



St Hilda's College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

June 2026

**German:
German and French/German and Linguistics/Philosophy and German**

The Modern Languages tutors are delighted that you have been offered a place to read Modern Languages at St Hilda's, and we look forward to welcoming you in October.

The reading list with the set texts and a syllabus for the first-year German course (called Prelims) is attached. Please buy and read (or in one case watch) the set texts **before you arrive**, as you will not have enough time to read them during the short and academically demanding terms at Oxford. Read steadily over the summer (for instance, one chapter or act a day), and make notes as you read, capturing your thoughts and perceptions as well as details of plot, vocabulary and other matters of language.

With your German language, too, the more you are able to do in advance, the more you will be able to enjoy the course, and there are suggestions in the reading list for resources to help with both grammar work and vocabulary expansion.

You should retain the receipts for your book purchases as you will be able to apply for a College book grant to claim back up to £60 when you arrive in October.

If you have any questions about reading or preparation, or if you have difficulty obtaining books, please do not hesitate to get in touch (nicholas.jones@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk).

With best wishes,

Dr Nicholas Jones
Fellow and Tutor in German



READING LIST FOR GERMAN LITERATURE COURSE

Please buy your own copies of the following books and film and read/watch them before October. Please pay careful attention when buying them to the edition and ISBN, as editions can vary slightly, and having the same page numbers makes it easier to follow in tutorials and lectures.

1. Frank Wedekind, *Frühlings Erwachen* (1891) [Stuttgart: Reclam, 1991. ISBN 3150079519]
2. Bertolt Brecht, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1943) [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004 (BasisBibliothek 25). ISBN 978-3-518-18825-5]
3. Thomas Bernhard, *Heldenplatz* (1988) [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000 [1995]. ISBN 3518389742]
4. Dea Loher, *Unschuld* (2003) [Stuttgart: Reclam Theater der Gegenwart, 2022. ISBN 3150142059]

5. Theodor Fontane, *Irrungen, Wirrungen* (1888) [Stuttgart: Reclam XL, 2021. ISBN 3150161215]
6. Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung* (1912/1915) [Stuttgart: Reclam XL, 2021. ISBN 3150161096]
7. Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975) [Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, current edition. ISBN 978-3499124679]
8. Fatih Akin (dir.), *Aus dem Nichts* (2017) [Warner Home Video, 2018] OR *In the Fade*, with English subtitles [DVD: Curzon Artificial Eye, 2018]

Please also buy the following poetry anthology: we will focus on a selection of poems from it.

9. *Deutsche Gedichte*, edited by Hans-Joachim Simm [Insel, ISBN 978-3-458-17440-0] – the most recent edition is from 2009.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

It is extremely important to put in work on consolidating your German grammar and expanding your German vocabulary before you come to Oxford to start your course, as this will give you the best basis for approaching your set texts as well as helping you to start your language course with confidence.

Essential: For the first-year course, you will need to have Hammer's *German Grammar and Usage*, revised by Martin Durrell, seventh edition (revised) (London: Taylor and Francis, 2021) and *Practising German Grammar – A Workbook* by Martin Durrell, Katrin Kohl and Claudia Kaiser (now in fourth edition, 2017).

Optional: For vocabulary work, all students are recommended to use Sarah M. B. Fagan, *Using German Vocabulary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), but this is an expensive book and there are copies available to use for study in the College Library.

Highly recommended is the Duden *Stilwörterbuch* (vol. 2 in Duden's 12-volume series of linguistic reference books; this shows words in context and gives standard collocations: ISBN 978-

3411040292 OR also available as downloadable software, though NB system requirements, here: <https://shop.duden.de/Duden-Das-Stilwoerterbuch/9783411912230>).

If you prefer to use a paper dictionary, consider the New Concise Langenscheidt German/English English/German dictionary (recommended; min. 165,000 entries), or the Collins Concise German/English English/German dictionary.

Online dictionaries:

- <https://en.pons.com/translate>
- www.dict.cc
- www.leo.org
- <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-german>

Expanding your German vocabulary

It is important to focus on expanding your vocabulary in order to have a good basis for reading your literary texts as well as for your general language work. If you aren't already doing so, then you should start keeping a vocabulary resource (and when you note down new words, make sure you note down gender and plural form for nouns, and for verbs the 3rd person singular form for the present and imperfect tenses, plus the past participle form and whether the verb conjugates with 'sein' or 'haben').

The following books are recommended but not essential to assist you with your learning:

Paul Stocker, *Wort für Wort. German Vocabulary for Edexcel A-Level* (Hodder Education, sixth edition 2018)

The Big Yellow Book of German Verbs (Book with CD-ROM): 555 Fully Conjugated Verbs (Big Book of Verbs Series)

And for basic German grammar consolidation, highly recommended:

Annemarie Künzl-Snodgrass and Silke Mentchen, *Upgrade Your German* (Routledge 2015), also available in a Kindle edition

Also helpful:

Annemarie Künzl-Snodgrass and Silke Mentchen, *Speed Up Your German: Strategies to Avoid Common Errors* (Routledge 2017)

However, these books are expensive and again there are copies you can work with in the College Library.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST YEAR COURSE IN GERMAN (Post-‘A’ level)

The German Sub-Faculty has an integrated First Year course in which undergraduates are introduced to the study of literature in historical context and encouraged to make active use of oral and written language skills in discussing historical topics. The period focused on is the so-called ‘long twentieth century’, from the 1890s to the early 2000s. While you will engage with questions of literary style, language, and characterisation, and the ways in which authors experiment with these aspects of their craft, you will also be encouraged to see literature as a space for critical debate, in which a range of views and experiences are portrayed and analysed. Taking in canonical authors as well as Jewish and female perspectives, and including one film, the course engages with issues of inclusion and marginalisation and the impacts of systems of power.

The course lasts three terms and leads to the preliminary examination (‘Prelims’). These are the papers you will take in German Prelims:

Paper I Language I (3 hours): *Deutsche Gesellschaft und Kultur seit 1890*.

There will be a focus on the following topics: *Generationen und Geschlechter; (Aus-)Bildung: wozu?; Umwelt; Nation und Nationalismus*.

The examination paper consists of two parts: (i) Reading comprehension (in German) on a passage which relates to one of the themes of the paper; (ii) One essay in German on a topic relating to one of the themes of the paper (a choice of questions will be set).

Paper II Language II (two parts of 1½ hours each):

IIA Translation into German of a prose passage.

IIB Translation from German of a prose passage in a modern literary register.

Oral

There is no formal oral examination, but in order to pass the Preliminary Examination in German, colleges are required to present, for each candidate, a certificate of attendance and active participation in oral classes.

Paper III Drama and Poetry: Essay and Commentary (3 hours)

All non-beginners will study four prescribed dramas for this paper in Michaelmas Term (see list below). In addition, over the course of the first year (usually in Trinity Term, but potentially in college classes at earlier points of the year), you will study a selection of poems from the anthology *Deutsche Gedichte 1500 Gedichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*.

Frank Wedekind, *Frühlings Erwachen* (1891)

Bertolt Brecht, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1943)

Thomas Bernhard, *Heldenplatz* (1988)

Dea Loher, *Unschuld* (2003)

The examination will comprise three exercises: (1) ONE essay on the prescribed plays, (2) ONE commentary set from ONE of the prescribed dramas (the drama from which the commentary passage will be set is to be identified each year; in 2026-27 it will be *Frühlings Erwachen*), and (3) ONE commentary from a choice of three of the prescribed poems. Answers are written in English.

Paper IV Prose and film: Essays (3 hours)

All students of German, non-beginners and beginners, will study the prescribed prose texts and the prescribed film in Hilary Term.

Theodor Fontane, *Irrungen, Wirrungen* (1888)

Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung* (1912/1915)

Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975)

Fatih Akin (dir.), *Aus dem Nichts* (2017) (film)

For the examination candidates will be required to write THREE essays (selected from a choice of questions, covering genre, themes and period) on the prescribed works. Answers are written in English.