

Modern Languages and European Studies

Collecting policy

User profile

This collection statement covers provision for the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies (MLES), which is constituted of European, French, German, Italian, and Spanish and Latin American studies. Joint courses are run with a number of other departments.

The collections primarily serve all staff and students within the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies, but may also be of interest to other interdisciplinary areas such as history, politics and current affairs, art, film and theatre, and applied linguistics.

Research interests

French Studies

- Medieval and Renaissance literature
- French children's literature and publishing
- Francophone literature, especially of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean
- 20th century drama (notably Beckett)
- Modern and contemporary French history and politics

German Studies

- East German studies, including GDR literature and cinema
- Political and media discourse in German; critical discourse analysis
- Language use and migration in Germany
- Travel literature

Italian Studies

- Dante
- Medieval literature and culture
- Renaissance literary culture and performing arts
- History of the Italian language
- Italian socio-linguistics and dialectology

- Twentieth century Italian literature and culture, including Italian cinema

At present, Reading is one of the largest hubs of postgraduate researchers in the UK working on modern Italian history.

Spanish and Latin American Studies

- Twentieth century Cuban literature and culture
- Women's writing and testimonial writing in Latin America
- Twentieth century Spanish literature and culture
- Golden Age Spanish literature and theatre

Dimensions of teaching and learning

The department has around 250 students, although this number is expected to grow over the coming years. The student body largely consists of undergraduate students, with a small number of taught and research postgraduates. Many of the undergraduate students are on joint programmes, often shared with other departments; there are over 20 degree combinations listed on their website: www.reading.ac.uk/modern-languages-and-european-studies/Undergraduate/mles-ugmlcourses.aspx

The primary teaching and learning interests of the department reflect its research strengths. The 2014-15 curriculum review has introduced a greater number of department-wide, comparative modules, with a particular focus on film studies.

Current holdings

Studies conducted at the MLES department cover a wide range of topics, including literature, linguistics, language, art, cinema, media, history and politics, and the Library collections are therefore scattered.

The books for French, German, Italian, and Spanish and Latin American literature are classified from 830-869, while the relevant history books can be found at 940-946. Books on language and linguistics are classed between 430-469. Relevant material can also be found at the 300s (political science, economics, women's studies); 400s (applied linguistics); and in the 700s (art and performing arts).

For more information please see the Modern Languages libguide:
<http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/modern-languages>

E-books and multimedia

The Library has access to several packages providing relevant e-books, such as ACLS Humanities, Oxford Scholarship Online, and Cambridge Companions Online. Individual titles are also acquired via aggregators such as MyiLibrary, EBL and EBSCO, as well as on publishers' platforms such as Taylor and Francis E-books and Cambridge Books Online. Electronic format is preferred for key items on reading lists, in order to improve accessibility for users.

We also have a strong collection of world cinema DVDs available to support the department's teaching and research. These can be found at 791.437.

Periodicals

The Library has a substantial collection of journals relevant to the MLES department which are mostly available online, although we do retain a small number of titles in print.

Reference/bibliographic

There are a number of reference titles specific to the subjects studied at the MLES department. Many useful reference resources are accessible online via Credo Reference, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Oxford Reference Online and Oxford Art Online.

The Library also has a good collection of language dictionaries, including translating, defining and dialect dictionaries. Online access is available to Oxford Dictionaries.

The online MLA (Modern Language Association of America) International Bibliography is used to identify literature and language related references. The Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index and JSTOR can be used to locate references to literature in history, politics and other areas.

Other useful indexes are:

- BHA (Bibliography of the History of Art)
- Film Indexes Online (which includes FIAF, the International Film Archive, and Film Index International)
- IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences)
- LLBA (Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts)

Related special collections

The University Museums and Special Collections Service (UMASCS) holds a number of collections of interest to the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies. Those of particular note include:

- French Studies: The Samuel Beckett Collection has been designated a collection of national and international importance by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. It is the world's largest collection of resources relating to the writer and dramatist Samuel Beckett, and contains manuscript items, typescript drafts, notebooks, correspondence, material from performances of Beckett's plays, editions of Beckett's work and critical texts in over 20 languages, artists' illustrated books, newspaper cuttings, audiovisual material, photographs and ephemera. Also of interest is the Turner Collection of French Revolution pamphlets and other materials concerning the events of 1787-1806.
- German Studies: The papers of Herberth E. Herlitschka and the Robert Musil Research Unit are of particular relevance to German Studies at the University of Reading. The Library also holds a fifteenth century Meister Eckhart illuminated manuscript.
- Italian Studies: A number of collections relate to the politics and history of the fascist era in Italy, namely the papers of the Italian Refugees Relief Committee and the Marion Rawson collection, as well as the Sprigge papers and a collection of documents from the Salò Republic.
- Spanish and Latin American Studies: The records of the Boydell & Brewer publishing house include John Varey's Tamesis list, which specialised in archive studies and Spanish theatrical history and monographs relating to the Spanish-speaking world.

Strengths, exclusions and areas for development

The strengths of the MLES collections reflect the teaching and research interests of the department's staff. Materials on topics not taught or researched at the department are not acquired for our collections. The Library has recently purchased a substantial number of foreign language films in DVD format as well core texts in film studies to support teaching in this area.

The Italian studies collection is regarded as being one of the strongest in the United Kingdom. Particular strengths of the collections include: Modern Italian history in the 19th and 20th centuries; Dante and Italian literature of the Medieval and Renaissance periods; 20th century literature; history of the Italian language.

There is a substantial and unique collection of materials in East German Studies which, together with the GDR Archive held by the Department, attracts researchers from other institutions.

Language learning resources are not generally selected by the MLES department as students are expected to purchase their own copies of the textbooks used. However, strategic purchases of language textbooks and texts on second language acquisition have been made for language teachers' professional development and to build a student-facing core collection of textbooks. The Library stocks a loanable collection of textbooks, dictionaries, grammars, and easy readers.

As Spanish and Latin American studies are new to the University of Reading, this is an area that requires development over the coming years. The MLES collection as a whole will also continue to be developed in accordance with the teaching and research interests of the department's staff and students.

Collecting level

Our undergraduate teaching collection is comprehensive; in addition, we also have a good and up-to-date collection of basic reference material and dictionaries.

The personal research of academics and postgraduate students is supported to some extent, in consultation with the department's library representative.

Alternative access

Inter-library loans

Researchers (staff and postgraduate students) make relatively modest use of the inter-library loans service, while undergraduates and taught postgraduates should be able to find almost everything they need in the Library.

Other information resources in the University

The Department of Modern Languages and European Studies Resource Room has a small collection of classic works, monographs, theses, reference works and some periodicals. It mainly serves the Department's undergraduates.

Language learning materials, mainly available for reference only, are held in the University's International Study and Language Institute (ISLI) Self-Access Centre for Language Learning (SACLL).

Use of other libraries

Other specialist libraries used include the British Library and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The GDR Archive in the Department contains and continues to collect documents, books and periodicals relating to the political history of the GDR and the aftermath of unification in 1990.

Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Statement for general principles:

www.reading.ac.uk/library/about-us/policies/lib-collection-policies.asp

Development of the collection is largely determined by purchase requests made by academic members of staff, either for teaching or research, or both. The Liaison Librarian also makes suggestions to academic staff for purchases after scanning publishers' catalogues, as well as ordering items listed on reading lists, or individually requested by academics. Reference works will normally be selected by the Liaison Librarian in consultation with the department.

Materials are purchased in a variety of languages. Following consultation with academic staff, print is preferred to electronic format except for those items that are marked as essential reading, as these are likely to be in high demand.

Consideration may be given to relegating or withdrawing related material if the Department ceases to teach or research a particular writer or subject area. Unused material which falls outside areas of current research interest may become a candidate for relegation to closed access or withdrawal from stock.

Policy written by YiWen Hon, Modern Languages and European Studies Liaison Librarian, May 2015