

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2024-25: MSt in English (1830-1914)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The English master's programmes are designed to serve both as an autonomous degree for students wishing to pursue more advanced studies in English literature, and as a solid foundation for doctoral research.

The MSt in English Literature (1830-1914) offers graduate students an opportunity to expand their knowledge and critical understanding of nineteenth-century literature and culture. The responses of writers to cultural change in this period, provoked—and continue to provoke—animated debate about language and literature, aesthetics and politics, and the objects and purposes of cultural criticism.

English Faculty staff teaching on this course have a wide variety of interests, and encourage a wide range of critical perspectives. Areas of special strength include the history and practice of cultural criticism, literature and science, English and world literature, transatlantic cultural exchange, theatre and drama, life writing, material culture, comic and nonsense literature, aestheticism and decadence, poetry and poetics. Individual profiles are available on the English Faculty website.

Course structure

The MSt programme comprises four main components spread over three academic terms, through which you have the opportunity to pursue interests within your chosen MSt strand, as well as across period boundaries. In the first two terms, you will take a core course (A), a compulsory course in book history and theories of text (B), and choose two courses from a wide range of options (C). Under the guidance of a specialist supervisor you will also research and write a dissertation (D), which is submitted at the end of the third term.

A. Core course: Literature, Contexts and Approaches

The core course for this MSt is formally non-assessed but compulsory. It aims to further students' knowledge of the literature in the period 1830-1914, and to deepen their sense of established and emerging critical debates in the field. The course ranges across genres and modes, engaging with theatrical works, poetry, and prose writing, and classes draw on both primary and secondary texts. Each class involves student presentations (on which feedback is provided).

Topics for discussion vary each year, but the following list gives an indication of various topics that have been studied in recent years: 'Competing Forms of Victorian Studies', 'National, Transnational and Global Literatures', 'Culture and its Critics', 'Slave Narratives and Diasporic Modernity', 'Performance and Melodrama', 'Gender and Sexualities', 'Aesthetics and Material Culture'. The central aim of this course is to provide a solid foundation for advanced literary study in the period.

B. Core course: Bibliography, Theories of Text, History of the Book, Manuscript Studies

This is a compulsory, assessed course, taught via a range of lectures and seminars in each of the first two terms. It provides an introduction to bibliography, book history and textual scholarship as they apply to the study of literature. This course is designed to enable you to:

- use and appraise a range of approaches to studying the material form of books;
- understand the process of making books in the machine-press era (1800–1950);
- explore describe the physical features of printed books;
- analyse how the meaning of a text is shaped by its medium (print or manuscript);
- understand the roles of authors, printers, and publishers in the production and distribution of books; and
- apply and evaluate textual critical approaches to dealing with the problems of material texts.

Topics for discussion vary each year, but the following list gives an indication of various topics that have been studied in recent years: 'Book History and Literary Study'; 'Manuscript, Print, and Meaning'; 'Making Books'; 'Authors, Publishers, and Copyright'; 'Textual Criticism and Theories of Reading'; and 'Investigating Illustration'; 'Serialisation'; and 'Celebrity'.

C. Special options

The special option courses present an excellent opportunity for you to develop and pursue your research interests, whether related or unrelated to other work undertaken as part of the MSt degree. You are not constrained to follow option courses within the designated period, and indeed, option courses often traverse the boundaries of the broad periods. The courses are

taught in weekly, small group seminars. Students read a range of primary and secondary texts in advance and engage in discussion during the seminars, often led each week by one or two student presentations. These are not assessed formally but students are given verbal and written feedback on them.

Examples of past 'C-course options include: 'Pluralism and the Imagination: from Romanticism to Modernism'; 'Literary London, 1820-1920'; 'Senses of humour: Wordsworth to Ashbery'; 'Literatures of Empire and Nation 1880-1935'; 'American Renaissances'; 'Henry James and his Literary Legacies'; 'On Being (and Not Being) a Person: The Function of Literary Character'. Options change from year to year, depending on the availability of faculty members and on their current teaching and research interests.

D. Dissertation

You will write a dissertation on a subject of your choice but related to the work you have been doing over the year. In the first term of the MSt you will be assigned to a member of academic staff who will act as your supervisor. Students will have the opportunity to present their dissertation ideas at a one-day conference that they organise in conjunction with the faculty office, usually at the start of Trinity term. Each student on the course gives a 10-minute presentation on their work in progress, with the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers and the course convenors.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of English and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Faculty of English.

Assessment

The programme is assessed via the submission of four pieces of coursework. In addition to the dissertation, you will submit three essays – one at the end of the first term, and two at the end of the second term – relating to the 'B' and 'C' courses that have been taken. All course work will be completed by the end of the second term (Hilary term), leaving the summer term (Trinity term) to complete the dissertation, which is submitted in June. The outcomes of the MSt examination are pass, fail, merit, or distinction. Candidates must achieve a pass mark on each element of the examination to be awarded the MSt.

Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2024-25

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£15,840
Overseas	£33,970

Information about course fees

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>).

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover your accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also don't cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Additional cost information

There are no compulsory elements of this course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of your course requirements, you may need to choose a dissertation, a project or a thesis topic. Please note that, depending on your choice of topic and the research required to complete it, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

In addition to your course fees, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

The likely living costs for 2024-25 are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£495
Accommodation	£745	£925
Personal items	£190	£320
Social activities	£40	£95
Study costs	£35	£85
Other	£20	£35
Total	£1,345	£1,955

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,835	£4,445
Accommodation	£6,705	£8,325
Personal items	£1,710	£2,880
Social activities	£360	£855
Study costs	£315	£765
Other	£180	£315
Total	£12,105	£17,595

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,780	£5,940
Accommodation	£8,940	£11,100
Personal items	£2,280	£3,840
Social activities	£480	£1,140
Study costs	£420	£1,020
Other	£240	£420
Total	£16,140	£23,460

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2024-25, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 5% or more each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require an accessible version of this document please contact Graduate Admissions and Recruitment by email (graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask>).