

MPhil Seminars 2017–18

There are three sorts of MPhil seminars:

1 Research Skills for Classics Graduates

All MPhil students will be expected to attend a series of seminars on Research Skills for Classics graduates. These will take place on Wednesday and Thursday at 2.00 p.m. in week 0 and Tuesday and Wednesday in week 1 of Michaelmas Term (October 3, 4, 10 and 11 in 2017), and Tuesday and Wednesday in week 0 of Lent Term (January 16 and 17 2018).

Seminar 1: (Michaelmas Term) Making the most of the Cambridge MPhil: finding a topic and identifying a question, understanding the marking criteria, working with your supervisor, building a bibliography, structuring an argument (Caroline Vout)

Seminar 2: (Michaelmas Term) Finding primary sources: manuscripts, papyri, inscriptions, catalogues, site reports (Rebecca Laemmler and Christopher Kelly)

Seminar 3: (Michaelmas Term) Tools for interpreting primary sources: using reference works, commentaries, concordances, databases of ancient texts, monographs and journals (Nick Denyer and Ingo Gildenhard)

Seminar 4: (Michaelmas Term) How to get on in Classics: writing a research proposal for a PhD and applying for a PhD or other career after the MPhil. (Robin Osborne)

Seminar 5: (Lent Term) Using your IT skills: from research to presentation (Rupert Thompson and Yannis Galanakis)

Seminar 6: (Lent Term) When, how, and where to give a scholarly paper or get a paper published (including Open Access issues) (Richard Hunter and Gábor Betegh)

2 MPhil Text and Topic seminars (MT & LT)

All MPhil students must attend *at least one* MPhil Text and Topic seminar in MT and one in LT and *at least one* piece of assessed work (normally either the first or the second essay) must relate to one of these seminars. The ambition is for the courses both to explore a particular theme that offers a rich potential seam for further research and to give students some of the resources they need to write a submitted essay mining that seam. Students should have an initial discussion with their supervisor of the topic upon which they propose to write in connection with the seminar, and should then subsequently check that with the person or persons running the seminar.

MPhil students *may* attend more than one of these seminars in a particular term, in as far as timetabling allows that, but should note that the seminars will involve preparatory work, active participation, and some element of student presentation. The preparation for a seminar may take as much as two to three days' reading. Some seminars will involve close group reading of primary texts. Attendance and participation at one of these seminars in each term is a requirement of the degree and failure to do so will adversely affect your marks: if for any reason you are unavoidably prevented from attending, e.g. by illness, you must contact the seminar organiser in advance to explain the situation.

The seminars will normally meet weekly for six sessions of 90 to 120 minutes. Most will take place on Tuesday or Wednesday at 2.00 p.m. In Michaelmas Term the first session will be in week 2 (Tuesday 17 or Wednesday 18 October), although a brief meeting will be arranged before this to set up the programme for the first session.

The seminar organiser will inform you of the length of time you should speak for when making a presentation, and how the session will be organised. You are not expected to deliver finished or polished product, and any questions and puzzlements you can address to your audience may prove more valuable, both to you and to them, than fully worked out theories or interpretations. An informal presentation, from notes, may work much better than reading out a written text. You should provide handouts of texts, site-plans (etc.) to be discussed, and you may also want to use PowerPoint or other visual aids. If so, please consult the seminar organiser. When your own presentation is approaching, you should supply the other seminar members with a short reading list, some links to

material to be downloaded or photocopied material to study in advance. Photocopying of material for your seminar presentation can be done at Faculty expense, provided that you arrange it in advance with the seminar organiser.

The Text and Topic seminars in 2017–18 will be:

MICHAELMAS TERM

Hellenistic poetry (Richard Hunter).

These seminars will provide an introduction to Greek poetry produced between the death of Alexander and the death of Cleopatra and a close reading of selected passages from the major poets of the period (Callimachus, Theocritus, Apollonius). We will focus on the ways in which this poetry differs from what went before as well as on elements of continuity, and will also look ahead to the reception of Greek poetry in Rome. Above all, we will be concerned with how this period shaped modern ideas of the nature of poetry by a powerful combination of creative poetry and poetic criticism.

Horace *Odes* (Emily Gowers). This seminar offers a hands-on survey of Horace's *Odes*, one man's attempt to subsume the corpus of Greek lyric poetry into a Roman masterpiece. The choice of poems will be largely determined by those taking the course. But whatever route is taken, these central Latin poems should prove a good laboratory for exploring general themes such as poetic memory, politics, history, time, gender, the symposium and the meaning of metre.

Ancient cosmology (Gabor Betegh)

How is our world built up? What forces govern it? Was it designed by a divine intelligence or is it the product of mechanical forces? What is the place of humans in it? Such questions were central to ancient philosophical reflections. The course offers an introduction to ancient cosmology from the Presocratics through Plato and Aristotle to the Stoics and Epicureans.

Empire (Robin Osborne and Christopher Kelly)

Scholars use 'empire' to describe a very wide range and varied scale of political arrangements across Greek and Roman antiquity. In the light of the extensive recent theorizations of empire, these seminars will think about how empires from the fifth century BC to the fifth century AD were ruled and what they achieved. What use is the term 'empire' for students of the ancient world, and how did the different imperial arrangements impact not only on politics and institutions, but on all aspects of religion, ideology and culture?

The art and archaeology of power (Tiziana D'Angelo and Martin Millett)

What does power look like? Thucydides thought that anyone judging from the material remains would massively overestimate the power of Athens, and underestimate the power of Sparta. How does power reveal itself in the appearance of objects and settlements, and in their distribution? Are there types of power that we can measure, and types that we cannot? This seminar explores power as a relationship between people(s) and looks at the ways in which objects (from amphorae to silver drinking vessels, from villa mosaics to sculptures in sanctuaries, from buildings in a city to the distribution of fortifications) both shape and map these relationships. It brings archaeological and art historical approaches together, and with them, questions of patronage, politics, production, material, scale and context. In the process, it better understands ancient motivations and mentalities and makes us more self-conscious about our scholarly language.

The reading and Interpretation of Sabellic inscriptions (Dr N A S Zair)

The only source of evidence for the non-Roman (and non-Greek) peoples of first-millennium BC Italy which is written in their own voice is inscriptional. The Samnites, Umbrians, Picenes, Paelignians etc. left behind a wide range of inscriptional genres, including bronze law tablets and sacred texts, gravestones, curse tablets, ownership marks, religious dedications and even (possibly) doorknockers, written in a number of different alphabets. This course will discuss how we can understand what these peoples wrote and what this tells us about their languages and cultures.

LENT TERM

Homer beyond the classical (Tim Whitmarsh).

How has Homeric poetry been received and rewritten in antiquity and modernity? How do the techniques and preoccupations of both eras relate, and how do they differ? This series is double-headed: the first half will focus particularly upon the construction and contestation within antiquity itself of Homer's status as a 'classic', a foundational, definitive body embodying 'the literary' in its purest form - and all of the political implications that go along with that status. We begin with the idea of 'Father Homer' which is already current in the archaic era. We then move through rationalising, allegorical, necromantic, katabatic and zombified Homers of the Hellenistic and Roman eras. The second half of the course turns to the more radical (or are they?) rewritings of Homer in the modern era that expose issues of race and gender: we shall consider writers such as Atwood, Walcott, Oswald and Malouf, who exploit contemporary identity politics simultaneously to displace and restate the classic authority of Homer.

Early Christian literature: new dynamics (Fran Middleton).

How did Christianity change the scene of élite literature? This seminar will examine how literature written in the first two centuries after Constantine responds to, reinterprets and/or rejects classical models, including Homer, Virgil, Plato and Cicero. We will be guided by questions of reception, but also cultural and intellectual history: what was the role of "high" literature in the Christian empire and how did the understanding of literary art change in these centuries?

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Robert Wardy)

No other philosophical text has been more influential in shaping subsequent philosophical ethics and in its profound influence on how people think they should live. Nevertheless, some of its fundamental arguments have been subjected to ferocious criticism. We shall be examining these arguments and evaluating the criticism.

Suetonius (Mary Beard).

The seminar will explore Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars*: how we should now read it (as text, as biography, as history, as meditation on power?), and how it has been read since the sixteenth century, and with what effect on our understanding of Roman imperial history, culture and transgression. But it will also raise wider questions about how historians hierarchise their sources and under what rubrics of "reliability".

Culture contact and culture change (Yannis Galanakis and Robin Osborne)

What happens when peoples come into contact? Cultural transfer has long been central to archaeological debates. For a long time, scholars assumed that the movement of ideas, forms and iconographies depended on the movement of peoples. Today, they are less interested in peoples than they are the agency of objects, talking in terms of network analysis to model the relationships between them. This seminar revisits these formulas and the issues intrinsic to them, issues of change, connectivity within and beyond the Mediterranean basin, localism, Orientalism. . . . It works with data and literature on dirt archaeology and the history of art to see the production, style and reach of objects differently.

Greek dialects from a historical perspective (Rupert Thompson)

Before the rise of the Hellenistic Koine there was no supra-regional standard variety of Greek, but each city state used its own, regional dialect. The dialects are attested in official and private inscriptions such as laws, treaties and epitaphs. In this course we will read a number of inscriptions illustrating the major dialects. We will see how we might go about determining how the dialects are related to one another, how we might try to arrange them in groups or families, and whether the traditional classifications such as "West Greek", "Attic-Ionic", "Aeolic" have any basis in fact. We will investigate what this can tell us about the history of the Greek language. Copies of texts will be distributed to those attending.

Classics at the edges: tradition and reception (Maya Feile Tomes and Aaron Kachuck)

This seminar explores the edges of Classics as a discipline, both historically (how the field has constituted itself over time) and methodologically (how contemporary scholarship interacts with other fields, regions, languages, etc.). We aim both to interrogate the nature of the discipline's frontiers and to challenge the notion that the study of classical reception is itself an enterprise at the "edge" of

Classics. Alongside guided discussion on topics from humanist book culture to postcolonial literature and critique, the seminar will accommodate and respond to a wide range of student interests.

3 MPhil Dissertation seminars (ET)

All students will give a short presentation on the topic of their thesis at a seminar early in ET. Students will be grouped according to their interests and the supervisors of all the students in the group will be present to offer comments. Presentations should be 15 minutes long, each followed by around 25 minutes of discussion. Depending on the group size the group may meet either once or twice.

August 2017