English Tripos Part 1 paper 2/part 2 paper 20 /ASNC/Classics/MML

The contact person for this paper in Michaelmas and Easter 2018-19 is Prof. Nicolette Zeeman, King’s College, nz202@cam.ac.uk. The Lent term coordinator will be decided shortly. Please read this carefully and don’t hesitate to ask if anything is unclear.

The paper deals with the most extraordinary and varied multilingual literature written between 1066-1350 in the British Isles or those parts of Europe controlled at one time or another within this period by the English monarch (what might be called ‘The Angevin Empire’: Henry II was from Anjou). The paper includes epic and romance, historical chronicles and satire, saints’ lives and devotional writing, lyric poetry, comic fabliaux and beast fables. This is a period of complex political history and rich in philosophical, artistic and literary innovation. It is also a period of striking multilingualism: the texts studied in the paper were originally written in either Medieval Latin (the language of learning and the educated, clerical classes), Anglo-Norman (the dialect of French spoken in Britain after the Norman Conquest), or Early Middle English (the language derived from that spoken in England before the Norman Conquest). One of the fascinating things to see is how genres and modes of writing dialogue with each other across these three languages.

Texts are read either in the original language or in a modern English translation. On the paper, you need to show you have studied at least one of the original languages. There are language classes for the individual languages and supervisions in which you and your supervisor devise a course of study according to your interests. The reading list for the paper can be accessed in the English Faculty website (via Moodle).

The paper is in two sections. Section A involves translating texts from your chosen language (or languages) and Section B comprises essays ranging across many more texts that you have studied, in a variety of thematic and comparative ways. In the examination, candidates answer one question comprising 3 parts) in section A, and two questions in section B (section A commands 33% of the marks and Section B 67%).
Section A

This section tests translation skill and understanding of the language. There are no unseens. You must translate three passages from prepared prescribed texts, though in each language there are about 5 or 6 prescribed texts from which these passages will be drawn. It is essential that you prepare all of the set sets in one language (even if you intend to mix and match among languages) as you have no way of knowing which three will be on the paper.

Teaching for Section A

Language Classes (details of times and venues will be on the faculty website and in Notes on Courses for Michaelmas 2018/Lent 2019). Normally students will attend one set of classes: either Anglo-Norman, Middle English or Medieval Latin. You will need to decide which you would prefer by the beginning of October 2018 so you don’t miss the first class. You may, if you wish, attend classes in two or even three languages, but most students attend one.

Some supervisors will offer help with the translations if you have particular difficulty, and will be pleased if you approach them with specific questions after you have attended the classes. Some supervisors may go through the prescribed texts more formally, whether during the main supervision programme or as revision. Whatever the precise arrangements, the cover offered in supervisions for Section A needs to be supported by attendance at the classes.

Section B

This section allows you to explore the literary texts in the period more widely and variously, as well as the philosophical, cultural, artistic and historical backgrounds to these texts. Questions are set on a range of texts, genres, literary styles and cultural issues; there is plenty of choice, but it is essential to prepare in depth as well as across a range of topics. The paper encourages comparative thinking across and between texts originally written in the three languages, Anglo-Norman, Early Middle English and Medieval Latin, and, although not an actual requirement of the paper, you are strongly urged to think comparatively. There will be plenty of opportunity for you to follow up your interests and enthusiasms. You are not necessarily expected to write on the texts from which the set passages for translation are chosen, but you may wish to do so. But you will no doubt want to go beyond these texts and read more widely.
Teaching for Section B

Faculty-based Teaching:

In the **Michaelmas Term**, there are English Faculty lectures which will be of general interest to people taking this paper, many advertised under Part 1, Paper 3 (Literature 1300-1550). In the **Lent Term**, there are lectures planned precisely for this paper. These take the form of a circus with a different specialist each week. But in both terms, there will be other lectures which will be useful to students taking this paper (there are lectures on medieval French literature, for example, in the Department of French, MML; and lecture on medieval art in the Faculty of History or Art). Some information about these will be circulated before the start of the year.

Supervisions

In addition to the language classes mentioned above, you can expect to have four to six hours of supervision for this paper, either individually or in a small group. Some students, in consultation with their DoS, choose to take this paper across two terms (Michaelmas and Lent) and others take it in Lent. Some revision supervisions may also occur in the Easter term, in the run-up to exams. Spreading the course across Michaelmas and Lent often suits Part I English, ASNC and Classics students, while the second, Lent, option is more suited to students in Part II English. Whichever pattern is offered to you, your supervisor will make sure you have been able to cover a good range of texts for the paper.

All students should go to all literary supervisions arranged for them, regardless of the language they have chosen to study in the original: some of the supervisions will deal with single texts; others may take a comparative approach dealing with a range of texts originally written in two or three of the medieval languages and linked by, for example, genre, theme or readership. Texts will be studied in translation, with individual students encouraged to look at texts within their competency in the original where they can.

Quotation in section B essays should normally be in the original in the case of texts in the language which the student has chosen as his or her ‘original’ language, but may be in modern English for other texts. Thus, for example, if you choose Early Medieval English for your language preparation, texts studied which were written originally in Latin or Anglo-Norman may be quoted in modern English. However, if you have any language skills in these other language (such as GCSE acquaintanceship with modern French, for example) you might wish to look at short passages of texts in the original even where you are not required to do so.
The images on this paper are all illustrations of the romances of Tristan and Iseult: an ivory of the lovers under a tree by a pool with King Mark spying on them above in the tree; a slip tile of Mark embracing Tristan; and a wall hanging of the lovers under the tree again.