

# European and Middle Eastern Languages (EMEL)



## MINIMUM A-LEVEL GRADE REQUIREMENTS

AAA

## LENGTH OF COURSE

4 years with a year abroad

## A-LEVELS REQUIRED

A modern language (depending on course choice).

2 pieces of written work will have to be submitted.

## ADMISSIONS TEST

MLAT (Modern Languages Aptitude Test) & OLAT (Oriental Languages Aptitude Test)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The European and Middle Eastern Languages (EMEL) course enables students to combine papers in one of the languages taught in the Faculty of Modern Languages with papers in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish, providing opportunities to take advantage of the cultural links which exist between a number of European and Middle Eastern languages. For example, appropriate combinations might well be French and Arabic, German and Turkish, or Hebrew and Russian, but even some of the less obvious pairings would provide similar cultural and historical linkage. For example, Spanish and Turkish would be an interesting combination for the history of Sephardi Judaism, while Persian and Portuguese are important for the study of early colonial expansion. You will normally spend your second year on an approved course of study in the Middle East. There are arrangements in place with partner universities to help you make the most of your time abroad. In addition to undertaking a study placement, students may also choose to undertake further language study or participate in internships. You are strongly advised to spend the adjacent summers in a country where the European language of your choice is spoken.

## STRUCTURE OF MODULES

### 1st year

**European languages:** Two language papers, One literature paper

**Middle Eastern language:** Intensive language learning

**First University examinations:** five written papers; plus oral/aural examination (Arabic only)

### 2nd year

**Middle Eastern Language:** Students attend an approved course of language instruction in the Middle East

**European Language:** Students are encouraged to spend as much of their vacation time as possible in a relevant country

**Qualifying examination:** At the end of Year 2 (Middle Eastern language only)

### 3rd year & 4th year

**Courses:** Practical language work in the European language, Period of literature and further paper chosen from a wide range of options in the European language, Practical language work in the Middle Eastern language, Three papers including literature and a range of options in the Middle Eastern language, Extended essay on a topic bridging the European and the Middle Eastern language

**Final University examinations:** nine written papers are taken including a bridging extended essay; oral exam (both languages, but not Hebrew on the Middle Eastern side)

## APPROXIMATE NO. OF CONTACT HOURS PER WEEK

**Tutorials:** 3-4 hours

**Lectures:** 3-5 hours

**Classes:** 3-6 hours

## WHY MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES AT OXFORD?

ME languages is an intensive but rewarding course. It is a gratifying opportunity to interact with various cultures and explore historical context. You will gain proficiency in the target language and have the amazing chance to experience a year abroad in the country of your language.

I knew that I wanted to study German, so I looked at what other combinations I could do and Arabic caught my eye. As a Muslim, I was interested in Arabic so that I could understand the Qur'an and be able to do my own research in Islam, and not have to be reliant on other interpretations and readings. After Arabic caught my eye, I began to read around Arabic literature and fell in love with Arabic women's writing, particularly the poetry of Khansa and Wallada bint al-Mustakfi. I also read the original Arabian Nights (in translation) and was shocked to find that the themes and topics were not as conservative as I imagined. I wanted to be able to understand the literature as is because I knew that a lot of meaning was lost, especially when translating classical Arabic to English. Finally, I am extremely interested in refugees and integration and having German and Arabic would be a useful combination, even if it doesn't have as strong a historic precedent as Spanish or French with Arabic. It's an important combination for the future of refugees in Germany and Europe, and I hope to be able to work with them in the future.

## PERSONAL STATEMENT TIPS

- Short concise introductions, avoid clichés
- For extra reading, look at the course description found on the Oxford Website (recommended reading)
- Mention a Ted Talk/article (with brief analysis)
- Show how the skills developed from your A levels will equip you for the degree
- Brief analysis of mentioned topics to show critical thinking
- Round it off by bringing it back to the actual course and what you hope to get out of it
- Strong clear structure with lots of links
- The Arabic degree has a HEAVY focus on the language and its linguistics. Make sure to showcase that you know this and have a passion for the language, as well as the history/ culture/religion part of the course.

## INTERVIEW TIPS

- Beforehand, critically analyse your personal statement; this is what the interviewers will be doing.
- Question yourself and make sure you can answer them.
- During the interview, think out loud
- It is okay to have a moment to think about the answer
- Back up yourself and any claim that you make with evidence
- Listen to the phrasing of the question carefully. Often, the interviewer is trying to take you in a certain direction.

## MLAT & OLAT TIPS

- MLAT - paper-based test which consists of 10 sections. Which sections you take depends on your course (max 2).
- OLAT - paper-based test, lasting 30 minutes.
- Work through the past papers online (with a teacher if possible) and make sure you practice trickier grammar points like the subjunctive and tenses.
- The test requires translation of short phrases into your chosen language so make sure you practice this as it isn't something that comes up at A-level.

## CAREER PROSPECTS

Possible career options: Government: UN Ambassador, Industry: British Business rep liaising with the Middle East/Political risk analyst, Intelligence analyst: GCHQ/MI5/MI6, Education: Teacher/Researcher, Reporter, Foreign correspondent, Translator/Interpreter, Writer/Researcher, Anthropologist

## STUDYING

As an Arabic student, you will have essays on history, culture and religion. These depend upon when lectures have finished teaching a certain topic. The tutorials are extremely vital as it used as an oral opportunity to express your arguments and back your opinions. It is beneficial when you are paired with someone who has argued the alternative side to you so that you can have a healthy debate. It is also a very good chance to ask your lecturer for specific feedback and clear up any misconceptions or queries. The tutorials groups are extremely small, and this is great as it means the session can be catered for your needs directly.

## AVERAGE DAY/WEEK

During my first year, I had a 2hr language class every single day and lectures twice a week. I would often wake up early to cover the language work from the last lesson and attempt to look over what was to be covered that day. As for lectures, I would attempt to go over a lecture (if recorded with permission) over the weekend before the next one so that I could brush up on my notes. As for essay deadlines, I would write them in advance so that I could plan my time effectively; two days of reading and two days of planning/writing. I would bear in mind society commitments and socials to ensure I was managing my time effectively.

## Recommended Reading/Viewing

- **David Crystal language debates** exemplifies the prominence of language variation
- **Ted Talk 'don't kill your language'**: showcased the significance on protecting your mother tongue in all its linguistic glory
- **David Crystal's The CE of the English Language: Arab influence on the English language**
- **Wallada bint Al-Mustakifi's** poetry
- Farghaly's **'The Arabic Language and Linguistics'**: revealed salient patterns between phonology and semantics.
- LOOK AT THE COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PICK OUT THINGS TO READ FROM THE **'RECOMMENDED READING'**!!
- [https://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/orinst/documents/media/oriental\\_studies\\_undergraduate\\_handbook\\_for\\_2020.21\\_v1.4.pdf?time=1605105282592](https://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/orinst/documents/media/oriental_studies_undergraduate_handbook_for_2020.21_v1.4.pdf?time=1605105282592)