

Course Handbook: European and Middle Eastern Languages (EMEL)

Faculty of Oriental Studies

Academic Year 2017-18

This handbook applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas Term 2017/Final Honour School in Michaelmas Term 2019. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

NOTE: The Examination Regulations relating to all Oriental Studies courses are available at <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/>. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, you should always follow the Examination Regulations.

If you have any concerns please contact academic.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk.

In drawing up this handbook, we have tried to be as up-to-date and accurate as possible. However, this is still only an informal guide. It may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes. Students will also be informed.

Course Structure: European and Middle Eastern Languages (EMEL)

EMEL is a Joint Honour School combining the study of a European language and its literature with that of a Middle Eastern language and its literature. The two faculties involved are the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

The aims of the course are

- to make you competent in the spoken and written use of one European and one Middle Eastern language;
- to provide you with a specialised knowledge of the literature and culture of your two chosen languages, either in the modern period, or in earlier periods, or in both;
- in some languages, to provide you with a specialised knowledge of the history of specific periods.

Since you will be studying the languages and literature of two markedly different cultures, you will probably be struck by the differences rather than the similarities between them. These differences will enable you to reflect on each of the cultures from the viewpoint of the other, placing each of them in a perspective that will help you define its specific characteristics. But you will also be encouraged to discover connections between the two cultures.

The following languages are offered as part of the Middle Eastern language component of the degree:

- Arabic
- Hebrew
- Persian
- Turkish

One important component of the final examination is a **compulsory Extended Essay**, which is intended to form a 'bridge' between the European and Middle Eastern sides of your course. In the Extended Essay you will have to write about both of the cultures that you are studying. You will be able to choose your own topic, which might be a comparison between the work of certain authors writing in your two languages, or a study in the comparative linguistics of your two languages, though there are plenty of other possibilities that you might want to pursue. The key thing is to discuss potential topics with potential tutors for your proposed topic well in advance, on both the Modern Languages and the Middle Eastern sides of the degree. The Extended Essay is written in the Hilary Term of the 4th Year. The norm for the essay is for 4 tutorials to be given, split equally between the European and Middle Eastern subject tutors.

For the latest information on the Extended Essay submission and details including presentation and length see the section on Assessment below.

This handbook is intended only as a guide to the Middle Eastern components of this joint degree. Information about the papers in the European language you have chosen and the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages in general may be found in the [handbooks for German, French, etc.](#)

Your Year Abroad

It will normally be your second year that you spend abroad. For most students it will be strongly advisable to spend the bulk of the year abroad following an approved formal course of language instruction in a Middle Eastern country appropriate to their language of study. The tuition fees involved in this will normally be covered in part, or in full, by Oxford University, but you will have to provide for your own living expenses, as you do in Oxford.

Assuming that you spend the main part of your year abroad as described above, you should plan to spend the adjacent summers in the European country appropriate to your course. On Friday or Saturday of 0th Week upon your return you will have to sit a language test in your Middle Eastern language at the Oriental Institute.

Teaching Staff

Arabic, Turkish and Persian

The following list gives most of the members of the Faculty who teach Islamic Studies. Messages can also be left in the pigeonholes in the foyer of the Institute.

[Dr Walter Armbrust](#), Associate Professor in Modern Middle Eastern Studies (St Antony's)

[Professor Marilyn Booth](#), Khalid Bin Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of Contemporary Arab World (Magdalen)

[Professor Julia Bray](#), Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic (St John's)

[Dr Dominic Parviz Brookshaw](#), Associate Professor in Persian Literature (Wadham)

[Dr Stephanie Cronin](#), Department Lecturer in Persian Studies

[Dr Otared Haidar](#), Instructor in Arabic

[Professor Edmund Herzig](#), Soudavar Professor of Persian Studies (Wadham)

[Dr Nadia Jamil](#), Co-ordinator; Senior Instructor in Classical and Modern Arabic

[Professor Jeremy Johns](#), Professor of Islamic Archaeology and Director of the Khalili Research Centre (Wolfson)

[Mr Tajalsir Kandoura](#), Instructor in Arabic

[Dr Homa Katouzian](#), Iran Heritage Foundation Research Fellow (St Antony's)

[Professor Christopher Melchert](#), Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies (Pembroke)

[Dr Laurent Mignon](#), Associate Professor in Turkish (St Antony's)

Dr Aslı Niyazioğlu, Associate Professor in Ottoman History (Exeter)

[Dr Mohamed-Salah Omri](#), Associate Professor in Modern Arabic Language and Literature (St John's)

[Dr Philip Robins](#), Associate Professor in the Politics of the Middle East and Faculty Fellow (St Antony's)

[Dr Eugene Rogan](#), Associate Professor in the Modern History of the Middle East (St Antony's)

Dr Christian Sahner, Associate Professor of Islamic History (St Cross)

[Dr Ahmed Al-Shahi](#), Research Fellow (St Antony's)

[Dr Nicolai Sinai](#), Shaikh Zayed Associate Professor in Islamic Studies (Pembroke)

[Dr Luke Treadwell](#), Samir Shamma Associate Professor in Islamic Numismatics (St Cross)

[Dr Elizabeth Tucker](#), Jill Hart Research Fellow in Indo-Iranian Philology (Wolfson)

[Professor Oliver Watson](#), J.M. Pei Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture (Wolfson)

[Dr Michael Willis](#), University Research Lecturer and H.M. King Mohammed VI Fellow in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies (St Antony's)

[Dr Zeynep Yurekli-Gorkay](#), Associate Professor in Islamic Art and Architecture (Wolfson)

Hebrew

Undergraduates are taught by a large circle of specialists, university post-holders in closely related subjects, or post-doctoral researchers who may be in Oxford for a number of years. Those principally involved with teaching for the undergraduate course at present are:

[Dr Miri Freud-Kandel](#), Lecturer in Modern Judaism (Wolfson College)

[Professor Martin Goodman](#), Professor of Jewish Studies (Wolfson College)

[Dr Sara Hirschhorn](#), University Research Lecturer in Israel Studies (Wolfson College)

[Dr Adriana X. Jacobs](#), Associate Professor and Cowley Lecturer in Modern Hebrew Literature (St. Cross College)

[Professor Jan Joosten](#), Regius Professor of Hebrew (Christ Church)

[Professor David Rechter](#), Professor of Modern Jewish Studies (St. Antony's College)

[Professor Alison Salvesen](#), Professor of Early Judaism and Christianity (Mansfield College)

[Dr David Taylor](#), Associate Professor in Aramaic and Syriac (Wolfson College)

Dr. Alinda Damsma, Instructor in Biblical Hebrew

[Mr Gil Zahavi](#), Instructor in Modern Hebrew

Dr. Benjamin Williams, Rabbinic and Medieval Hebrew

Languages Overview

Arabic

Preliminaries (First Year)

The first three terms of your course are designed to give you a sound foundation in the Arabic language.

Arabic Prelims, taken after three terms of study, comprise two examination papers of 3 hours each plus an oral examination.

1. Translation and précis into English.
2. Comprehension, composition and grammar.
3. Oral/aural examination (to be taken at the Oriental Institute).

You will prepare for Papers 1 and 2 by attending intensive language instruction for about 10 hours per week, backed up by thorough preparation in your own time.

Final Honour School (Third and Fourth Year)

You have to take the following papers in FHS, one of which is the Oral. The details for these papers are specified below.

- 6A. Arabic Unprepared Translation into English (half-paper)
- 6B. Composition in Arabic (half-paper)
7. Spoken Arabic (counts as half-paper)
8. Arabic Literature
9. Islamic Religion
10. Islamic History or one paper chosen from single honours Arabic Further or Special Subject.

Students are only allowed take these options provided that there are no timetabling clashes. Therefore, students are strongly advised to consult with the subject tutor before finalising their options. Students choosing a Special Subject will only be allowed to sit the exam paper and not the essay paper.

Hebrew

When Hebrew is combined with a modern European language (EMEL) it is normal to focus on Hebrew in the early stages; thereafter, the two languages are accorded roughly equal attention. Elementary

Biblical and Modern Hebrew are taught in the first three terms for Prelims. Similarly, two papers must be offered in the European language. In practice, most people doing this course will already have a good A-level in the European language but very little knowledge of Hebrew, so that in the beginning it may be necessary to spend more time on Hebrew.

Preliminaries (First Year)

For EMEL students the first three terms of the course comprise intensive class instruction in the Hebrew language, both Biblical and Modern. The aim is to cover the basic grammar in the first term and to consolidate this in the next two terms, when simple texts in each form of the language are also taught. This is a demanding goal, but essential in order to achieve a reading ability which will stand you in good stead for the rest of the course. There are three class hours a week in each form of the language, and you will be expected to prepare carefully for each. Written exercises are set regularly, and there is some provision for individual tutorials to iron out difficulties or questions and to return your written work.

For EMEL students the first three terms of the course comprise intensive class instruction in the Hebrew language, both Biblical and Modern. The aim is to cover the basic grammar in the first term and to consolidate this study in the next two terms, when simple texts in each form of the language are taught. There are three class hours a week in each form of the language. Written exercises are set regularly, and there is some provision for individual tutorials to iron out difficulties or questions and to discuss your written work in depth.

Two papers are set for Prelims, taken at the end of the third term:

1) Biblical, Rabbinic/Medieval and Modern Texts

The first paper is on the set texts, which will have been taught.

The following are the set texts for 2017-18.

Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22

Deuteronomy 5-6

1 Kings 17-19

Mishnah, Berakhot ch.1, 1-3

Tanhuma, Bereshit 23 (to Gen. 22)

David Gans, *Tsemah David*, ed. Breuer, p. 369 (invention of the printing press)

Chaim Nachman Bialik, "El ha-tsipor" (poem)

S. Y. Agnon, "Ma'ase ha-'ez" (story)

Shulamith Hareven, "Ornitosiyad" (story)

Yehuda Amichai, "Elohim merachem 'al yaldei ha-gan" (poem)

Yona Wallach, "Yonatan" (poem)

2) Grammar and Translation into Hebrew

Past papers are available to view on-line and also kept in bound volumes in the Oriental Institute library. Examiners will give ample advance notice before any changes are made to the format of the papers.

Candidates who perform exceptionally well in Biblical Hebrew in Prelims are eligible for the Pusey and Ellerton Prize.

Final Honour School (Third and Fourth Year)

After Prelims, the course is divided roughly half-and-half between the two languages. The aim of the course is to achieve a high level of competence in the handling of Hebrew texts from at least two periods, not just to translate them but to be able to discuss them from a wide range of perspectives, stretching all the way from language and textual criticism to literary and historical appreciation. For this reason attention is given to developing knowledge of the necessary historical and cultural background of the texts.

Compulsory Papers:

1. Hebrew composition and unprepared translation.
2. One option from Jewish Studies paper c.

Optional papers (you must choose two papers out of three papers listed below):

3. Prepared texts I: Biblical texts
4. Prepared texts II: Rabbinic and Medieval Hebrew texts
5. Prepared texts III: Modern Hebrew literature

Persian

Preliminaries (First Year)

The first three terms of your course are designed to give you a sound foundation in modern Persian.

The Persian Prelims comprise two examination papers of 3 hours each:

Translation from Persian and reading comprehension
Translation into Persian and essay

You will prepare for these papers by attending language classes for up to 10 hours per week, and working independently on the course material. You will be required to build up a basic vocabulary, and to learn to use all the essential grammatical structures of modern Persian. The teaching method combines systematic presentation of grammatical and thematic topics during language classes with regular assignments in reading, writing and translation. Spoken language classes will develop your speaking and listening comprehension skills. There will be regular written tests taken in class time to monitor your progress and identify areas for development. The set texts for Paper 1 are available from the Faculty Office. These are a selection of modern and classical Persian texts, most of which will have been read and discussed in class.

Set Texts are available [here](#).

In the second and third terms of your first year you will also be preparing for your year abroad. We will support you in applying for the approved course at Tehran University and for your visa. As the year progresses, the spoken classes will become more oriented towards the colloquial language and particular situations that you are likely to encounter in Iran.

Year Abroad (Second Year)

You will spend Year 2 in Iran, following a course of study approved by the Faculty Board. We regularly review options for Persian study in Iran with a view to sending our students to the best institution for learning Persian. Currently our students spend the year taking a succession of intensive courses at the International Centre for Persian Studies (ICPS, aka Dehkhoda Institute), Tehran University. The courses will help you develop your language skills and will also cover areas such as media Persian and Persian literature. As the capital of Iran and a city of some 10 million inhabitants, Tehran is the ideal place to learn Persian while experiencing the social and cultural life of contemporary Iran. At times Tehran may seem challenging and difficult, but it will always be stimulating, and the structure of your course, the secure home base of your university hall of residence, relationships with your peers on the course, as well as regular contact with faculty and college tutors will support you. It is most important for you to use the time in Iran to improve your knowledge and skills in the language, deepen your understanding of those aspects of Persian culture and history in which you wish to specialise, and gain some insight into Iranian society. You should find it an exciting period, one which will test your initiative, stamina, and ability to respond to a quite different society. It will be a time to carry out research for your dissertation and to start thinking about and reading for your optional papers.

Accommodation

Currently all our students live during their year abroad in halls of residence of the University of Tehran or of Shahid Beheshti University. The former are more central and cheaper, whereas the latter are closer to ICPS and offer superior accommodation.

Final Honour School (Third and Fourth Year)

In years 3 and 4 you will be pursuing linguistic and literary study in parallel as you work towards your Finals. Language work will continue steadily, and will continue to develop your capacity to speak, read and write modern Persian. You will have up to 5 hours of language classes each week, covering reading comprehension, translation into and out of Persian, essay-writing in Persian and speaking and listening comprehension. Classes and tutorials for your literature papers will cover modern and pre-modern literature, both poetry and prose. You will read and analyse the 'set texts' and write essays on literary and literary historical questions.

This is the list of papers available:

6. Unprepared translation from Persian.

7. Translation into Persian and essay

8. and 9. Two papers from the following:

- a) Persian literature: 1000 – 1400
- b) Persian literature: 1400 – 1900
- c) Persian literature: 1900 – the present

10. Oral (as specified for the Honour School of Oriental Studies).

Turkish

In order to understand the scope of the EMEL syllabus in Turkish, a brief explanation is needed of the relationship between Turkish and Ottoman. Ottoman is the name given to the various forms of Turkish that were used in the Ottoman empire (1300-1922). The only common characteristic of the different styles of Ottoman is that they were written in the Arabic script. (This continued during the first few years of the Turkish Republic, until the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928.) Early Ottoman texts, although showing some lexical and grammatical differences from modern Turkish, tend to be fairly simple in style. Middle and late Ottoman texts contain a high proportion of Arabic and (in poetry and the more ornate prose) Persian vocabulary, and some grammatical constructions copied from those languages. During the last century of the Ottoman empire the general movement of modernising reform brought with it a movement for simplification and rationalisation of the written language, and by the beginning of the 20th century the rise of Turkish nationalism began to turn this movement into a drive for linguistic purification. The official language reform programme launched by Atatürk in the 1930's took the project of purification much further than most Ottoman reformers had envisaged, and this movement has been largely 'successful', so that the Turkish of the last five decades or so is very different in terms of vocabulary from that of even the early years of the Republic.

The core part of the EMEL syllabus involves modern Turkish language skills, modern Turkish literature and modern Turkish political thought. The texts studied for these latter two papers include some in late Ottoman Turkish (studied in the Arabic script). You thus gain an understanding of the political, intellectual and cultural transformation of Turkish society from late Ottoman times to the present day. Beyond these core papers and the 'bridging' essay you choose one more paper out of four options, either penetrating into the earlier Ottoman cultural world, or looking at the language reform movement of the 19th-20th centuries, or studying the modern history of Turkey from 1807 to 1980.

Preliminaries (First Year)

The first three terms of your course are designed to give you a sound foundation in the Turkish language, including some experience of reading authentic texts. The examination comprises two written papers of 3 hours each:

1. Prepared and unprepared texts for translation from Turkish into English.
2. Turkish grammar and translation from English into Turkish.

You are expected to attend language classes up to 7 hours per week, and to work on the course material systematically by yourself every day. You will be required to build up a basic vocabulary, and to learn to handle all the basic grammatical structures during these three terms. The teaching method combines grammatical exposition with oral practice and conversation sessions. Written translation exercises are set on the material covered each week. These are assessed and gone over in class. In the second half of the year the prescribed texts for Paper 1 are read in detail. The set texts for Paper 1 consist of some short poems, some traditional Nasrettin Hoca tales and three modern short stories. Copies are available from the Faculty Office. All texts will be read in full in class.

Set texts are available [here](#).

Final Honour School (Third and Fourth Year)

You will be studying the following papers in your final 2 years:

6A. *Unprepared translation from modern Turkish (half-paper)*

6B. *Translation into Turkish (half-paper)*

7. *Spoken Turkish*

8. *Turkish political and cultural texts, 1860 to the present*

9. *Modern Turkish literary texts*

10. *One paper chosen from the following:*

- a) *Ottoman historical texts*
- b) *Turkish Literature: General Questions*
- c) *Turkish and Ottoman literary texts, 1300-1900*
- d) *Turkish language reform and language politics from 1850 to the present day*
- e) *The Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, 1807-1980*

Assessment

The latest information on assessments and submission details is listed in the University of Oxford Examination Regulations and can be found here: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/>

The Exam Regulations are revised and re-issued each year, and you must always consult the relevant issue in force. For example, if you matriculate your studies in Michaelmas Term 2017, for Prelims examinations you should refer to the Examination Regulations for 2017 -2018. For FHS examinations depending on the programme, please see the below:

Year of Matriculation	Prelims Exams	FHS Exams	
		for 3-year programme	for 4-year programme
MT 2017	Prelims Exam Regs for 2017-18	FHS Exam Regs for 2018-19	FHS Exam Regs for 2019-20