

Prelims Paper 1A: Introduction to English Language

This half of Paper 1 introduces you to some of the key concepts and theoretical approaches in the study of the English Language. The aim of this course is to learn how to engage in close linguistic reading of texts, literary or otherwise, and for the final portfolio (i.e. coursework) you will be expected to produce a comparative commentary of 1,500-2,000 words analysing two passages of your own choosing.

Over the course of Michaelmas Term, you will learn how to analyse language using the methods of discourse analysis and stylistics, and we will cover individual topics like language and power, language and gender, language change, and regional and social variation. While we will look at some literary texts, much of our work will also focus on critically reading 'everyday' texts, including the language of the media, politics, and advertising. Teaching will be through a combination of small-group classes and tutorials, plus the English Faculty lecture series. You are required to produce four practice commentaries during the course of Michaelmas Term and the Christmas vacation, plus another over the Easter break.

Core texts

Please make sure you have purchased and read the following texts prior to the start of term:

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

Paul Simpson and Andrea Mayr, *Language and Power: A Resource Book for Students* [2nd edition] (London: Routledge, 2018)

Other preparatory reading

Other texts to seek out once you have access to the Bodleian catalogue include:

Deborah Cameron, *The Myth of Mars and Venus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

David Crystal, *The Stories of English* (London: Penguin, 2005)

Jonathan Culpeper, *History of English* [3rd edition] (London: Routledge, 2015)

Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* [3rd edition] (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015)

Malcolm Hebron, *Mastering the Language of Literature* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004)

Paul Simpson, *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* [2nd edition] (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014)

Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* [4th edition] (London: Penguin, 2000)

Having a solid grasp of the grammar of English is crucial to doing linguistic close reading and stylistic analysis, and it will be worth brushing up on this over the summer. The following grammar and workbook are highly recommended:

Douglas Biber et al. *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Harlow: Longman, 2003)

Douglas Biber et al. *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English Workbook* (Harlow: Longman, 2002)

David Crystal's *Rediscover Grammar* is also good, if a little more elementary.