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To Freshers reading Spanish (LMH and SOMERVILLE).

**Read this letter carefully straight away and keep it for future reference.**

This letter is to welcome you, and also to put on paper one or two things about the Spanish side of your studies, in advance of our meeting in person. Please forgive the relative impersonality of this letter. I hope you will enjoy getting the hang of the place, and I hope indeed that your whole time in Oxford will be fruitful and enjoyable.

*Tutorials* : On the literature side, you will have one tutorial/seminar a week at **2.15 on Thursdays at Lady Margaret Hall**. You will write either an essay or a commentary every week on the prescribed literary texts. Essay topics will either be found on the appropriate reading list, or given you orally a week in advance. The essays should be in my pigeonhole or email inbox by 5 p.m. on the day before the tutorial.

In our first meeting in 0<sup>th</sup> Week we'll confirm precise times for your classes and tutorials, checking that these involve no clashes with any lectures you need to attend. You for your part must NOT arrange anything else to coincide with the time I have allocated to you. Once term is underway, times may not be changed by you, except in the most exceptional circumstances, which you are expected to justify fully in advance. In case of illness, it is your duty to let your tutor know as soon as possible. Never fail to turn up when you are expected to do so, and never fail to appear with the written work set, in finished form. It is also a good idea to bring the actual text (book) under discussion and a notepad to take notes. Be punctual. Keep a diary, so as not to forget things and so as to avoid time-table clashes. Taylorian lectures and classes start by convention at five minutes past the hour and end at five minutes to, to aid people's transit to and from colleges.

*Essay-Writing Schedule* : In Michaelmas Term, you will study, and write a weekly essay on Paper III, in the following order: Cervantes's *Rinconete y Cortadillo* [1 essay; 1 comm.] Calderón's *El médico de su honra* [1 essay; 1 comm.] Machado's *Campos de Castilla* [1 commentary; 1 essay] and Vargas Llosa's *La Fiesta del Chivo* [1 essay; 1 comm]. As part of the paper you may be required to do a passage for translation from these texts

In Hilary Term, you will study Paper IV starting with the prescribed old ballads (romances viejos) from Mercedes Díaz Roig's anthology [1 com. 1 essay]; ballads by Lope, Góngora and Quevedo [1 com. 1 essay]. In Trinity Term, you'll finish Paper IV with Rivas [1 essay], Machado's 'La tierra de Alvargonzález' [1 essay] and Lorca's *Romancero gitano* [1 essay]. The Trinity Term listings allow for some revision in addition to the topics listed,

there will be opportunities for further discussion of topics previously studied and/or the writing of additional commentaries, after which you may do a timed past paper or two (of papers III /IV) to help you prepare for the examination itself.

*Language Classes* : Every week during the first year, you will be required to attend a grammar class and a conversation class in Spanish in the Faculty These are run by a native speaker, and organised centrally in the Language Centre. You will also attend a College-based unseen class and a prose class in alternate weeks. We will confirm the time for these but probably the slot Friday at 12 noon. You are expected to attend these language classes on a regular basis; your tutor will be notified, and you will be called to account, if you fail to do so. The times for the centralized language classes are published in the lecture list (see below)

*Lectures* : As regards lectures on literary topics, each term a number of these are provided in the Taylorian and elsewhere. Your tutors will give you a copy of the lecture-list (also online). You are expected to attend lectures regularly. It is hoped that you will find them interesting, although not everyone will do so all of the time. Even so, you must maintain your attendance. If you know primary texts thoroughly and if you have attended all the lectures provided, you ought to have no trouble passing Prelims (and you are expected to pass it first time round).

*Libraries* : Both for your language work and your literary essays, you will need to use libraries. Your college library will have most, if not all, of the necessary language reference books, to supplement those that you own yourself. I'll provide a reading-list about this, suggesting which dictionaries and grammar-books you should buy. You should make it an early priority to find the Spanish section in your college library, and attend librarians' introductory talks as advertised in colleges' information packs for Freshers. (This saves a lot of time in the long run.) In addition, you will need to use the Modern Languages Faculty Library [MLFL], located in the main Taylorian building (on the corner of Beaumont St. and St.Giles'). You should consult the introductory material they provide. It is worth familiarizing yourself with SOLO, the computerized catalogue and shelf layout as soon as possible, since once more, a little time spent doing this initially saves a lot more time subsequently. The MLFL will almost always contain the books you will need for your literature work, when college libraries do not. The chief exception to this will be where your reading list contains a reference to an article in a learned journal. Journals are mostly housed in the Periodicals Reading Room of the Taylorian Library.

The Taylorian is a fine research library and one that you will want to use increasingly for your Finals work. In your first year, however, it is worth remembering it as another place where you may find some of the books you need, when they are not available elsewhere. (In the Taylorian Library you do not have access to the book-stacks: they are fetched for you, so time needs to be allowed for this.) The main Taylorian Library also has magnificent reference sections, for language work not least, and you can usefully

consult these, to help with translation exercises, in any odd hours between lectures. Sometimes the Bodleian Librarian is helpful too (although its holdings of modern foreign literary criticism are more restricted than the Taylorian's and the MLFL's, and you may not borrow books from it). The main Bodleian Library and the Radcliffe Camera are attractive places to work in, and all you need is your Library card. In a different way, the City Library may sometimes be of help as well.

*Contacting Tutors* : Do not hesitate to ask your personal tutor questions about anything academic about which you are uncertain. If you want to see your tutor outside tutorial hours, please email or leave a note to fix a time, rather than calling in person without warning [Please sign your letters clearly with your surname] but never place the onus on a tutor to phone you back. You will be assigned a college e-mail account. Check it regularly, because it is the e-mail by which you will receive academic communications, not your personal (e.g. hotmail) account.

*Welfare* : Your tutors will be happy to talk about other problems you may encounter, but remember that particularly for more personal matters, there are plenty of other, independent, people you can approach for help, such as the College Nurse or College Doctors, your College Dean, Chaplain, Advisers to Women Students, or sometimes, the Senior Tutor.

*The Working Day & 'Study Skills'* : One thing people quite often find they need to get used to in Oxford is organizing their working days. One elementary tip is to make sure you always get up in time for breakfast and try to be at work by 9 a.m. If the morning is well used, the rest of the day tends to get well used also. I think that on average, you should aim to put in a good four or five hours' study a day, in addition to the time you spend at lectures, classes and tutorial.

*Monitoring of Progress*: Your College Tutors report on your progress to the Head of your College at the end of every term, and receive formal (or when required, more frequent) written reports on your work and progress from all outside Tutors (including those running centrally provided language classes). In addition, as Spanish Tutors in a small Sub-Faculty that meets informally every week and where other informal contacts between us are also frequent, we keep a close eye on how your studies are going with outside Tutors. This way, problems usually come swiftly to our notice. In the final week of every term, we also have an individual report session with the personal Tutor. On this occasion, you will receive a frank formal assessment of how your work is progressing and you will be encouraged to tell us about any academic problems you are experiencing. Your Tutors will also discuss with you less formally on other occasions throughout the term how we feel about your progress. We encourage you to share with us at any time concerns you have about your work or any other matters. (The colleges' welfare provisions are advertised separately.) Very occasionally, academic problems arise that

turn out to require a disciplinary response from your College, and the College By-Laws and text of the Code of Practice governing this is available if needed.

*Information Technology* : The University's Language Centre is a state-of-the-art resource, providing access to live and recorded satellite television from the Spanish-speaking world, a comprehensive collection of video material in Spanish (including films – also in the MLL), and a wealth of other material for private study in addition to classroom use. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these things. Colleges normally provide word-processing and printing facilities for you to write extended, or weekly, essays; and they provide access to networked facilities, such as SOLO (the University's computerised library catalogue), e-mail and the Internet, which has a range of Spanish-language material as part of its coverage.

You will find that things get easier as the term progresses, so don't get stressed if at first you feel a bit disoriented. Do ask people around: you will find that College staff – academic and non-academic – are friendly and happy to help. On Thursday you will have your first formal meetings (Spanish at 2.30 pm in my room)

Best wishes, y hasta muy pronto

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