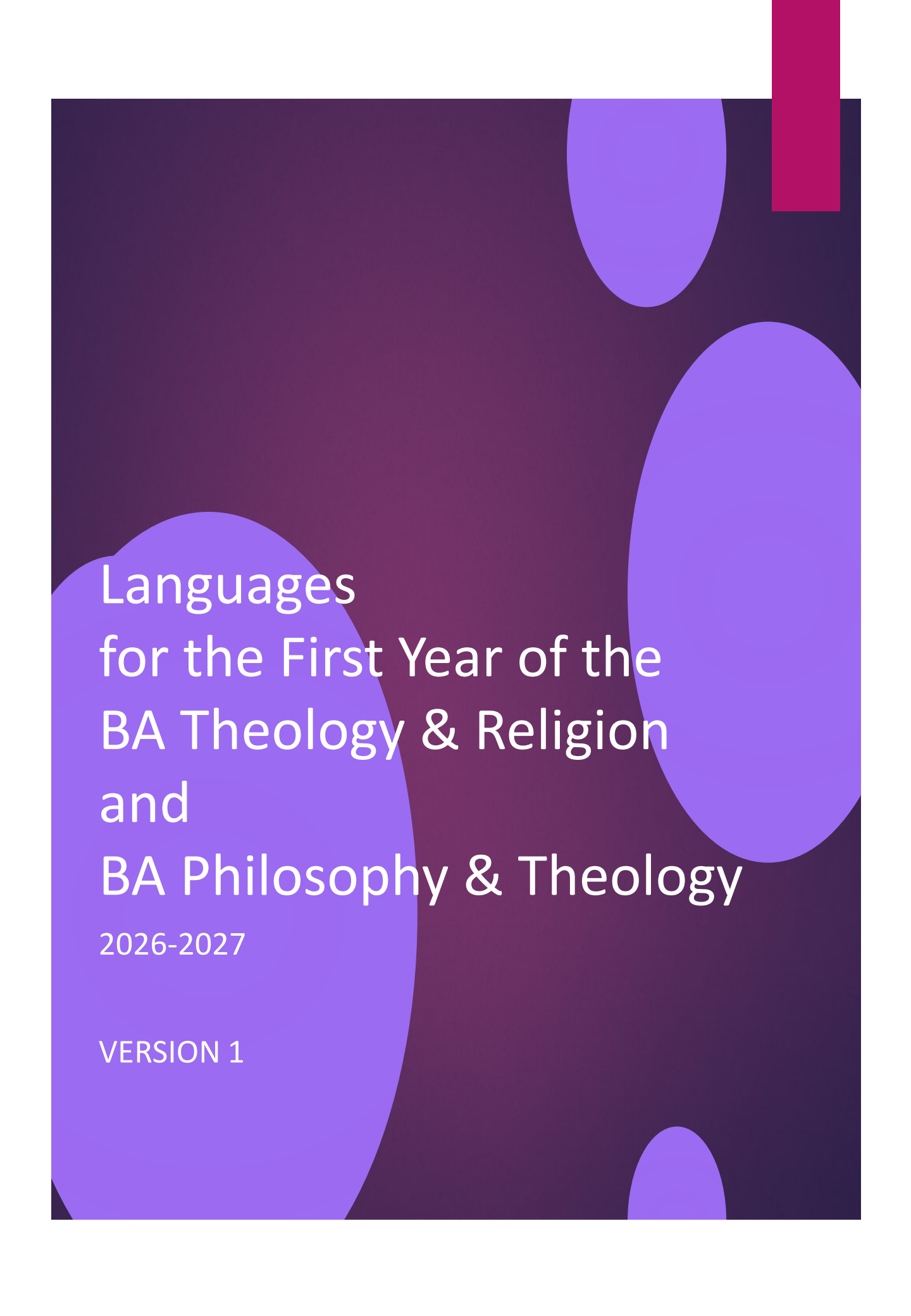


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Languages for the First Year of the BA Theology & Religion and BA Philosophy & Theology

2026-2027

VERSION 1

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Languages and your course

- ▶ All students studying BA Theology and Religion are required to study one of six languages in their first year, to be examined at the end of the third term. These languages (in alphabetical order) are:

Qur'anic Arabic

New Testament Greek

Biblical Hebrew

Church Latin

Pali

Sanskrit

You will find further information about each language in this booklet.

- ▶ Students studying BA Philosophy and Theology may also choose to study a language as their second Theology paper.
- ▶ Each of these languages is taught for beginners from scratch in classes led by dedicated language teachers. We do not expect you to have any prior knowledge of the language before you start the classes. These classes are organised by the Faculty for students for all colleges and both BA courses, so they provide an opportunity for you to meet and work with students from other colleges.
- ▶ Classes meet for three hours per week in term time. In addition to these classes, assignments will be set and it will be important for you to maintain independent study of the language throughout the term and during vacations. It is good practice to try to devote some time to the language every day. (A little time each day is more effective than several hours every now and then.)

Why Study Languages?

- ▶ Languages in theology and religion work differently from languages you might have studied at school. Rather than learning to order coffee or ask directions abroad, you're investigating how entire worldviews developed and came to be expressed in specific languages.
- ▶ Over centuries of scholarship and still today, the ability to access religious texts in their original languages has been an important component of the study of Theology and Religion.
- ▶ In many religious traditions, language isn't just practical; it's often considered sacred. Hebrew is the language for the revelation of Torah; Arabic is the language God chose for the Qur'an; Greek and Latin became the languages of early Christian theology. Sanskrit and Pali survive primarily as the languages of Hindu and Buddhist canonical texts, respectively and in the religious practice of those religions. Each tradition wrestled with questions: Can sacred texts be translated? Do some words lose their meaning in translation? Who gets to decide what texts mean? These aren't just ancient debates, they're alive today whenever communities argue about which is the better Bible translation, whether Muslims can pray in English, how to interpret religious texts. Studying these languages means you're not just learning words; you're examining how humans have captured, preserved and communicated ideas about God, about what is good, and about meaning. That makes language study in this degree intellectually distinctive—and surprisingly relevant to the contemporary world.

Why Study Languages?

- ▶ Many of the papers you will study for your degree will engage with these texts and use terminology that originates in the languages of those texts. Even if you study these texts entirely in English translation after your first year, the process of having learned a language and engaged in translation should afford you insights into the implications of languages and translation for interpretation and understanding. Learning a language is, therefore, concerned not only with learning vocabulary and identifying sentence structure; it probes the issues and challenges that are at the heart of these degrees.
- ▶ The specific learning aims and objectives of the first year courses are detailed in their individual course descriptions. Looking beyond the first year, you will find different opportunities to use your language skills. You may choose to answer on Hebrew and/or Greek in your final examinations.
- ▶ More broadly, however, your first year language study should equip you with the skills and experience to tackle – with the help of reference tools and notes – a text in that language. (Some texts are more difficult than others to read and translate but you should be able to make an attempt.)
- ▶ You should be able to access secondary literature that makes reference to the original language of a text and to appreciate arguments that draw on the language of a text (even if some are more easy to understand than others).
- ▶ At the very least, you will be able to draw on insights you gained from working in another language and appreciate the challenges posed by working on texts in translation and ideas transposed from one language and culture to another.

Choosing a Language

Students should choose the language they would prefer to study in their first year in consultation with their college tutors, who will be able to offer advice and put you in touch with Faculty language teachers. When choosing, therefore, you might like to consider the following factors:

- ▶ Do your interests in the broad field of Theology and Religion coincide with texts written in a particular language? If so, studying that language may enable you to access relevant texts in the future and you are likely to be interested in texts written in that language. For example, if you are interested in Hinduism, consider Sanskrit, if you are interested in the history of the church in the West, consider Latin. It is certainly possible to study these subjects without Sanskrit or Latin but it makes sense to align your studies with what interests you and motivates you to work.
- ▶ Alternatively, try reading some of the set texts for the language courses in English translation. If you enjoy reading and are interested by a text in translation, you're more likely to enjoy reading it in its original language.
- ▶ Have you studied a language before? What did you enjoy about it? Its familiarity or its strangeness? Its sound? Its appearance?
- ▶ It may be possible to access free "tasters", where you can hear the language being read and see what the script looks like. Find links to some free resources in answers to the FAQs at the end of this booklet.
- ▶ Remember that all of these languages are taught at beginners level and so, if you have already studied one to the equivalent of AS level or higher, you will NOT be able to study it in your first year. If you have some familiarity with the language (e.g. to GCSE level) or facility in a closely related language (e.g. Modern Hebrew or Arabic) you should discuss your particular situation carefully with your college tutor, in order to determine whether or not a beginners class will provide you with sufficient occupation and challenge.

Students are invited to indicate their preferred language before arriving at the University in October. This allows sufficient time for the Faculty to prepare and organise the classes. Your preferred language is normally communicated to the Faculty via your college tutor.

Some Considerations...

- ▶ Six languages are offered for study in the first year and every effort is made to accommodate the preference of individual students. However, insufficient student demand for a language or changes in circumstances may render it unviable or impossible to run classes in all six languages this year. If your preferred language cannot be accommodated for any reason, you will be contacted and consulted about an alternative. It is helpful if you are able to give some thought to your second preference/contingency option.
- ▶ The brief descriptions of the courses in this booklet are intended only as brief indicative guides. The finer details (e.g. set texts and books used) may alter. The definitive course description on the Faculty's website: <https://theology.web.ox.ac.uk/course-options-for-the-preliminary-examination>
- ▶ The following descriptions include links to external websites where you can find English translations of the set texts. As suggested on the previous page, exploring the content of the set text might help you to make a decision about which language you would like to study. However, please bear the following points in mind:
 - The Faculty accepts no responsibility for content of external websites.
 - There are a variety of translations available; learning the language will help you to negotiate this variety and make informed judgements about which you think are best. The links that follow provide just one (and not necessarily the only or best) example of how the text might be translated. It is offered merely to provide an indication as to content.
 - The links have been selected on the basis of their open-access (free) availability. In some cases the English translation may be old fashioned, incomplete or difficult to navigate.
 - Once you have started the course, your tutor will recommend editions of the set texts and reliable English translations, which you would be able to access through University and college libraries.

Qur'anic Arabic

Qur'anic Arabic is closely connected to the geography and history of the emergence of Islam. Arabic was the last of the Semitic languages to be written down and is arguably the best preserved of all these, retaining more ancient features than any other language of that group. Learning Qur'anic Arabic is a great starting point for the modern language, as it is the foundation of all Arabic dialects, with the text of the Qur'an considered the ultimate standard of Arabic grammar and style.

The course focuses on Qur'anic vocabulary and the major grammatical and syntactical points of the language. On completing the course, a student would have a foundation for further studies on both the Qur'an and other related texts.

SET TEXTS

Several short passages from the Qur'an:

Try reading an English Translation of the Qur'an. There are several online including at:

<https://www.clearquran.com/>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Second and third years may choose to study *Islam in the Classical Period*, *Islam in Contemporary Society and Further Studies* in Islam. Learning Arabic is not required for these papers but would enable to you access primary sources in the original language as well references to Arabic in secondary literature, enriching your work on these papers.



A page from an 18th century copy of the Qur'an in the collection of the Bodleian Library, From the library of Tipu Sultan, Fath 'Ali, Nawab of Mysore.

See more – Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. Or. 793:

<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/1d091ec9-33f8-42d9-a620-141dfc7b1816/>

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New Testament Greek

New Testament Greek opens up one of history's most fascinating puzzles: how did a small Jewish movement in first-century Palestine become a religion that spread across the Roman Empire? The answer lies partly in language: Greek was the common language of the Mediterranean world. If you wanted your message to travel from Jerusalem to Rome to Alexandria, you wrote in Greek. But this created a challenge: how do you express Jewish ideas about God, covenant, and messiah in a language shaped by completely different philosophical traditions? Learning Greek lets you see this creative struggle firsthand and understand how translation choices made 2,000 years ago still shape how people read these texts today.

By the end of the course you will have covered all the major grammatical features of New Testament Greek, and will have learned a valuable portion of relevant vocabulary. You will have read selected chapters of the New Testament in Greek, which may enrich study of the first-year paper, *Introduction to the study of the Bible*. You will be able to read the New Testament independently using a dictionary.

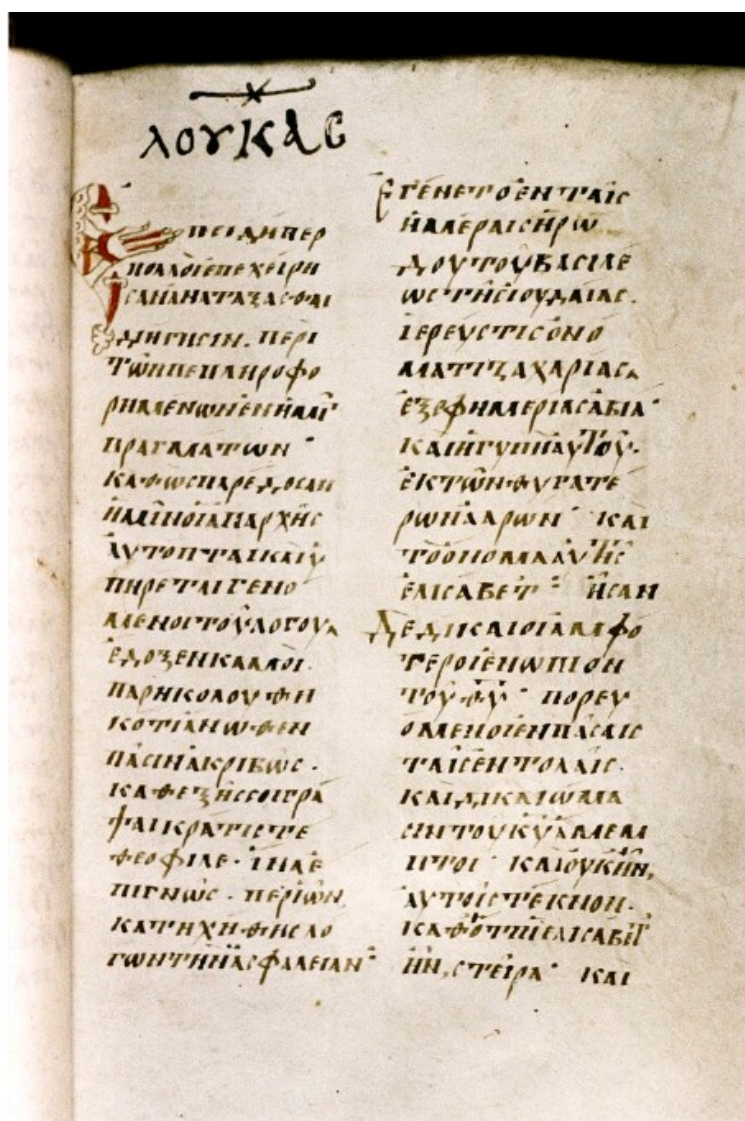
SET TEXTS

A selection of chapters from Luke's Gospel. Try reading Luke's Gospel in English at

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1&version=NRSV>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

If you study early Christianity, you'll read theologians who were trying to explain Christian ideas using Greek philosophical concepts, often creating fascinating tensions. If you're interested in manuscripts and textual history, you'll be able to examine the actual ancient documents and understand debates about which readings are original. Even if you focus on completely different areas, Greek provides a useful parallel: how do religious traditions handle sacred languages, translation, and textual authority? And practically speaking, being able to say 'I can read ancient Greek' is pretty impressive on CVs and graduate school applications: it signals serious academic commitment.



A page of Luke's Gospel from a 10th Century (possibly) Palestinian manuscript. It was collected in 1853 by famous scholar L.F.S. Tischendorf and is now in the collection of the Bodleian Library.

See more – Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Auct. T. inf. 1. 1:
<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/22e893f5-c2ce-4fc1-bfbb-5a121c3b1df2/>

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Biblical Hebrew

Hebrew is the language of the Jewish scriptures and the Christian Old Testament. First the language of ancient Israel and Judah from around 1,000 BCE, it was later preserved in the Jewish diaspora as a holy tongue. Texts in Hebrew, a Semitic language, span a wide range of genres, from the law or Torah of Moses, to the poetry of the Psalms and the prophecy of Isaiah. Learning Hebrew gives you access to the earliest tales of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and David, to texts that have influenced many subsequent religious writings. The Hebrew of the Bible is also an excellent basis for learning later forms of the language, including modern spoken Hebrew.

The course covers all the basics of Biblical Hebrew – the writing system, essential vocabulary, noun and verb grammar, and syntax – so that students develop a good ability to read and write texts in Hebrew. In addition, through studying several chapters from the book of Genesis closely, students will develop the linguistic tools necessary to carefully analyse passages from the Bible.

SET TEXTS

The book of Genesis chapters 12, 15 and 22.

Try reading Genesis in English at

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1&version=NRSV>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

In the third year paper *Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible*, you can take your Hebrew to the next level and gain an appreciation for sophisticated literary texts. During your second and third year you may consolidate and improve your knowledge of the language in Intermediate Hebrew classes.

Examinations in *Narrative World of the Hebrew Bible* and *Poetic World of the Hebrew Bible* provide an opportunity for students to translate and comment on Hebrew passages. Knowledge of Hebrew would be an asset for both papers (even if you opt to study the texts in English).

The Hebrew language and Hebrew Bible are foundational to the development of Judaism, which may be studied in several papers.



The beginning of Genesis in the 'Kennicott Bible', which dates from 1476, from La Coruña in Spain and now in the collection of the Bodleian Library.

See more – Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Kennicott 1:
<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/8c264b23-f6cc-4f18-98cf-9d75f7175b54/>

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Church Latin

The use of Latin stretches from the foundation of Rome to the Vatican today. It has existed alongside the everyday vernacular languages of the different peoples of Europe as the language of religious worship, theological discourse, learning, and erudition. This course equips you to read post-Classical Latin, and particularly the form of Latin that was used by the authors of the Vulgate, a translation of the Bible made in the fourth century, and by theologians from Late Antiquity throughout the Middle Ages. You will learn how each author and era adapts the language to their own context.

You will learn enough Latin grammar and vocabulary to access the Vulgate (both Old and New Testaments), and read extracts from other relevant ecclesiastical texts. You will also be able to analyse and elucidate points of Latin grammar and syntax, as well as translate simple English sentences into Church Latin.

SET TEXTS

Genesis 22, Psalms 18 and 50 and Luke 9 and 22 - try reading these Biblical Texts in English by typing 'Genesis', 'Psalms' or 'Luke' into the search bar at

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

And extracts from:

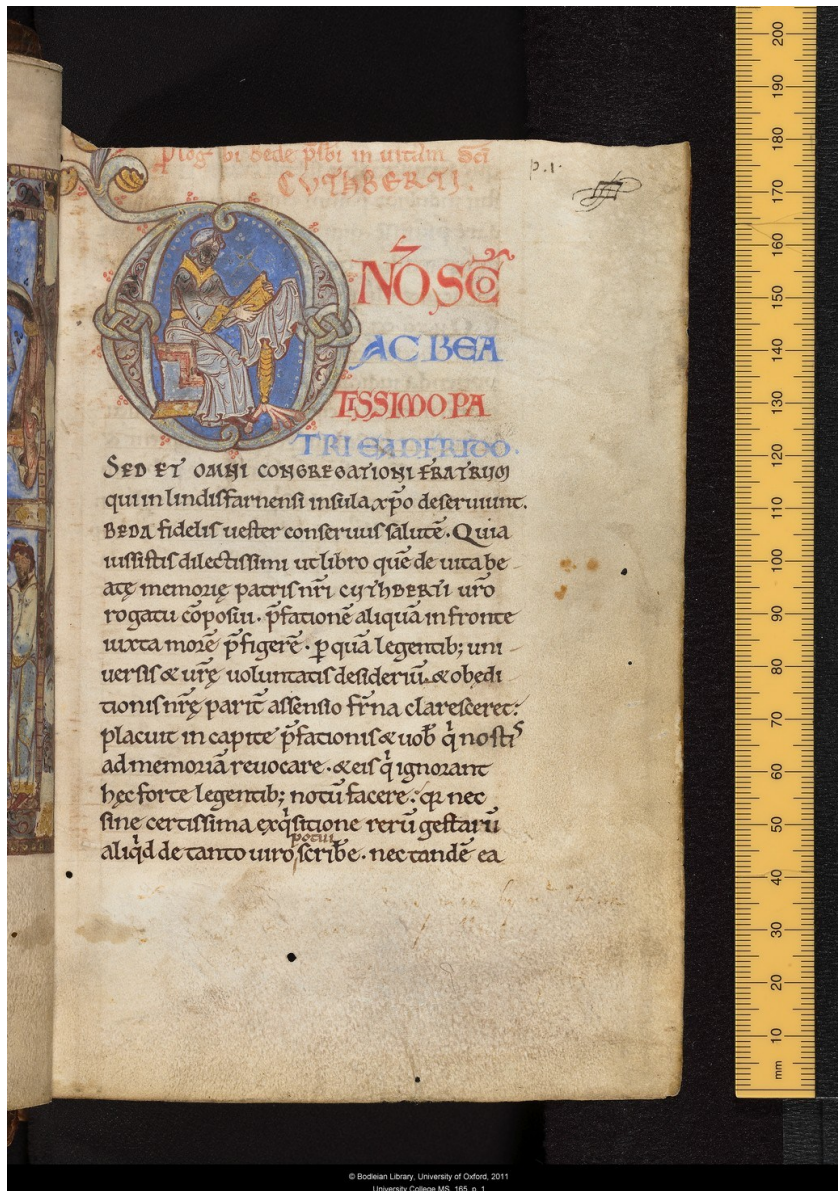
Augustine, Confessions - try the (old fashioned) English translation at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3296/3296-h/3296-h.htm>

The Rule of St Benedict - try at <https://e-benedictine.com/rule/>

Bede, Prose Life of St Cuthbert – try at <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/bede-cuthbert.asp>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Learning Church Latin will enable you to access primary sources in Latin for a variety of finals papers, supporting and enriching your work in those areas. Particular papers which would benefit from it include the *History and Theology of the Early Church, From Nicaea to Chalcedon* and *Augustine*..



A painted initial from a 12th century manuscript of Bede's prose Life of Cuthbert in the collection of University College Oxford.

See more – <https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/news/life-cuthbert-venerable-bede/>

Image courtesy of the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford (MS 165, fol. 6r.).

Pali

Pāli is the language of the Tipiṭaka, the Theravāda Buddhist canon, which includes discourses attributed to Gautama Buddha. Many later Buddhist works were also written in Pāli. It branches from the Indo-European family of languages and shares many features with Vedic and Sanskrit. Pāli offers a unique challenge and opportunity to engage with a related and yet distinct conceptual universe. Written evidence of Pāli goes back to inscriptions from the 4th century BCE. Pāli is still spoken, read, and recited by Theravāda Buddhists throughout South and Southeast Asia.

You will learn enough Pali grammar and vocabulary to be able to read extracts from original Theravāda Buddhist texts.

SET TEXTS

Passages from the Pali canon, try browsing the Tipiṭaka at

<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/index.html>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

After the first year: Second and third years may choose to study *Early Buddhism*, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, *Ethics II: Religious Ethics* and *Further Studies* in Buddhism. Learning Pali would enable you to use accurate terminology, understand key concepts and access primary sources in the original language as well as references to Pali in secondary literature, enriching your work on these papers.



An eighteenth-century Thai illuminated manuscript containing several different texts in Pali, including ten Buddhist birth stories and the life story of the Buddha Śākyamuni. Image shows the partly folded exterior. Now in the collection of the Bodleian Library.

See more – Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Pali a. 27 (R):

<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/59371853-5ff2-436e-9714-672986c6a6d6/>

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Sanskrit

One of the longest continually used languages in existence, Sanskrit has a history spanning more than three thousand years. For much of that time, Sanskrit has been the primary language for intellectual, literary, and religious expression in India. It remains an official Indian language today, continuing to develop, as well as being unusual in having a codified ancient grammar making Sanskrit the key to the world's largest and oldest classical literature.

The 'discovery' of Sanskrit by European scholars in the late 18th century has been hugely important to the comparative study of languages and a reconstruction of their development. A branch of the family of languages called 'Indo-European', Sanskrit has unexpected similarities with languages you might already have encountered (including English), while remaining very different. It is used for both literary and religious texts, with huge quantities of beautiful prose and poetry available for reading.

You will learn enough Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary to be able to read, with support, significant passages from a range of relevant Hindu and Buddhist texts.

SET TEXTS

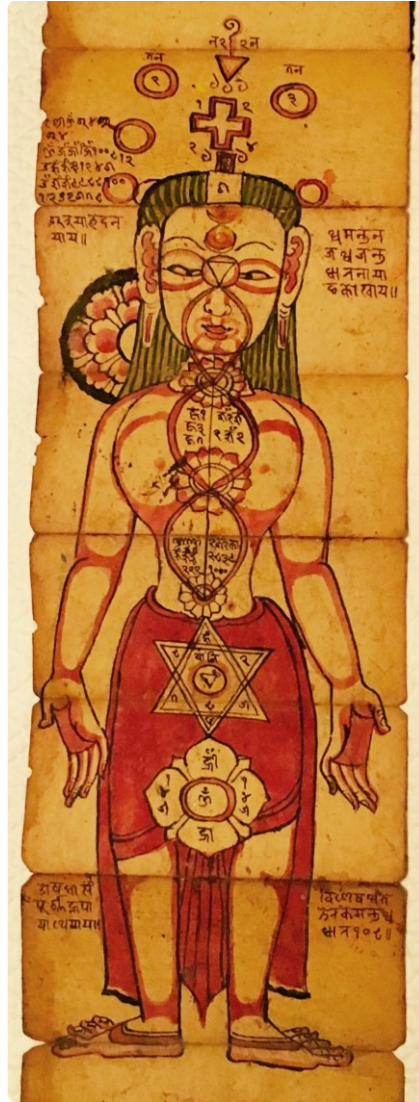
Passages from a range of relevant Hindu and Buddhist texts, including from the:

Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Bhagavadgītā
try reading the English translation at
https://blackbird.vcu.edu/v11n1/poetry/martin_c/gita_page.shtml

Haṭhayogapradīpika – try
<https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/hyp/index.htm>

AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Second and third years may choose to study *Early Buddhism*, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, *Hinduism: Sources and Formations*, *Hinduism: Theology and Traditions*, *Ethics II: Religious Ethics* and *Further Studies* in Buddhism or Hinduism. Learning Sanskrit would enable you to access primary sources in the original language as well as references to Sanskrit in secondary literature, enriching your work on these papers.



Tantracakracittra - A Nepalese depiction of the yogic body with energy centres (cakras) and channels (nāḍīs). This tantric manuscript has Sanskrit terminology written in Newari script and is dated to 1811. It has been digitized by the Manuscript Database Project. at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS).

See more – https://ochs-database-demo.netlify.app/sakta-manuscripts/ochs_s_000_000_027_tantracakracittra/

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Frequently Asked Questions

► **Can I take any of the six languages? Does it depend what degree I'm taking or what college I belong to?**

Students studying either the BA in Theology and Religion or the BA in Philosophy and Theology are permitted to take any one of these six languages for their Preliminary Examination. Language classes are delivered by the Faculty of Theology and Religion and are available to all our first year students, regardless of college. Occasionally, it is not possible or not viable for the Faculty to run classes in all six languages (because of e.g. low student demand or teacher availability) but we endeavour to accommodate student preferences, where possible.

► **Whom can I contact for further advice about my language choice?**

Your college tutor will be responsible for organising your studies while you are at Oxford and will get to know you as an individual. You should certainly consult your college tutor about your language choice.

► **How do I register my preferred language for study?**

In most cases, you should tell your college tutor who will inform the Faculty. Occasionally, you might be contacted directly by the Faculty's Director of Undergraduate Studies, and you should reply directly to her.

► **When is the deadline for making my decision?**

Language classes start in the first full week of Michaelmas Term. The Faculty needs to know student preferences in time to organise these classes. Please inform your college tutor as soon as you have made your decision, even before the start of term. At the very latest, you would need to decide by noon on the Friday before classes start (this year, **9th October 2026**).

Frequently Asked Questions

► Can I change my mind?

You can change your mind any time before noon on the Friday before classes start (this year 9th October 2026). If you start the classes for one language and then change your mind, you *might* be allowed to switch at the discretion of both your college tutor and teacher of your preferred language. They will need to be satisfied that you have sufficient time to catch-up study in the new language or other paper (for Philosophy and Theology students). Swapping languages is allowed in exceptional circumstances and permission to swap may be refused.

► I have A Level Latin and would like to continue studying Latin, should I take Church Latin in my first year for the Preliminary Examination?

No. Preliminary Examination Languages are taught to beginners from scratch. If you already have significant ability in a language, the course will not offer you sufficient challenge or occupation to make it worthy of the Preliminary Examination. You should take the opportunity to learn a *new* language. Your college tutor and the Faculty's Latin teacher may be able to suggest ways for you to maintain and improve your Latin through independent study alongside the curriculum and you may encounter reading groups, other classes and language societies across the University.

(This answer is framed in relation to A Level Latin but is relevant to students with at least equivalent qualification or ability in any of the languages.)

Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ **I have GCSE Greek and I've forgotten most of it. Might I be able to resume my Greek studies and recover lost skills by taking New Testament Greek in my first year for the Preliminary Examination?**

You would be permitted to do so only at the discretion of your college tutor and the Greek Language teacher. They would need to be satisfied that the course will offer you sufficient challenge and occupation. It's probably the case that the Faculty class starting from scratch, will quickly overtake your current level of Greek, making your inclusion in the class viable. Beware, however, that the relative ease of early lessons does not lull you into a false sense of security. The class will accelerate and you will need to plan your work to include a full Greek workload, even if the work in the first couple of weeks does not take you the full time allowed.

(This answer is framed in relation to GCSE Greek but is relevant to students with up to equivalent qualification or ability in any of the languages.)

- ▶ **I am a fluent, competent or occasional speaker of modern Arabic, should I take or avoid Qur'anic Arabic in my first year for the Preliminary Examination?**

The relationship between the modern version of a language and its historical or scriptural versions varies according to the language and your own standard of competence in it. As for the answer in relation to GCSE language above, you would discuss your individual case with your college tutor and the Arabic teacher. They would need to be satisfied that the course will offer you sufficient challenge and occupation. Beware, however, do not expect to find the scriptural form of a language and the technical business of translation easy, just because you are familiar with a modern spoken form of the language.

(This answer is framed in relation to speakers of Modern Arabic but is relevant to students with facility in the modern form of any of these languages, e.g. modern Hebrew, modern Greek or languages related to them, e.g. Italian.)

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can I study more than one language in my first year? Or can I be examined in more than one language at the end of my first year, for example in the language I choose to study plus one I've already learned?**

The course and the examination require and expect you to take only one language. Of course, you may choose to spend your leisure time learning a language but normally you will be permitted to join only one first year language class. Learning a language from scratch requires time and effort and it is unlikely that you will have sufficient of both to learn more than one language alongside your lectures and tutorial work for other parts of the course. In certain cases, attendance at classes for two different languages *might* be permitted, if a student's tutors are satisfied that there would be no detrimental impact on that student's other work.

In any case, the University will permit you to enter only one language exam for your Preliminary examination and this must be in the language you have studied as a beginner during your first year.

- **I didn't enjoy learning languages at school. Does that mean I'm not going to enjoy my language studies at University?**

No! Your experience at school is not determinative of your experience at University and may not even be representative of language learning as you will encounter it at Oxford. There are a few things to bear in mind. First, you are encouraged to select a language for study that aligns most closely with your interests in the field of Theology and Religion. This should provide a strong motivation to learn and you will soon find yourself engaging with material that interests you and touches on other areas of your course. Second, the way we learn languages is generally more technical and grammatically focused than the style of teaching that is prevalent in secondary schools. You will not learn how to order lunch or ask for directions in Sanskrit, rather, you will be concerned with how the language works and its implications for interpretation and understanding. Students who did not enjoy learning 'phrasebook' sentences for GCSE French or German, might find the process of understanding grammar and syntax much more engaging. Your primary concern will be with the language in its written form.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **I have never learned a language or dealt with any language except English. Am I at a disadvantage?**

Not necessarily. It is the case that any prior learning of any a language, despite the differences highlighted above between school and University studies, may provide students with relevant skills and experience; that might be an advantage but this is not taken for granted. It's also the case that you may have acquired relevant skills in other ways. For example, students who do well in Maths or Music (subjects which rely on identifying patterns) may also display an aptitude for languages. Our language teachers are interested in teaching you *how* to learn the language and will teach you from scratch. The first year language offers you the opportunity to acquire and develop a brand new skill!

- **Is study of a particular language a prerequisite for taking any course option in the second and third year? For example, if I don't do Pali, am I excluding the possibility of studying Buddhism later on?**

No. With one exception, all papers (options) in the second and third years are taught using sources in English translation. No second or third year student would be required (or expected) to work on sources in Latin, Arabic, Pali or Sanskrit. There are a few papers that offer students the opportunity to be assessed on the basis of sources in Hebrew or Greek but it is also perfectly acceptable for second and third years to study the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in English translation. Your choice of language now will not cut your choices later on.

The single exception is the third year paper, Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible. In order to take this paper students must have studied Biblical Hebrew and normally in their first year, to maximise experience in the language. If you are concerned about this, please contact your college tutor and Hebrew teacher.

Frequently Asked Questions

► Should I buy my own copy of the text book or set texts?

It is certainly advantageous to have your own copy of the text book and the set texts. You can then consult them whenever you like, take them home with you during the vacation and feel under no obligation to surrender them to friends on the same course. If it is your own copy, as opposed to a library copy, you will also be able (if you like) to write in the book, highlight portions or add tabs and book marks. (Librarians will not be pleased if you do any of these things to a library book!)

However, in some cases there may be no need for you to purchase a text in advance of arriving in Oxford. Some college libraries have copies which they are willing to lend to students on a long-term loan (you can start in this way and buy your own copy later if you like). Some colleges have book funds and grants for which you can apply for help in purchasing essential text books. It may be possible to acquire cheap copies of e.g. the Greek New Testament once you have arrived in Oxford and the Faculty/Bodleian may be able to make digital copies of some editions available to you.

As a rule, it's a good idea to check with a college tutor about when and how to purchase a text book before you part with your money.

Most teachers will make use of the text book from the beginning of the course and only use the set texts after enough of the language has been acquired so you need only consider acquiring the text book for your first classes.

Although some editions of texts and translations may appear very reasonably priced, you might not get good value for money from a copy of the text which is not the teacher's recommended set text edition or from a translation which is unreliable. Do consult your language teacher for advice and refer to the details of set text editions in the Schedule of Papers.

Studying a language in your first year should not entail any financial hardship. Please consult your college tutor for advice on how to obtain the resources you need and do not purchase anything that you cannot afford!

Frequently Asked Questions

► What can I do to prepare before my language classes begin?

We teach all our languages from scratch and you are not expected to have any prior knowledge of the language before you begin, but there are a few things you can do to get yourself off to a flying start.

- It is recommended that you take a look at the set texts in English translation to inform your decision about which language to study. This is also a good way of getting into the world and style of the texts you will study. As you learn the language, you'll be able to map it on to texts that are already a bit familiar.
- Native speakers of English tend to have a poor technical understanding of their own language. You may find it easier to undertake the grammatical study of another language if you are more confident and comfortable analysing English grammar. Try spending a little time examining a short piece of published prose (even the answer to this question). What patterns do you notice? Are you able to identify parts of speech, such as: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions? How much are you able to say about those parts of speech? Do you understand, for example, what is meant by tense (e.g. past, present and future) or what it means to say something is expressed in the active or passive voice? You don't need to become an expert grammarian or be able to teach English as a foreign language but establishing or refreshing a few basics may prove helpful. A resource like BBC Bitesize for Key Stage 3 (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z4hrt39>) is not complicated (it's aimed at students in the first three years of secondary education) but it does encourage you to think technically about the English language. (If you wish to take things further you might also browse relevant content under the BBC Bitesize sections for GCSE and A Level specifications.)

[Answer continues on the next page]

Frequently Asked Questions

- You will find tasters and introductions to languages online. They are of varying quality so don't invest much time unless you're confident they are worthwhile. However, for certain languages you might enjoy e.g. YouTube videos which help you to learn a new alphabet. Here are some suggestions:

Arabic: <https://corpus.quran.com/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSLtNmRfIBU&list=PLTuNe-VJYE8c3tVkQSVfxqC_2njpkTMZo

Greek: <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/greek/index.html#>

Hebrew: <http://www.animatedhebrew.com/>

Latin: <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/introducing-classical-latin/>

Pali: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC73nNRzMzvweRb52ArFG3Gg>

Sanskrit: <https://www.thesanskritlanguage.com/>

► If I don't study a language in my first year, can I take it up later on?

The Faculty organises beginners classes in New Testament Greek and Biblical Hebrew for students not taking the Preliminary Examination. You can take these languages up later alongside the second and third year curriculum. The Faculty does not currently offer extra classes in other languages but there may be provision in the Faculty or elsewhere in the University that will enable you to take them up. You should discuss your aspirations with your college tutor.