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Dear Incoming English Student,

Welcome to Teddy Hall! We're very much looking forward to welcoming you in October. This letter is to give you a first glimpse into your studies here and to let you know what you should be doing this summer in preparation. In your first year at the college, you will be studying four courses: one is a broad introduction to the study of English Language and Literature (Paper 1), one will focus on early medieval literature (Paper 2), one will look at literature in English from 1830-1910 (Paper 3), and one will look at literature in English from 1910 to the present day (Paper 4). The three Oxford terms – Michaelmas, Hilary, and Trinity – are short and very busy, so it's absolutely vital that you read and prepare as much as possible *before* each term starts. You will need to use your weeks during term time to write essays and fine-tune your thoughts about the reading you have done over the vacation.

To make sure you hit the ground running this autumn, we have compiled summer vacation reading lists for each of the *three* courses you will be taking in Michaelmas Term (you will receive a full reading list for the fourth paper, Paper 4, prior to winter break in December). There's a lot of material here including some long novels, so it is crucial that you get started on this reading immediately and work steadily over the summer! We hope it will be fun.

For university-level study, it is important that you use well-edited and annotated editions of texts whenever available. We have included information on recommended editions for much of the reading listed below, and you should get your hands on these texts as soon as possible. If we have not specified particular editions, try to use series such as Oxford World's Classics, Penguin Classics, Norton Critical Editions, or Broadview editions – all of which include notes and reproduce faithful editions of texts. You should be able to find all of your texts on Amazon or at Blackwells (instore or online); cheaper, second-hand copies of many titles are available from abebooks.com or third-party sellers on Amazon, and you are welcome to purchase these – just be sure you are buying the most up-to-date/recommended edition.

PAPER 1: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

This paper will be taught in two parts across the entirety of your first year and is designed to provide you with the key skills, concepts and methodologies that you will need as you go through your degree. Part A covers issues related to "Literature"; Part B covers issues related to "Language" (though obviously these concerns overlap). You will learn the basics of what it means to be a literary scholar. Here are some starting points for each section:

Part A: Approaches to Literature

This paper will mostly be studied in the first term (Michaelmas). The first thing to read for this paper is

- Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (2011)

You should also buy

- *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leitch, Cain, Finke, et al., third edition (2018)—it may be quite expensive, but it is extremely good value, given the range of material it contains. Before you come to Oxford, you should read the following selections from it: Aristotle (*Poetics*), Sidney, Pope, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Shelley, Marx (extracts from *Capital*), Arnold, Nietzsche, Freud, Saussure, du Bois (*Souls of Black Folk* extract), Woolf, Eliot, Auerbach, Bakhtin, Jakobson, Brooks, Wimsatt and Beardsley, Austin, Barthes ('The Death of the Author'), Althusser, Jameson, Williams, Sontag, Bloom, Derrida (as much as possible), Todorov, Butler, Gilroy.

Other books which you should try to read before the start of the course:

- Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*
- Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*
- Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*
- Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*
- Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*

We will use William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* as a key primary text for the study of theoretical ideas, so you should also read that if you haven't before. The recommended edition is the revised Arden 3rd edition, edited by Vaughan and Vaughan.

We also recommend the following excellent books of criticism, which may act as models for you as you begin to develop your own style as a literary critic:

On poetry:

- Christopher Ricks, *The Force of Poetry* (1986)
- James Longenbach, *The Resistance to Poetry* (2004)
- Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (2002)
- William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930)

On fiction:

- James Wood, *How Fiction Works* (2008)
- David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (1994)
- E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (1927)

Part B: Approaches to Language

Section A covers various approaches to language, introducing you both to the study of the language of literary and non-literary texts in their historical and cultural contexts and to the analysis of form and meaning in language. It will mainly be studied in Hilary Term (the second term), but you should do some preparation for it. The English Faculty suggests the following three books as introductory reading for Section A of Prelims Paper 1, which you should read before you arrive in Oxford:

(1) Ronald Carter and Walter Nash, *Seeing Through Language: A Guide to Styles of English Writing* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1990)

(2) Jonathan Culpeper, *History of English*, Language Workbooks, second edition (London: Routledge, 2005)

(3) *The Language, Society, and Power Reader*, ed. Annabelle Mooney et al. (London: Routledge, 2011).

Whatever your prior knowledge of English grammar, you should prepare yourself by working through the whole of the UCL Internet Grammar of English at the following website:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/>

Each section of the Internet Grammar has useful exercises to test your understanding. You should complete all of these exercises before you arrive in Oxford and you will be expected to show knowledge and understanding of this basic grammatical material in our classes.

David Crystal's *Rediscover Grammar*, third edition (London: Longman, 2004) provides a similar introduction and reference manual in book form. Crystal has produced two other books which you may find useful: *The English Language: A Guided Tour of the Language* (2002), and *Spell It Out: The Curious, Enthralling and Extraordinary Story of English Spelling* (2013).

Fuller reading lists and a course plan for both parts of the paper will follow when you arrive in October.

PAPER 2: EARLY MEDIEVAL LITERATURE, c. 650 – 1350

Course format

This paper allows you to study texts in Old English and Early Middle English. In Michaelmas term, we will be focusing on Old English. Old English literature was written in the period from the time that the Germanic settlers invaded Britain in the fifth century up to around the Norman Conquest in 1066, or shortly after. We will start by tackling the fundamentals of the Old English language, before studying two of the paper's set texts: *The Dream of the Rood* and *Beowulf*.

Required Texts

You will need these books:

Richard Marsden, *The Cambridge Old English Reader* (CUP; most recent edition)

Elaine Treharne, ed., *Old and Middle English, c.890-c.1450: An Anthology*, 3rd ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

Laura Ashe, ed., *Early Fiction in England: From Geoffrey of Monmouth to Chaucer* (Penguin Classics, 2015)

We will also be using the following two books in Michaelmas term. Both are freely available from the library, but you may wish to acquire *A Guide to Old English*, since this contains the set-texts, and you may find it helpful to have your own copy so that you can write notes in it:

Peter Baker, *Introduction to Old English: Third Edition* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), and online resources at: <http://www.oldenglishaerobics.net/>

Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 8th ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

Essential Summer Reading

In preparation for studying Old English, you should read through a translation of the whole of *Beowulf*. This exciting heroic poem features heroic deeds, monster fights, and dragons, and you will find it easier to study if you are already acquainted with it in modern English. Many editions and translations are available, but you will find facing-page translations particularly helpful for studying the poem:

- Prose translation: Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *Beowulf* (Manchester, 1978)
- Verse Translation: R. M. Liuzza, ed. and trans., *Beowulf: Second Edition (with facing-page translation)* (Peterborough, Ontario, 2013). N.B. Take care to get the one with the Old English included, as Liuzza's translation is also available on its own.

You should also read some Old English poetry in *Old and Middle English* (ed. Treharne) to get a feel for the literary styles and subjects of the early medieval period. Sometimes medieval literature references events, biblical imagery, or ideas that you may be unfamiliar with. Treharne's very short introduction before each poem will help you to understand what is going on:

- The Whale
- The Battle of Maldon
- Judith
- The Dream of the Rood

Further Summer Reading

Though we will be spending Michaelmas studying literature written in Old English, in Hilary term we will consider works written in Middle English, as well as some medieval texts (in modern English translation) that were originally written in Latin or Anglo-Norman. These narratives include tales of king Arthur and his knights; stories of saints fighting dragons; and texts written by and for women. These are fantastic narratives, and reading some of them in advance will not only whet your appetite for things to come, but will allow you to start thinking about the kinds of genres, tropes and ideas in medieval literature. There are plenty of texts for you to choose from in the books by Treharne and Ashe, but some suggestions are:

- The Life of Saint Margaret (Treharne)

- Thomas of Britain: *Tristan* (Ashe)
- Geoffrey of Monmouth: *History of the Kings of Britain* (Ashe)
- Ancrene Wisse (Treharne)
- Marie de France: *Lais* (Ashe)

Since you will probably not have studied any medieval literature before, you might also like to read some works discussing the historical and literary background.

John Blair, *The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000) offers a concise and manageable history of the period, and will be helpful to read over the summer.

You may also find it helpful to consult entries in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2013) – e.g. ‘Trinity’, ‘Sacrament’, ‘Eucharist’, ‘Gospel’, ‘Liturgy’, ‘Office, Divine’, ‘Mattins’, ‘Vespers’, ‘Parish’, ‘Annunciation of the BVM’, ‘Incarnation’, ‘Harrowing of Hell’, ‘Sacrifice’, ‘Martyr’, ‘Saints, devotion to the’, ‘Anglo-Saxon Church’.

The Bible has had an enduring influence on English literature, from the medieval period to the present, so being well acquainted with it will be immensely useful not just for this paper, or indeed this year, but for your whole course. You can consult any version for free online at www.biblegateway.com. I also particularly recommend E. Sutherland Bates *The Bible, Designed to be Read as Living Literature*, which extracts all the best and most beautiful bits from the biblical text and sets them out for you: you will need to get it from the library or secondhand on abebooks, as sadly it is out of print.

You should also read three great classical epics. These are literally among the most famously thrilling stories ever told, so this should be no hardship; all three have excellent introductions:

- Homer, *The Iliad* (trans. Peter Green)
–*The Odyssey* (trans. Peter Green or Emily Wilson)
- Virgil, *The Aeneid* (trans. David Ferry)

For background to the classical material, try R. Jenkyns, *Classical Literature* (Penguin, 2015): an amazingly concise and eloquent survey of a thousand years of literary production.

If you don’t know the classical myths, go for R. Graves, *The Greek Myths* (many editions)

PAPER 3: LITERATURE IN ENGLISH, 1830-1910

This paper is taught during Michaelmas Term and covers literature written in English between 1830 and 1910. We’ll be studying a range of literary forms – including poetry, fiction, autobiography, and the essay – and the reading list for the course is fairly extensive, so it is crucial that you do as much of the primary reading as possible *before* you arrive at Teddy Hall in October. Some Victorian novels in particular are very long – Henry James famously dubbed them ‘large loose baggy monsters’ – and there is simply too much else to do in the eight weeks of Michaelmas to leave this amount of reading until term has begun.

Please purchase the following two anthologies now: they are excellent collections of important works from the literary period and include many of the poems and prose writings which we'll be studying over the course of term. They also include helpful introductions to the historical period as well as invaluable contextual information and explanatory notes to accompany each text:

- Catherine Robson (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature – Volume E: The Victorian Age*, tenth edition (Norton, 2018)
- Robert S. Levine (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of American Literature – Volume B: 1820-1865*, tenth edition (Norton, 2022)

In the reading list below, I've indicated which of the primary texts we're studying are included in the anthologies. In addition to using these two anthologies to access the set texts listed below, use them as a resource to help you explore the literature of the period more widely. Dip in and out of each and see what excites you. There will be plenty of scope for you to pick and choose your essay topics when you get here, so don't be afraid to form opinions and preferences – and to be guided by them. That is to say, follow your nose and dive into whatever moves you most!

Please read as many of the following primary texts as possible *in advance of term*. I recommend specific editions of the works by Brontë, Conrad, Dickens, Douglass, Eliot, and Schreiner, so please take note of these and make sure that you purchase the correct Oxford or Penguin edition for each (it will be incredibly helpful in classes if we are all using one version of the text and referring to the same page numbers).

Fiction:

- **Emily Brontë**, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), ed. John Bugg (Oxford World's Classics, 2020)
- **Joseph Conrad**, *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (1907), ed. Michael Newton (Penguin Classics, 2007)
- **Charles Dickens**, *Bleak House* (1853), ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)
- **George Eliot**, *Middlemarch* (1874), ed. Rosemary Ashton (Penguin Classics, 2003)
- **Olive Schreiner**, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), ed. Joseph Bristow (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

Poetry:

- **Matthew Arnold**, 'Dover Beach' and 'The Scholar Gypsy' [both of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Robert Browning**, 'Porphyria's Lover', 'My Last Duchess', 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came', 'Fra Lippo Lippi', and 'Andrea del Sarto' [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Emily Dickinson**, Poems 122 ('These are the days when Birds come back –'), 124 ('Safe in their Alabaster Chambers –'), 194 ('Title divine, is mine'), 236 ('Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –'), 256 ('The Robin's My Criterion for Tune'), 372 ('After great pain, a formal feeling comes –'), 373 ('This World is not conclusion'), 407 ('One need not be a Chamber – to be Haunted –'), 764 ('My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –'), and 1577 ('The Bible is an antique Volume –') [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]

- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, ‘The Snow-Storm’ and ‘Merlin’ [both of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Gerard Manley Hopkins**, ‘God’s Grandeur’, ‘As Kingfishers Catch Fire’, ‘Spring’, ‘The Windhover’, ‘Pied Beauty’, ‘Binsey Poplars’, ‘Duns Scotus’s Oxford’, ‘Spring and Fall: to a young child’, ‘Carrion Comfort’, ‘I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day’, and ‘That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection’ [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Christina Rossetti**, ‘In an Artist’s Studio’, ‘Winter: My Secret’, and ‘Goblin Market’ [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Alfred Tennyson**, ‘Mariana’, ‘The Lady of Shalott’, ‘The Lotos-Eaters’, ‘Ulysses’, and ‘Tithonus’ [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Walt Whitman**, ‘When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d’ and Sections 1, 2, 3, 33, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52 of ‘Song of Myself’ [both of which are included in your Norton Anthology]

Non-fiction Prose:

- **Matthew Arnold**, Extract from ‘The Study of Poetry’ (1880) included in your Norton Anthology
- **Emily Dickinson**, Letters to Thomas Wentworth Higginson (15 and 25 April 1862) [both of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Frederick Douglass**, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845), ed. Deborah E. McDowell (Oxford World’s Classics, 2009)
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, *Nature* (1836), ‘Self-Reliance’ (1841), and ‘The Poet’ (1844) [all of which are included in your Norton Anthology]
- **John Stuart Mill**, ‘What is Poetry?’ (1833) [included in your Norton Anthology]
- **Walter Pater**, Extracts from *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) included in your Norton Anthology
- **John Ruskin**, Extract from ‘Of the Pathetic Fallacy’ (1856) included in your Norton Anthology
- **Walt Whitman**, Preface to *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and Letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson (1856) [both of which are included in your Norton Anthology]

As you read each text, try to make notes on what interests and intrigues you about their form and content, as well as anything that you find exciting, puzzling, or difficult about them and would be interested in returning to during class discussion or tutorial essays. Don’t simply skip over those passages which you find especially complicated or vexing: such complexities might well speak to issues at the heart of particular texts and would likely benefit from you grappling further with them in your work during term time.

This reading list will provide you with plenty of work to undertake in advance of term and you should concentrate on these primary texts before you arrive at Oxford, rather than on secondary criticism. However, if you’re interested in deepening your wider understanding of the period of literary history that we’ll be studying for Paper 3, you might find it helpful to have a look at one or more of these critical surveys of the period:

- Philip Davis, *The Victorians, 1830-1880: The Oxford English Literary History Volume Eight* (Oxford University Press, 2004)

- Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (Routledge, 1993)
- Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature*, second edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

The primary texts listed above will form a strong foundation for your work on Paper 3 but eventually (for tutorial essays and end-of-year examinations) you should try to read beyond them. For instance, if you particularly enjoy *Middlemarch*, during term you can dive further into Eliot's work – try her novel *The Mill on the Floss*, or her poetry such as the 'Brother and Sister' sonnets, or her critical essays including 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists'. Or, if after reading *Bleak House* and *The Secret Agent* you're interested in exploring the subject of the nineteenth-century city in greater detail, you might look at Henry Mayhew's London journalism or the urban theory of Georg Simmel. One of the great strengths of Oxford's English syllabus is the extent to which it enables you to develop your own interests and approaches, and, once you arrive here, you'll have ample opportunity to take advantage of that freedom to follow where your critical instincts take you.

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We hope you have a wonderful and productive summer. Happy reading! We are very much looking forward to having you here soon.

Sincerely,
The Teddy Hall English Tutors