**Student Profiles**

I was always keen to do a degree in a language because it’s a transferable skill you can use in any profession. I did Spanish and German at A-Level and felt I had taken these languages far as I could. I wanted to start something new at university, particularly an Asian language - as I think it is one of the smartest things you can do! I had a real interest in Japanese history and culture before I applied and I was learning Japanese in my spare time to GCSE level too. However, half of our class have come here without any previous Japanese language knowledge and they are coping absolutely fine with the Japanese scripts.”

Sean Bullock

This term we are reading modern Japanese literature. We’ve also covered the history of Japan from pre-historic Japan up to modern times, as well as exploring the influence China and Korea have had on the country. The first year lecture series covers politics and economics and we have even had a taste of Classical Japanese, so there’s something for everyone. The language part of the course is taught by native language instructors, and there are speaking classes which offer quite a lot of contact time with them, so you really do start getting immersed into the language even before you do your year out in Japan. We’re looking forward to going to Kobe in the western part of Japan, near Kyoto, I’ve heard it’s a really great location with lots of cultural influence.”

Shyam Patel

For more information please visit the Faculty of Oriental Studies website at: www.orinst.ox.ac.uk

For the latest University prospectus and information on fees and scholarships please contact: Undergraduate Admissions Office, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD. Tel. 01865 288000. Email: undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk, or visit www.admissions.ox.ac.uk
Japanese at Oxford

Oxford is a major national and international centre for the study of Japan and Japanese has been taught as a degree subject at Oxford since 1963. The B.A. course in Japanese at Oxford is a four year course which aims:

(a) to give students a thorough grounding in modern written and spoken Japanese, and in the written classical language;
(b) to ensure that they have a good general knowledge of Japanese history, culture, and society; and
(c) to allow them to do in-depth, specialised study from a wide range of possible options, including both classical and modern literature, linguistics, pre-modern and modern history, anthropology, politics, economics and art.

Japan has a rich traditional culture dating back more than 1,500 years and a modern period distinguished by vigour and variety.

The Oxford degree in Japanese is not a vocational course in the sense that it equips the student for a certain type of career, the Japanese teachers are more concerned that students should acquire an understanding of an unfamiliar, rich, and important culture and be able to communicate this understanding to others. Employment prospects for graduates who wish to pursue a career connected with Japan are excellent. Graduates pursue a variety of careers, from diplomacy and journalism to law and business. Students who achieve firsts or very good upper-second-class degrees may be accepted as graduates students for higher degrees.

In Oxford, traditional and modern culture are studied both through Japanese language sources and the work of Western scholars. There are two main centres for teaching and research on Japan in the University, The Oriental Institute, and the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies. It is in the Oriental Institute that the core curriculum of language classes are taught, and it is where the teachers of Japanese from the Faculty of Oriental Studies have their offices. There is a lending library of basic Japanese literary and historical texts, translations and monographs in Western languages on pre-modern Japanese history, Japanese literature, theatre, and linguistics. The Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies is inside St. Antony's College and engages in advanced research on modern Japan. It also houses the University's main research library for Japanese materials, the Bodleian Japanese Library.

Why study Japanese?

"Japan is a progressive, modern and exciting country with an enchanting, ancient culture. Studying Japanese at undergraduate level offers a rewarding challenge for those interested in the country and who want to branch out from European languages learnt at school. If you are already fascinated by Japanese culture and are keen to learn a language which is very different from European languages, then studying Japanese could be an excellent option for you. Prior experience of the Japanese language is not required and so the course attracts students from a variety of different backgrounds. All of the students who apply tend to share a keen interest in Japan, its culture and language. The second year of the course is spent at Kobe University in Japan which provides a wonderful opportunity to deepen the knowledge of the language, history and culture acquired during the first year of study in Oxford, which focuses on modern Japanese language (scripts, writing, grammar vocabulary and practical usage), but which also includes a thorough survey of Japanese history and culture as well as an introduction to classical Japanese language. Students return to Oxford for the third and fourth year of their course, where they will choose between a variety of text and subject options ranging from classical and modern literature, linguistics to contemporary economics, at the same time as continuing the study of the modern and classical language. At this point in their course, they will be able to use Japanese language material for their content and essay work and a 15,000 word dissertation."

Bjarke Frellesvig
Professor of Japanese Linguistics