

Bachelor of Arts in Persian

Course Handbook

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2023-24 (VERSION 1)

Course Co-ordinator – Dr James White

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here ([Exam Regulations](#)).

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Senior Academic Administrator, Edmund Howard (edmund.howard@ames.ox.ac.uk).

The information in this handbook is accurate as at Michaelmas Term 2023; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the faculty will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

THIS HANDBOOK

The handbook sets out the basic framework for the BA in Persian. You should consult the current edition of the Examination Regulations for information regarding your course. The information in this handbook should be read in conjunction with:

- the Faculty’s general Undergraduate handbook;
- the [Examination Regulations](#);
- the [University Student Handbook](#)
- your college handbook.

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination regulations, then you should follow the Examination regulations.

Comments and criticism of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the [Director of Undergraduate Studies](#) or the Senior Academic Administrator, [Edmund Howard](#).

Version history

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INTRODUCTION

Students will study either Persian sole, or Persian with a subsidiary language.

The aims of Persian sole are:

1. to help you to become proficient in reading, writing, and speaking Persian;
2. to familiarise you with the characters, concerns, and development of Persian literature, both modern and pre-modern, and to develop your literary critical skills;
3. to familiarise you with the major themes and questions of Iranian history from medieval to modern times, and to develop your skills in historical analysis and argument;
4. to give you scope to specialise in those areas of Persian and Iranian studies that most interest you and to develop your skills in independent research and extended writing, through optional papers and the dissertation.

The aims of Persian with a subsidiary language are:

1. to make you proficient in reading, writing, and speaking modern Persian;
2. to familiarise you with the character, concerns, and development of Persian literature, both modern and pre-modern, and to develop your literary critical skills;
3. to familiarise you with the major themes and questions of Iranian history from medieval to modern times, and to develop your skills in historical analysis and argument;
4. to give you scope to specialise in one area of Persian and Iranian studies that particularly interests you and to develop your skills in independent research and extended writing through the dissertation;
5. to provide you with a firm grounding in a second language with which Persian is historically and culturally linked, and to introduce you to the literature of that language.

OUTLINE

Year 1

The first three terms of your course are designed to give you a sound foundation in modern Persian, and to introduce you to Islamic religion and culture and the history of the Middle East.

Persian Prelims comprise three examination papers of 3 hours each:

- Translation from Persian and reading comprehension
- Translation into Persian and essay in Persian
- Islamic history and culture

Students will attend Persian language classes for up to 10 hours per week, as well as working independently on the course material provided. Students will be required to build up a basic vocabulary, and to learn to use all of the essential grammatical structures of modern Persian. The teaching method combines systematic presentation of grammatical and thematic topics during language classes with regular assignments in reading, writing and translation. There will be regular written tests taken in class time to monitor students' progress and identify areas for development. The modern and pre-modern set texts for this year will be available from the Faculty Office. These are modern and pre-modern Persian texts which will have been read and discussed in class.

Spoken language classes will develop students' speaking and listening comprehension skills. As the year progresses, the spoken classes will become more oriented towards the colloquial language and particular situations that students are likely to encounter in Iran.

In Michaelmas Term, Hilary Term, and the first 1/2 of Trinity Term, students will attend 1 1-hour lecture per week and 1 1-hour tutorial every fortnight on Islamic history and culture. For the tutorials, students will be required to write 10 essays throughout the year (4 in each of Michaelmas and Hilary Terms, and 2 in Trinity Term).

In Hilary and Trinity Terms, students will also prepare for the Year Abroad. The Faculty will support students in applying for the approved course, and for their visa (where applicable).

Year 2

The second year of study comprises the Year Abroad in Yerevan, Armenia (12 weeks starting in September), and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (two 8-week terms starting in January with a two-week holiday break [Nawruz holiday approximately from March 16th to March 31st] between the two terms).

For detailed and further information on your year abroad, accommodation, and areas of study, please contact the Year Abroad Co-ordinators: Dr Farniyaz Zaker and Ms Ani Beyt-Movsess. It is most important for you to use the time during the year abroad to improve your knowledge and skills in the language, and to deepen your understanding of those aspects of Persian culture and history in which you wish to specialise. You should find it an exciting period, one which will test your initiative, stamina, and ability to respond to a quite different society. It will be a time to carry out research for your dissertation and to start thinking about and reading for your optional papers.

Years 3 and 4 (Persian and Persian with a subsidiary language)

For FHS, students will be pursuing several different kinds of study in parallel. Language work will continue steadily, and will continue to develop your capacity to speak, read, and write modern Persian. You will have up to 5 hours of language classes each week, covering reading comprehension, translation into and out of Persian, essay-writing in Persian and speaking and listening comprehension.

Classes and tutorials for your literature papers will form another major part of your course work, covering modern and pre-modern literature, both poetry and prose. You will read and analyse the set texts and write essays on literary and literary historical questions.

You will also attend lectures and have tutorials on Iranian history. Finally, you will write a dissertation, mainly in Hilary Term of Year 4, where you have the opportunity to pursue in greater depth a topic that particularly interests you, whether this be in language, literature, history, culture, or social studies. Your dissertation supervisor will guide your research and provide feedback on plans and early drafts of your work. Your dissertation topic has to be approved by the Faculty Board at the beginning of your final year.

For students taking only Persian, you will be able to tailor your course to your own interests through your choice of two optional papers. You may choose to concentrate more on literary or historical study, or to maintain a balance between them both. The teaching for the optional literature and history will usually be similar to that for the core components of the course. Depending on the options you have chosen, you can expect to spend 4-6 hours per week from Michaelmas Term of Year 3 to the end of Michaelmas Term of Year 4 in classes devoted to the close reading and explication of these texts, to which you must come adequately prepared.

For students taking Persian with a subsidiary language, your subsidiary language will demand at least

one-third of your time, especially in Year 3, when you will be attending an intensive elementary language class. The 2 years of the FHS course offer an excellent opportunity to acquire a solid grounding in a second language, but it does mean that you give up the possibility of shaping your course to your own particular interests, as you lose the 2 optional papers. The dissertation does, however, allow you to explore a subject that particularly interests in depth.

Graduates will have acquired a range of expertise and skills. Linguistic proficiency in Persian and knowledge of Persian literature and Iranian history, as well as of the general culture and religion of Islam, may lead some towards a variety of jobs connected with Iran and the Middle East, such as diplomacy and international organisations, journalism, broadcasting, publishing, charities and NGOs, and business. Depending on the options you have chosen, you may also be equipped with specialist knowledge in other areas – for example, choosing the papers in Islamic art and architecture might lead you towards work in museums, art galleries, or the art market. A significant proportion of our graduates choose to continue their studies at the graduate level with a view to an academic career.

Students should note that not all subsidiary languages and options may be available in a given year.

Available subsidiary languages:

- Arabic
- Aramaic and Syriac
- Classical or Modern Armenian
- Classics (for students taking Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and Classics)
- Early Iranian
- Hebrew
- Hindi/Urdu
- Turkish

EXAMINATION PAPERS

Persian	Persian with a subsidiary language
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unprepared translation from Persian 2. Translation into Persian and essay in Persian 3. Spoken Persian 4. Persian Literature: 1000 – 1400 5. Persian Literature: 1400 – 1900 6. Persian Literature: 1900 – the present 7. Themes in Iranian history 8. 9. Two optional papers 10. A dissertation: topic to be approved by the Board of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unprepared translation from Persian 2. Translation into Persian and essay in Persian 3. Spoken Persian 4. and 5. Two papers selected from the following three: Persian Literature: 1000 – 1400 Persian Literature: 1400 – 1900 Persian Literature: 1900 – the present 6. Themes in Iranian history 7. 8. and 9. A subsidiary language from: Arabic, Aramaic and Syriac, Classical or Modern Armenian, Classics (in the Honour School of Classics and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), Hebrew, Hindi/Urdu, Early Iranian, Turkish 10. A dissertation: topic to be approved by the Board of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

OPTIONS

(not all options will be available in any given year):

- The Transition from Sasanian to Islamic Persian (up to the 10th Century CE)
- Safavid History
- Qajar History
- Iranian History from 1921 to 1979
- Iranian History from the 1979 Revolution to the Present
- Early Islamic Historiography
- Islamic Art and Architecture of the Persian-speaking World
- Ottoman State and Society, 1566-1700
- History of the Middle East during the late Ottoman Age, 1750-1882
- A short-term Further Subject, as approved by the Board of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern

Persian as a Subsidiary Language

Students taking BA Arabic, BA Turkish, and BA Classics with Asian and Middle Eastern Studies may take Persian as a subsidiary language.

Please refer to the conventions for FHS examinations for the papers to be taken, available on Canvas towards the end of Michaelmas Term.

RECOMMENDED PATTERNS OF TEACHING (RPT)

Below is an indication of the type and number of teaching hours on this course.

BA Persian

FPE

Paper	Term	Dept/ Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
						<i>Figures in this table are in hours unless otherwise stated.</i>
[1.] Translation from Persian and reading comprehension	MT		80			All Persian language teaching contributes to both papers
	HT		80			
	TT		80			
[2.] Translation into Persian and essay in Persian						See above
[3.] Islamic history and culture	MT	X		X		Two hours lectures per week and four tutorials per term, MT-HT; half that in TT, wks 1-4. Tutorials organised by the Faculty. Arabic only, excluding EMEL.
	HT	X		X		
	TT	X		X		
<u>Notes</u>						
<u>The course co-ordinator for the BA in Persian is responsible for allocating tutorials, etc.</u>						

FHS

Years 3 and 4

Paper	Term	Dept/ Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
						<i>Figures in this table are in hours unless otherwise stated.</i>
[1.] Unprepared translation from Persian	MT		32			All Persian language teaching contributes to all three papers 32 hours in Year 3. 24 hours in Year 4
	HT		32			
	TT		32/ 24			
[2.] Translation into Persian and essay in Persian						See above
[3.] Spoken Persian						See above
[4.] Persian Literature: 1000 – 1400	HT		16- 20	4-5		Year 3 1 revision class in year 4
	TT		2			
[5.] Persian Literature: 1400 – 1900	TT		16- 20	4-5		Year 3 1 revision class in year 4
	TT		2			
[6.] Persian Literature: 1900 – the present	MT		16- 20	4-5		Year 3, except 2 revision classes in year 4
[7.] Themes in Iranian history	HT	9			6-8	Year 3 1 revision class in year 4
	TT		1			
[8.] Optional Paper (e.g. The Transition from Sasanian to Islamic Persia (up to the 10th Century CE))	Any term	(8)	1	8		Year 4 or 3 (if in year 4, teaching is in MT; if in year 3, teaching is usually in HT, but may be in TT). For some, but not all, optional papers, a lecture is given as well as a series of tutorials. The single class is a revision class given in TT of year 4.
<u>Notes</u>						
The course co-ordinator for the BA in Persian is responsible for allocating tutorials, etc.						

FHS

Years 3 and 4: Persian as a subsidiary language

Paper	Term	Dept/ Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
						<i>Figures in this table are in hours unless otherwise stated.</i>
[1.] Persian Language	MT		40			All Persian language teaching contributes to all three papers 40 hours in year 3. 30 hours in year 4
	HT		40			
	TT		40/ 30			
[2.] Pre-Modern Persian Literature taught in MT	MT		16-20	4-5		Teaching for these papers is given in year 4 1-2 revision classes per paper in year 4
[3.] Modern Persian Literature taught in HT	HT		16-20	4-5		
	TT		2-4			
<u>Notes</u>						
The course co-ordinator for the BA in Persian is responsible for allocating tutorials, etc.						

Teaching Staff

- Professor [Walter Armbrust](#), Associate Professor of Modern Middle Eastern Studies (St Antony's)
- Dr [Usaama Al-Azami](#), Departmental Lecturer in Contemporary Islamic Studies (St Antony's)
- Dr Ani Beyt-Movsess, Lecturer of Persian Language (Brasenose)
- Professor [Dominic Parviz Brookshaw](#), Professor of Persian Literature (Wadham)
- Dr [Emine Çakır](#), Instructor in Turkish
- Dr [Stephanie Cronin](#), Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Research Fellow (St Antony's)
- Dr [Otared Haidar](#), Lecturer in Arabic
- Professor [Edmund Herzig](#), Masoumeh and Fereydoon Soudavar Professor of Persian Studies (Wadham)
- Dr [Nadia Jamil](#), Senior Instructor in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic (on study leave from 2018-2023)
- Mr [Tajalsir Kandoura](#), Instructor in Arabic
- Professor [Laurent Mignon](#), Professor of Turkish Literature (St Antony's)
- Professor Fitzroy Morrissey, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and Law (Pembroke)
- Professor [Aslı Niyazioğlu](#), Associate Professor of Ottoman History (Exeter)
- Professor [Mohammed-Salah Omri](#), Professor of Modern Arabic (St John's)
- Professor Tahera Qutbuddin, Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic (St John's)
- Professor [Philip Robins](#), Professor of Middle East Politics (St Antony's)
- Professor [Eugene Rogan](#), Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History (St Antony's)
- Professor [Christian Sahner](#), Associate Professor of Islamic History (St Cross)
- Professor [Nicolai Sinai](#), Professor of Islamic Studies (Pembroke)
- Professor [Luke Treadwell](#), Samir Shamma Associate Professor of Islamic Numismatics (St Cross)
- Dr [Elizabeth Tucker](#), Jill Hart Research Fellow in Indo-Iranian Philology (Wolfson)
- Professor [Yuhan Vevaina](#), Bahari Associate Professor of Sasanian Studies (Wolfson)
- Dr James White, Departmental Lecturer of Persian Studies (St Antony's)
- Dr [Michael Willis](#), University Research Lecturer and H.M. King Mohammed VI Fellow in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies (St Antony's)
- Professor [Zeynep Yürekli-Görkay](#), Associate Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture (Wolfson)
- Dr Farniyaz Zaker, Lecturer in Persian Studies.

Examinations and Assessment

Please refer to the [Examination Regulations for Prelims and FHS](#).

In Trinity Term of Year 1, students will sit 3 written examinations. Students must pass all papers to proceed into Year 2 of the course.

Please refer to the conventions for FPE examinations for the papers to be taken, available on Canvas towards the end of Michaelmas Term.

In Trinity Term of Year 4, students will take 8 written examinations and 1 oral examination. Students will also submit their dissertations.

Please refer to the conventions for FHS examinations for the papers to be taken, available on Canvas towards the end of Michaelmas Term.

DEADLINES

Date	Year of Course	Event	How
Monday 9 th Week Trinity Term	1	Provisional start date of the First Public Examinations.	
Friday 4 th Week Michaelmas Term	4	Deadline for exam entry.	Via student self service
Monday 0 th Week Michaelmas Term	4	Deadline for applications for approval for Optional Subjects (Persian only) and Paper 8 and Paper 9 (two options)	Form to be sent to Academic Administration undergraduate.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk
Monday 0 th Week Hilary Term	4	Deadline for applications for approval for dissertation titles (Persian and Persian with Subsidiary Language) (as in Examination Regulations).	Form to be sent to Academic Administration undergraduate.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk
12 noon, Friday 10 th Week Hilary Term	4	Deadline for submission of dissertation.	Via Inspera
0 th Week Trinity Term	4	Oral examinations for Persian language.	
Monday 7 th Week Trinity Term	4	Provisional start date of the Final Honour School examinations.	

Canvas

Click [here](#) for the BA Persian Canvas page.

Examination Regulations

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at <https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/> If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations.