

Course Handbook: Persian

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.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of 1st October 2017. However, 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.

Courses

Persian

The course aims:

1. to help you become proficient in reading, writing and speaking Persian;
2. to familiarise you with the character, concerns and development of Persian literature, both modern and pre-modern, and to develop your literary critical skills;
3. to familiarise you with the major themes and questions of Iranian history from medieval to modern times, and to develop your skills in historical analysis and argument;
4. to give you scope to specialise in those areas of Persian and Iranian studies that most interest you and to develop your skills in independent research and extended writing, through optional papers and the dissertation.

Persian with a subsidiary language

The course aims:

1. to make you proficient in reading, writing and speaking modern Persian;
2. to familiarise you with the character, concerns and development of Persian literature, both modern and pre-modern, and to develop your literary critical skills;
3. to familiarise you with the major themes and questions of Iranian history from medieval to modern times, and to develop your skills in historical analysis and argument;
4. to give you scope to specialise in one area of Persian and Iranian studies that particularly interests you, and to develop your skills in independent research and extended writing through the dissertation;
5. to provide you with a firm grounding in a second language with which Persian is historically and culturally linked, and to introduce you to the literature of that language.

Course Structure

Preliminaries (First year)

The first three terms of your course are designed to give you a sound foundation in modern Persian, and to introduce you to Islamic religion and culture and the history of the Islamic Middle East.

Persian Prelims comprise three examination papers of 3 hours each:

- Translation from Persian and reading comprehension
- Translation into Persian and essay in Persian
- Islamic history and culture

You will prepare for Papers 1 and 2 by attending language classes for up to 10 hours per week, and working independently on the course material provided. 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 modern and pre-modern Persian texts which will have been read and discussed in class.

Paper 3 is taught principally through lectures and tutorials (respectively, 1 hour per week and 1 hour every other week) in Michaelmas Term and Hilary Term and weeks 1-4 of Trinity Term. You will also

be required to write a total of 10 essays over the year (4 in each of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, and 2 in Trinity Term).

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.

Second Year: Your Year Abroad

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 more than 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 the 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.

Third and Fourth Year

Persian and Persian with a subsidiary language

During Years 3 and 4 you will be pursuing several different kinds of study in parallel. 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 form another major part of your course work, covering 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. You will also attend lectures and have tutorials on Iranian history. Finally, you will write a dissertation (to be worked on in Hilary Term of Year 4) where you have the opportunity to pursue in greater depth a topic that particularly interests you, whether this be in language, literature, history, culture or social studies. Your dissertation supervisor will guide your research and provide feedback on plans and early drafts of your work. Your dissertation topic has to be approved by the Faculty Board at the beginning of your final year. (See Appendix I for general guidance on the writing of dissertations.)

For students taking Persian you will be able to tailor your course to your own interests through your choice of two optional papers (8 and 9). You may choose to concentrate more on literary or historical study, or to maintain a balance between the two. The teaching for the optional literature

and history will usually be similar to that for the core papers described in the previous paragraph. Depending on the options you have chosen, you can expect to spend 4-6 hours per week in the first four terms in classes devoted to the close reading and explication of these texts, to which you must come adequately prepared.

For students taking Persian with a subsidiary language your subsidiary language will probably demand at least one-third of your time, especially in Year 3, when you will be attending an intensive elementary language class. The two years of the FHS course offer an excellent opportunity to acquire a solid grounding in a second language, but it does mean that you give up the possibility of shaping your course to your own particular interests, as you lose the two optional papers. The dissertation does, however, allow you to explore a subject that particularly interests in depth.

Graduates will have acquired a range of expertise and skills. Linguistic proficiency in Persian and knowledge of Persian literature and Iranian history, as well as of the general culture and religion of Islam, may lead some towards a variety of jobs connected with Iran and the Middle East, such as diplomacy and international organisations, journalism, broadcasting, publishing, charities and NGOs, and business. Depending on the options you have chosen, you may also be equipped with specialist knowledge in other areas – for example choosing the papers in Islamic art and archaeology might lead you towards work in museums, archaeology or the art market. A significant proportion of our graduates choose to continue their studies at the graduate level with a view to an academic career.

Examination Papers

Persian	Persian with a subsidiary language
1. Unprepared translation from Persian 2. Translation into Persian and essay in Persian 3. Spoken Persian 4. Persian Literature: 1000 – 1400 5. Persian Literature: 1400 – 1900 6. Persian Literature: 1900 – the present 7. Themes in Iranian history 8. 9. Optional papers 10. A dissertation: topic to be approved by the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies	1. Unprepared translation from Persian 2. Translation into Persian and essay in Persian 3. Spoken Persian 4. and 5. Two papers selected from the following three: Persian Literature: 1000 – 1400 Persian Literature: 1400 – 1900 Persian Literature: 1900 – the present 6. Themes in Iranian history 7. 8. and 9. A subsidiary language from: Arabic, Armenian, Classics, Hebrew, Hindi/Urdu, Old Iranian, Turkish 10. A dissertation: topic to be approved by the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies

Optional Papers

- i) The Transition from Sasanian to Islamic Persia (up to the 10th Century CE)
- ii) Safavid History
- iii) Qajar History
- iv) Iranian History from 1921 to 1979
- v) Iranian History from the 1979 Revolution to the Present
- vi) Early Islamic Monetary History
- vii) Early Islamic Historiography
- viii) Islamic Art and Architecture of the Persian-speaking World
- ix) The Rise of the Sufi Orders in the Islamic World, 1200-1500

- x) Religion and Politics during the Mongol Period
- xi) Ottoman State and Society, 1566-1700
- xii) History of the Middle East during the late Ottoman Age, 1750-1882
- xiii) A short-term Further Subject, as approved by the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies

Teaching Staff

The following list gives most of the members of the Faculty who teach Persian, Arabic and Turkish Studies. Messages can also be left in the pigeonholes in the foyer of the Institute.

- Dr Walter Armbrust, Associate Professor of Modern Middle Eastern Studies (St Antony's)
- Professor Marilyn Booth, Khalid Ibn Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World (Magdalen)
- Professor Julia Bray, Laudian Professor of Arabic (St John's)
- Dr Dominic Brookshaw, Associate Professor of Persian Literature (Wadham)
- Dr Emine Çakır, Instructor in Turkish
- Dr Stephanie Cronin, Roshan Research Fellow, Modern Iranian History (St Antony's)
- Dr Otared Haidar, Instructor in Arabic
- Professor Edmund Herzig, Masoumeh and Fereydoon Soudavar Professor of Persian Studies (Wadham)
- Dr Nadia Jamil, Senior Instructor in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic
- Professor Jeremy Johns, Professor of the Art and Archaeology of the Islamic Mediterranean (Wolfson)
- Mr Tajalsir Kandoura, Instructor in Arabic
- Dr Homa Katouzian, Iran Heritage Foundation Research Fellow (St Antony's)
- Dr Laurent Mignon, Associate Professor of Turkish (St Antony's)
- Dr Christopher Melchert, Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies (Pembroke)
- Dr Aslı Niyazioğlu, Associate Professor of Ottoman History (Exeter)
- Dr Mohammed-Salah Omri, Associate Professor of Modern Arabic (St John's)
- Professor Tariq Ramadan, Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies (St Antony's)
- Dr Philip Robins, Reader in Middle East Politics and Faculty Fellow (St Antony's)
- Dr Eugene Rogan, Associate Professor of the Modern History of the Middle East (St Antony's)
- Dr Christian Sagner, Associate Professor of Islamic History (St Cross)
- Mr Sahba Shayani, Instructor in Persian
- Dr Nicolai Sinai, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies (Pembroke)
- Dr Luke Treadwell, Samir Shamma Associate Professor of Islamic Numismatics (St Cross)
- Dr Elizabeth Tucker, Jill Hart Research Fellow in Indo-Iranian Philology (Wolfson)
- Dr Yuhan Vevaina, Bahari Associate Professor of Sasanian Studies (Wolfson)
- Dr Michael Willis, University Research Lecturer and H.M. King Mohammed VI Fellow in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies (St Antony's)
- Dr Paul Wordsworth, Postdoctoral Research Fellow (Brasenose)
- Dr Zeynep Yurekli-Gorkay, Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture

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

Important Deadlines

Monday Wk 9 of Trinity Term	Year 1	Provisional start date of the First Public Examinations.
Monday Wk 0 of Hilary Term	Year 4	Deadline for applications for approval for Optional Subjects (Persian only) and dissertation titles (Persian and Persian with Subsidiary Language). Forms available here .
12 noon, Friday Wk 10 of Hilary Term	Year 4	Deadline for submission of dissertation.
Wk 0 of Trinity Term	Year 4	Oral examinations for Persian language. Timetables available about 5 weeks before the oral exams.
Monday Wk 7 of Trinity Term	Year 4	Provisional start date of the Final Honour School examinations.

Appendix 1: Dissertation Guidelines

UNDERGRADUATE HONOURS DISSERTATIONS: ARABIC PERSIAN TURKISH, FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

The dissertation is an opportunity to undertake original research on a topic of your own choosing. You will have one or two tutorials to discuss method, bibliography, and other aspects at the beginning of Hilary Term, then review what you have come up with near the end of the term with the same tutor. However, it is mainly your project to run with. You will be solely responsible for the final draft, which will not be read by your tutors.

For the word limit, deadlines and other rules, refer to the Examination Regulations which are the ultimate authority.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Faculty Undergraduate Handbook section on dissertations and the 'General Guidelines for Thesis Writers' available through the Faculty Undergraduate Handbook on the OI Website.

The 'General Guidelines' are at:

https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/a55c44d3-9f21-4dec-b48c-2dc6fa4e4bee/Exams/General_Guidelines_for_Thesis_Writers.pdf

WRITING AN UNDERGRADUATE HONOURS DISSERTATION: GUIDELINES, AND SOME TIPS

Choosing a topic and getting started

The honours dissertation is an exciting part of your course. It is an opportunity to conduct in-depth research on a topic of your choice, and to form and present your own original conclusions. It gives you a real indication of what academic research is like and why your tutors enjoy it so much. It may lead you to take an unexpected professional turn, or to go on exploring a topic of abiding interest even after you have concluded your degree. And it can give you a sense of satisfaction and pride at seeing through a complex, creative and original project. Make the most of the opportunity!

In the course of your studies, you may have already come upon a question you would like to explore or a topic or genre of writing or historical set of events that you would like to learn more about. Perhaps there is a text you have encountered in your studies that you would like to read and analyse more fully. Your year abroad may have sparked a particular linguistic or cultural or historical interest. Define as clearly as possible what it is that you want to focus on and what aspect most interests you. Do a web or library search to see what has been done, and then make an appointment by email – and in good time – with the most likely supervisor. Sometimes a short conversation can lead you in a new direction or sharpen your focus, or confirm that your idea is a viable one. A supervisor will help you to define a manageable topic and research question. At this early stage (ideally the year after your year of study abroad), you do not need to come up with a final title. (You will need to have a working title to be approved by the Subject.) But even before you have a final title and research question, the more clearly you can focus your interests, then the more targeted and useful your preliminary reading will be.

Keep in mind that almost everyone starts out with a question that is far too big or vague. You want to put some careful thought into defining your project at this stage. It is never too early to write a provisional abstract. Remember that a good dissertation *has* a thesis. It not only sets out a topic area

but it makes an argument. At the beginning of your research, you won't know exactly what that argument will be, but the earlier you start to think about it, the easier the later stages will be.

Remember also that the dissertation is the equivalent of *one paper* only, and it carries no more weight in your final degree mark than any other paper. This is another reason to focus early and well: you do not want to spend disproportionately more time on the dissertation than on other papers that are examined.

While an undergraduate dissertation is not a PhD thesis, and isn't expected to be an entirely original work in the way that a postgraduate thesis is, examiners do expect to see original thinking, a new angle on material that has been previously studied, a text analysis that takes an approach different to previous studies, etc. One feature of the cross-disciplinary field we work on – the study of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, often with European languages – is that there are many texts that have not been exhaustively studied: starting with a text is a fine way to come up with an original topic or an original treatment of a topic. If you want to work intensively on a text, discuss your interests with the most relevant member of staff, who can help you identify a text pertinent to your interests. Focussing your work carefully and closely, you're probably more likely to produce an original and cogent piece of research by doing so, than if you try to cover too much ground.

When you've chosen your dissertation and supervisor, discuss a preliminary bibliography. Start reading as you would for an essay. But for your dissertation, you are the one who sets the question, and your reading will help you to refine and modify it as you go. If you have chosen to work on a text or set of texts in the language(s) you have studied, give yourself plenty of time to read and reread the text(s), and jot down your ideas as you read. Identify the secondary readings that will help you carry out your original analysis.

You are required to submit a research question/topic and a brief abstract as an 'application for approval'. You may find it helpful to provide yourself and your supervisor with a somewhat expanded version of this, including:

- Title of dissertation
- Rationale underpinning the chosen area of study
- Key research questions to be examined and how you plan to answer them
- Sources to be consulted
- Preliminary discussion of relevant literature, if possible
- A work plan, with your timetable
- Possible outline of chapters

The research process

Read strategically and interactively. Make a record of interesting ideas and also of queries that occur to you. Be sure to also record details (including page numbers) that you would need to provide for a footnote reference. This will save you more time than you can imagine later on.

Here are some useful strategies.

1. Ask yourself, with everything you read for the dissertation: How does this reading relate to the question I started with? What aspect of my central question does it help me with?
2. Skim read for relevance. How useful will this book or article be? What arguments/concepts/evidence/definitions/ways of thinking does it offer to me?
 - a. Skim read the introduction and conclusion to book chapters to identify main approaches or arguments, and to gauge whether closer reading will be fruitful.

3. Read key articles or chapters closely and take notes. Put things in your own words: that way you are having to grapple with the argument, rather than just passively taking down what the author says.
 - a. What are the essential points of the account or argument?
 - b. How do they relate to my ideas and my question?
 - c. How do they relate to the other things I have been reading? Do they reinforce or challenge previous explanations?
4. How will your summary of this work serve the dissertation? Does it help you with your framework for analysis? Your background narrative account and contextualisation? Your sense of how wider debates in the field are mapped?
5. Rely on specialist/academic sources. A textbook might help you identify the specialist works or outline the general field, but it will be too general to serve as a source in itself.
6. The internet is useful in all sorts of ways, but rarely will it be good enough in itself. Be sure to embed your research in published academic literature.

On any topic, there are large numbers of books and articles you could read. Keep in mind that you cannot read everything. Be self-disciplined.

Think about how to pace yourself! As exciting as a dissertation project can be, it does demand commitment and good organisation. Don't leave it to the last minute. You may think that Hilary Term of your 4th year gives you plenty of time to write, but don't underestimate the twists and turns that this process can take.

Start writing as soon as you can. Even if you are not certain how all the pieces will fit together in the end – and indeed you may write many pages that never make it into the final dissertation – writing can help you clarify your thoughts, and it will show you where there are gaps in your knowledge and hence where more research is most urgently needed. Having some potential sections written can feel encouraging, too.

Don't feel you must start at the beginning. Write up a section that interests you, and do include the references to make your life easier later on. You might want to ask your supervisor to read this section, and to advise you on whether you need to aim for including more or less detail. When you write, think about how you would want to explain this to someone else who is on your degree but who is working on a completely different topic. You can ask your supervisor whether the section should be organised differently, and whether you've got the references right. Be forewarned: you may be surprised to find that you have already used more of the word-allowance than you expected. Remember the aim is to write ca. 15,000 words of *quality* work that is well organised, succinct without being telegraphic, and that all supports your central argument.

Research integrity and Ethical issues

Be sure that you are familiar with the University's guidelines on plagiarism, which you can find a link to in the Undergraduate Handbook.

Also be aware of research ethics and integrity issues. If your research topic involves research with human subjects, you must fill out a preliminary risk form. The full code of practice and procedure on Academic Integrity in Research is here: <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/>

Our Faculty comes under the purview of the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (SSH IDREC). For straightforward or lower-risk ethical issues, applicants apply for ethical review via completing a checklist (a 'CUREC1A'), and are then reviewed by the SSH IDREC

Secretariat. Complex issues require a full application form (a 'CUREC/2') but this is not likely for undergraduate research.

These forms are not meant to be obstacles: indeed, they are meant to foster good research practice, and they are there to help and guide you. The basic question they ask is: 'Does your research have ethical implications because it invokes human subjects and/or personal data?' If you have any questions about the process or whether you need to complete it, ask your supervisor in the first instance. The SSH IDREC Secretariat is there to help us with questions, as well.

Also, if your dissertation is based at all on fieldwork, you need to document interviews or the like. You may want to refer to informants confidentially (as X, Y, Z, etc.). You may also want to provide a copy of any questionnaires or sets of interview questions used, as an Appendix. But a dissertation based on fieldwork also needs to show familiarity with relevant secondary literature.

Organisation

Have a look at the section on 'good vs indifferent theses' in the Guidelines for Theses Writers. Theses are arguments backed up with evidence and clearly indicating the originality of the work and its relation to previous works on the subject. Theses are not simply accumulations of research findings. Evidence doesn't speak for itself! You need to think about how to shape your material into a well-organised argument. Don't let reading and collecting data become an end in itself, however enjoyable it may be.

You are likely to organise your dissertation as an introduction, 3-4 chapters organised on the basis of chronology or theme or another structural principle, and a conclusion. In the introduction, don't take too long to set up your dissertation statement. (*Remember, most students end up with too many words, not too few!*) Let the reader know immediately what your argument is and how you will present it. The introduction may include a literature review: by briefly discussing important work already done on this topic, you can distinguish your work from that earlier work as well as showing that you have a good grasp of the research area.

As you work, you may want to keep a 'checklist' of questions somewhere nearby, to remind yourself of the basic components of a good piece of research. Some of these aspects may be more important for some topics than for others.

Focus and structure

1. Have I clearly formulated the question, and do I state it clearly at the start of the dissertation?
2. Have I put the question into context (relevant literature, historical or socio-economic contexts, literary/genre context, etc.)
3. Have I established – and made clear – the aims and objectives of the work?
4. Do those aims and objectives relate to my central research question?
5. Have I made clear what my research design/methods is/are?

Reading

1. Have I surveyed the most relevant works from the general literature?
2. Have I critically assessed, not merely reported, relevant issues and debates in the literature?
3. How well have I related the literature to my research question?

Writing up

1. Is there a clear and logical structure, overall and within each section of the dissertation?

2. To put it another way, is the dissertation coherent? Is my central research question evident throughout the entire dissertation, do the different chapters and sections all relate to one another as well as to the research question? Have I avoided digressions?
 - a. It is useful to ask yourself (frequently) the ‘so what?’ question. What’s the point of this section (or this paragraph, or this sentence)? What does it add?
3. Do I begin each chapter with a succinct statement of and guide to what will appear in that chapter?
4. Do I provide good transitions between sections?
5. Do I provide a brief conclusion at the end of each chapter?
6. Have I written in clear English? Have I avoided jargon? Have I avoided generalisations?
7. Have I clearly defined my terms?
8. Have I analysed and interpreted the data, not just in my own head, but on the page, rather than just describing them?
9. Are my conclusions based on evidence I have presented?

Presentation and scholarly standards

1. Have I used clear and consistent referencing throughout, with page references where relevant?
2. Have I ensured that other people’s work – whether quoted or described in my own words – is explicitly cited?
3. Have I provided a detailed and accurate Bibliography? Have I rechecked the alphabetical order of authors’ last names?
4. Have I checked spelling and grammar? (Do not rely on computer checks!). Am I certain that my transliteration is consistent and correct?
5. Have I set off long quotations in separate, indented paragraphs?

Oriental Studies does not prescribe one format for citations in footnotes and bibliographies, because we realise that different disciplines tend to prefer different formats. Discuss with your supervisor – preferably early on – what format would be most suitable for you. Three excellent guides, available in the Oriental Institute Library, are:

Waddingham, Anne. *New Hart’s rules: The Oxford style guide*. 2nd edition. Oxford: University Press, 2014.

New Oxford style manual. Oxford: University Press, 2016.

The Chicago manual of style. 16th edition. Chicago: University Press, 2010.

Getting there

People have different working styles. Prior to Hilary Term 4th year – when you will do the bulk of the writing – some prefer to set apart one ‘dissertation day’ a week for reading and preliminary writing, while others find that their best rhythm is to work in short stretches between other deadlines. Set yourself some goals: write a timeline, especially for the intense period of work in Hilary Term. Outline each chapter, even if you don’t completely stay with that outline. While our policy is that students should meet with supervisors for an hour or two at the beginning of HT, perhaps an hour in the middle, and then another hour at the end (4 tutorials in total), emails containing particular questions and issues are perfectly acceptable and can often straighten out vexing matters. Some students and supervisors agree that the student will ‘check in’ with supervisors briefly (by email) every two weeks or so, to note their progress.

Try hard to have the final draft ready well in advance of the deadline. Ideally, you want to be able to put it aside and then pick it up to re-read it. This is extremely helpful for seeing gaps in your argument, places where you need better transitions, generalisations that need to be either deleted or worked on, infelicitous translations, missing or incomplete references, and – last but definitely not least – typing errors.

You can ask your supervisor to read a pre-final draft, but not the final draft. In the end, a dissertation is an independent piece of work. Hopefully you have sought out and incorporated your supervisor's diagnostic feedback already, and you've been able to produce a final dissertation that you'll long be proud of. But even in the late stages, supervisors can advise on structure, on problems with references, on particularly knotty translation issues, and the like.