

## Learning Spanish at Oxford

### General

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daunting and you should not worry if they do. Your tutors will be  
university life and they understand the (often exciting) challenges  
a significant amount of work to achieve the standard required by  
your tutors will help you gauge this, and they will offer guidance  
particular books and works of criticism, for instance. It is worth  
of doubt, that you will have to do much of the core work  
g to be well organized, to use your time effectively, and to be self-  
much as possible out of your contact time, you must attend all

based, is particularly useful when it comes to distinguishing between the register of words, and includes many examples from Latin American Spanish. Your college library should have copies of all the books mentioned here, so you do not necessarily need to acquire your own copy (except of Butt and Benjamin), though you may wish to.

You should also read widely and frequently in English (a good newspaper, contemporary fiction, etc.), both because you will be required to translate from Spanish into English throughout your degree and because it will help you write your tutorial essays. Developing the range and fluency of your English expression will be important.

### **Dictionaries**

There is no wholly satisfactory bilingual dictionary currently available, though both the Oxford and Collins dictionaries (full

no assumptions about what you 'should' be able to do when you begin your degree course. Reading John Peck and Martin Colye's *Practical Criticism* (London: Palgrave) will help you get started.

The above are intended as suggestions of some useful background reading you might want to do before coming up to Oxford. This is entirely optional, though. The next section details the pre-reading that is compulsory (and which should, therefore, be your priority).

### **Set Texts for Papers III and IV**

These are the two literature-based papers which you will be required to sit as part of the Preliminary Examination at the end of your first year. You should obtain all the following texts before you come up to Oxford, and you should read carefully (that means looking up all the unfamiliar vocabulary) all the set texts for Paper IV (note the reverse order we'll study the papers in), as we'll be covering this paper over the first term. Ideally, you would read the Paper III texts too before October (since time further down the line might be tight), though this is not essential. You should try, wherever possible, to get hold of the editions listed below (where a prescribed edition is designated), though the crucial thing is that you read the texts (in any edition you can obtain) before you begin your course.

Note that anyone reading Spanish with a Middle Eastern language will only need formally to sit one of these papers (Paper III). But such students will still follow the full course, including Paper IV, because it is

Vallejo, César, *Los heraldos negros*, ed. René de Costa (Madrid: Cátedra)  
[ISBN-10: 8437616697].

If you have any questions about the above, please do feel free to get in touch. My email address is: [roy.norton@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:roy.norton@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk). I hope you enjoy the preparatory reading and I look forward to meeting you properly in October. A happy summer in the meantime!

**Dr Roy Norton**  
**Trinity Term 2024**