups. See [www.ling-phil.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ling-phil.ox.ac.uk)

## The year abroad

The year abroad is usually the third year (it's the second year for Beginners' Russian and students taking a Middle Eastern Language). It's the opportunity to acquire an abundance of new experiences exercising your language skills in foreign countries around the world. You'll receive information and guidance about the options available well in advance; how you combine your languages and the particular

programme of activities that you put together is up to you, in consultation with your tutor. You might undertake a journalism internship in Argentina, attend university in Quebec, volunteer in Senegal, be a teaching assistant at a primary or secondary school in Vienna, work as a translator for an advertising agency in Bologna, or study at drama school in Paris – the possibilities are limitless!



Alice went to the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon: 'I was rather apprehensive about my year abroad: making a new set of friends, getting used to a new environment. It turned out to be one of the most interesting and enjoyable experiences of my life. I grew in confidence socially, and, of course, linguistically, with courses that provided a great complement to my Oxford degree, and with an additional bonus of expanding my meagre culinary skills!'