

French 3 : Preparatory Reading

Updated 2019

We strongly encourage students to begin exploring the material over the summer.

Literary Texts

Students' supervisors will determine the six–eight authors/texts studied in supervision, but students can get a head start by reading the selections listed below, essential texts that will be treated in the lectures.

We recommend that students acquire bilingual editions (Old French with modern French facing-page translations) for best access to the text. Bilingual editions of the literary texts are available through the Lettres gothiques series (Livre de Poche) and the Champion Classiques Moyen Âge series (Honoré Champion), and they are also published by Flammarion. We encourage students to commence their search for books in the library or a local bookshop. If the books in question are not available, students should know that Blackwell's online offers some of these texts. Beyond that, we encourage students to explore chapitre.com, which offers good prices on French-language books. Books are searchable by author, title, or ISBN number (EAN13).

Please treat the translations as a point of reference for the original texts and a way to assess how well you have understood, rather than relying on the translations as your only source for understanding the text. Helpful textbooks for Old French language are listed at the end of this page. There will be some formal instruction in the language during the year, but you should be aware that comprehension only really comes through regular reading of the language, which should begin in the summer.

- Marie de France, *Lais* (Recommended edition with translation by Laurence Harf-Lancner for Lettres gothiques, ISBN 9782253052715.)
- *Fabliaux* (There are many *fabliaux*. We recommend that students focus their preparation by using one of the following anthologies: *Fabliaux du Moyen Âge*, edited and translated by Jean Dufournet [Flammarion, 1998, ISBN 9782081351240] or *Fabliaux érotiques*, edited and translated by Luciano Rossi [Livre de Poche, 1993, ISBN 9782253060017].)
- *La Chanson de Roland* (Recommended edition with translation by Ian Short for Lettres gothiques, ISBN 9782253053415.)
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Romans* (Recommended anthology of all the romances with original and translation, from Lettres gothiques, ISBN 9782253131311. We do not require students to read all five of Chrétien's romances. Supervisions are most likely to cover the *Chevalier de la charrette*, and students will be expected to choose and read one other romance.)
- *La Queste del saint Graal* (Since this romance is in prose and employs a restricted vocabulary, this is a good text to try reading exclusively in Old French; the first pages will go slowly, but with time you will find you can read more quickly with a good understanding. We therefore recommend the edition by Albert Pauphilet for the Classiques français du Moyen Âge series, ISBN 9782852030442.)

These narrative texts were meant to be read aloud. In addition, the paper will cover some Old French song. To get a taste of what the language would have sounded like in performance, students may acquire a CD or MP3 album of Old French song. There is a range of albums available, but we particularly recommend *Chansons de toiles* (Ligeriana, 2008, B0015DM3JM), *Chansons de toile* (Esther Lamandier, 1999, ASIN B000027MEW), *Trouvères à la cour de Champagne*

(Ensemble Venance Fortunat, 2002, ASIN B000005WBW), or *Trouvères* (Sequentia, 1991, ASIN B01L9BX9H4).

Introductory Literary Criticism and the Special Topic

For introductions to the literature, see especially:

Gaunt, Simon, *Retelling the Tale: An Introduction to Medieval French Literature* (Bloomsbury, 2013)
Gaunt, Simon, and Sarah Kay, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*
(Cambridge University Press, 2008)

For the special topic, students may begin with one or two of the following:

Akbari, Suzanne Conklin, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009)

Ariès, Philippe, and Georges Duby, *Histoire de la vie privée*, vol. 2, *De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance* (Seuil, 1999) / *A History of Private Life*, vol. 2, *Revelations of the Medieval World* (Harvard University Press, 1993)

Byrne, Aisling, *Othworlds: Fantasy and History in Medieval Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Kinoshita, Sharon, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006)

Lochrie, Karma, *Nowhere in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)
Medieval Practices of Space, edited by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobińska (University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

Zumthor, Paul, *La Mesure du monde: Représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1993)

Lectures will introduce theoretical approaches to space and place, and a fuller bibliography will be distributed through Moodle in the autumn.

Guidance for Language

To begin reading Old French, the following are particularly helpful. Please note, however, that both French-language books were published for students in France preparing national examinations (the *Agrégation* and the *CAPES*), which require them to explain the historical development of words and grammatical structures. Likewise, the English-language textbook preserves components of a different approach to Old French that seeks to understand its development out of Latin. Our concern in French 3 is to understand the nuances of literary texts, not the history of the French language. For this reason, you should focus on grammatical structures and the form and meaning of words in the Old French period (twelfth and thirteenth centuries). The aspects of these books' exposition that are diachronic and deal with developments before and after that period (the sections on 'phonétique historique' in the Hélix book, 'Phonology' in the Kibler, and 'Origine' and 'Évolution' in the Bertran and Menegaldo), though interesting, will not be the focus of the paper. Students with a particular interest in linguistic questions should consider following—at the same time as FR3—FR2: Structures and Varieties of French and/or CS1: The Romance Languages.

- Hélix, Laurence, *L'Ancien Français en 18 textes et 18 leçons* (Armand Colin, 2014, ISBN 978-2200620936) [The presentation of the grammar in this book is the most accessible and concise of the many textbooks published in France. Short extracts from literature are

keyed to the lessons, making self-tutorial possible, and the grammatical topics are treated in an order conducive to rapidly reading and understanding original texts.]

- Kibler, William M., *An Introduction to Old French* (Modern Language Association, 1984, ISBN 978-0873522922) [Another grammar book with lessons organized to help you start reading as quickly as possible and short readings of Old French literature. We recommend this book principally to students from other faculties who are not currently studying modern French and may find a textbook in English more accessible.]
- Bertran, Olivier, and Silvère Menegaldo, *Vocabulaire d'ancien français* (Armand Colin, 2006, ISBN 9782200614690) [This book presents the vocabulary most frequently employed in Old French texts and offers useful explanations of the precise meaning of words in the period as well as the differences in meaning between closely related words. It is especially helpful for identifying *faux amis* between Old and Modern French and understanding words that have been lost from the language.]