Congratulations on securing your place at Oxford. You are entitled be proud of what you have achieved. I am sure that your success will be the spur to further achievement in future. I want to support you in that ambition.

For the moment my advice is to do some preparation before arriving in October. This will ensure a smooth and relatively stress-free beginning to your studies in Oxford. Reading ahead in the vacations is something you will be getting used to throughout your course here.

The advice applies partly to language skills (refreshing your grammar points, continuing to consolidate and expand your vocabulary), and partly to the literature we will be studying. The pace accelerates after school. The academic terms in Oxford are short and intense. And the German proverb applies: einmal ist keinmal - in other words, once you've read a text, you'll have to re-read it, possibly a number of times, before you begin to get the hang of it. So it's a good idea to get started now.

Do try to read in German. Learn vocabulary consciously and check grammar points as you go along. The more you put into this at the beginning, the sooner you'll get to the stage of reading comfortably and fluently without external aids.

Here's the link to the reading for the whole of the first year: 
http://users.ox.ac.uk/~spet0201/readinglists/prelims/entry.html

Please look at this carefully. In the first term, we will all be working on the plays and the poetry; so you should start your reading there.

You will need to buy the set texts; see the advice on editions given on the web page. I also strongly urge you to acquire the two grammar textbooks listed there. Learning your way around them will be a key to your success at improving your language. You will need the grammar books throughout your degree course; it won't be a wasted investment.

Do get in touch if anything is unclear or you want further advice. For general enquiries about accommodation and practical arrangements, contact admissions@spc.ox.ac.uk; for questions about the course content and the teaching, write to me at kevin.hilliard@spc.ox.ac.uk.

I very much look forward to seeing you here in October.

Best wishes,
Kevin Hilliard
Tutor in German