

Studying Modern Languages



Carole sporting face-mask fashion

If you're not a scientist, the study of a modern language is one of the best ways not only to prepare yourself for a fantastic range of careers, but also to develop your sensitivity to the world that awaits you beyond education! This study will take you beyond your own culture and background, will open your mind to ideas you had not thought possible and feed your inquisitiveness: you will become a present day culture detective!

It is with joy that I invariably send the students in my care out into the most fascinating and (I confess!) enviable careers; careers in which their developed sense of curiosity and broadened interest in other cultures will make them hot property to any employer outside the laboratory. They so often become the articulate catalyst that can make things happen!

As a teenager I never saw myself as a swot, though, I confess I did read a lot of books (and it's so much more fun to build your own context for what you read, putting it before a background far more realistic than the diet of alarm that seems to engulf every high def. media production these days). I devoured Flaubert, Zola, Camus, Beauvoir, Duras, Ernaux and many others. Very early on, I realized that our frame of reference is infinitely flexible and fed by the extraordinary history and development of our cultures: and that is what the study of modern language is all about. Particularly at Oxford. It is that passion for the *way* history is filtered through contemporaneous literature that feeds the curiosity that sharpens our minds; it is the *way* language is developing (even daily, don't we know!) that will feed linguistic research of the future. This is the passion for language – and in this I include your own! I love my native tongue – French – I can't get enough of French films and books! But, I confess, I have almost the same appetite for English-speaking literature, which is also part of my research.

At Oxford, the fire of your passions will be fanned; tutorials will prize you from the shell of your comfort zone, stretching your mind to an elasticity that you could never have contemplated. Do not expect me to respect the complacency of what you had hitherto believed were your limitations! And it is all *such* fun.

And how do I placate my own appetite? My research is pluridisciplinary and, as you can imagine, eclectic; it takes me beyond the confines of the syllabus and yet, in a predictable way feeds into it. That is the nature of the discipline. And that is what you will take with you into the world beyond.

If you have the ambition and a continuing fascination for the world outside, to fuel the passions of the lifetime before you, come and talk to us. Forget any nonsense you may have heard about ivory towers (what am I saying? The phrase, though originally biblical, came, in its 'modern' usage, from French!). Oxford is a new life; an awakening; a gateway; a tattoo on the thigh of all its family.

If you are serious about studying French at Oxford, here are a few tips: brush up your grammar, read books, read L'Obs or other papers, watch films, listen to France Culture. But I am probably stating the obvious...The more initiative you show, the better. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

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