


MPhil Jewish Studies Course Handbook
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
University of Oxford
Academic Year 2024-25 v.2

FACULTY OF
**ASIAN AND
MIDDLE
EASTERN
STUDIES**



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Master of Philosophy in Jewish Studies

Course Handbook

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2024-25 v.2

Course Director – Prof. [Zoë Waxman](#)

THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas Term 2024. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at Michaelmas Term 2024; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the faculty will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

The handbook sets out the basic framework for the MPhil Jewish Studies, and what to do should you encounter delays, setbacks, or need to make changes. It provides basic advice about writing your thesis and submitting it for examination.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here: [Degrees of Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies \(ox.ac.uk\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/examination-regulations)

You should consult the current edition of the Examination Regulations for information regarding your course. The information in this handbook should be read in conjunction with:

- the Examination Conventions and Rubrics;
- the Examination Regulations;
- the [University Student Handbook](#)
- your college handbook.

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Senior Academic Administrator, [Edmund Howard](#).

Comments and criticism of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies ([Margaret Hillenbrand](#)) or the Senior Academic Administrator.

Student Hub

The [Student Hub](#) is an ongoing project to provide a live online version of the handbook, together with more detailed course information and further resources such as forms and exam conventions, as well as archived documents from previous years. Please check the information on the Student Hub in conjunction with this handbook. You can also access the Student Hub through the top bar of the Faculty Website, through the 'NEW Faculty Intranet' button. You will need to log in using your SSO.

Version history

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2	May 2025	General Guidelines for Thesis Writers link updated

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MPhil JEWISH STUDIES

History

Oxford has been an important centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies since the 16th century. There are unrivalled collections of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books in the Bodleian Library. Outstanding scholars have held a number of different positions in Hebrew and Jewish Studies in the University and students from all over the world come to Oxford for both undergraduate and graduate studies. The [Leopold Muller Memorial Library](#) also contains invaluable Hebraica and Judaica collections. As the disciplines of Hebrew and Jewish Studies have developed, different approaches and fields of study have evolved, ranging from the study of the classical Hebrew language and the Hebrew Bible to rabbinic, medieval, early modern, and modern Jewish history, culture, and society.

Outline

The MPhil Jewish Studies provides a broad approach to the study of Jewish history and culture from antiquity to modern times, combined with study of Modern or Biblical Hebrew or Yiddish. This course is designed to teach the methods, sources and languages required for more specialised research within Jewish Studies.

You will be required to complete six terms of language study in the same language. You may choose to study either Modern Hebrew or Biblical Hebrew or Yiddish at elementary, intermediate or advanced level. You will be required to pass a qualifying examination in the language chosen at the end of Trinity term of the first year of the course, unless exempted.

In addition, you will be required to select four courses from a range of options and a dissertation of up to 30,000 words. The options of this course, which vary from year to year, must be selected from those on offer. Most options are assessed by two pre-submitted essays, of not more than 2,500 words, to be handed in at the end of the vacation following the term in which they were taught, though for certain courses there is a three-hour examination at the end of the third term of the second year. The language studied will also be assessed in a three-hour examination at the end of Trinity term (summer term) of the final year of the course. Conferral of the degree requires that students pass all components of the course.

Optional Papers

Options marked below with an asterisk will be examined by a 3-hour written examination at the end of Trinity Term of the second year. All other options will be examined by essay submissions. Students may choose from the following **(options will be subject to the availability of teaching each year)**:

Available in Michaelmas Term

Aramaic*

Available in Michaelmas Term

Prof. Alison Salvesen

Beginners may take the Aramaic classes at the Faculty and advanced students may prepare a selection of Aramaic texts in a tutorial. Beginning and continuing the study of Aramaic is of strategic value to Hebrew studies not only because the languages are closely related, but also because Aramaic exerted strong influence on Hebrew from the late biblical period onward.

This course will be examined by a written examination.

The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism

Available in Michaelmas Term

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

The many different labels used by contemporary Jews to characterise their Jewishness highlight the significant shifts that have developed in the modern period for conceptualising Jewish identity. This has seen the emergence of varied types of Orthodox, Progressive, cultural, and secular Jewish forms of identification. Alongside shifts towards post-denominationalism, which are gathering pace in certain sectors, this survey course will offer an opportunity to study aspects of the evolution of the three major religious movements of Modern Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. This paper focuses on Judaism as a living religion, examining some of the theological constructions that have been proffered in an effort to champion Jewish religious identity. Using selected primary texts and identifying the ideas of certain prominent Jewish thinkers from the late eighteenth century onwards, the historical and theological development of Modern Judaism will be examined and assessed. Beginning with a study of the early emergence in Western Europe of distinctive religious positions, their subsequent development in the USA, in the different sociocultural, political, and historical environments encountered there, will be examined. A consideration of what makes British Jewry distinctive will also be incorporated into the course. Some of the issues to be studied will include the influence of Enlightenment thought, the appeal of fundamentalism, nationalism, and critical scholarship, the meaning of covenant, and the impact of feminism.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

Holocaust: From History to Memory

Available in Michaelmas Term

Prof. Zoe Waxman

The main objective of this course is to teach the Holocaust in a way that explores the history of the events in tandem with an introduction to its historiography. This allows for students both to be introduced to one of the defining events of the twentieth century and also to some of its historical, ethical, and philosophical implications. A number of different sources will be explored, including testimony written in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, the rare testimony that survived the concentration camps, the memoirs of survivors, testimony of the perpetrators and 'bystanders', literature, and photographic and visual representations.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

Introduction to Rabbinic Texts

Available in Michaelmas Term

Dr Benjamin Williams

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmudim, and midrashic literature by studying selected texts. The first class will introduce the history of these corpora and, in subsequent classes, selected passages will be analysed with consideration of their content and literary structure, and in the light of secondary scholarship. The sources will be read in English translation, but the original Hebrew texts will also be made available.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

Modern Hebrew Literature, 1900-Present

Available in Michaelmas Term – Tutor TBC

From Psalm 137 to the contemporary graphic novel, constantly flowing and shifting affiliations of language, place and identity have shaped the development of Hebrew literature across centuries. Twenty-first century scholarship on Modern Hebrew literature has reconsidered the teleological “diaspora to nation” narrative that once dominated Modern Hebrew literary historiography, thereby opening its study to include a wider range of authors and a more expansive map of Hebrew literary circulation and reception. This course combines a chronological and thematic overview of Modern Hebrew literature from the early twentieth century to the present day and examines figures and themes of (linguistic, cultural, geographical) marginality in Modern Hebrew literature; the relation between Hebrew literature’s “minor” status on the global literary map and its own politics of inclusion and exclusion; as well as the ongoing discourse on “centers and peripheries” in Modern Hebrew literature. The course readings also address the politics of multilingualism and translation (with an emphasis on Yiddish and Arabic), the relation between nation and diaspora, and themes of trauma and displacement that continue to preoccupy Hebrew writers. Reading knowledge of Hebrew is not required but students who are able to read the original Hebrew are encouraged to do so. The course will be assessed at the end of the term by two 2500-word take-home essays. Throughout the course, students will complete assignments in consultation with the instructor. These will take the form of short written assignments as well as class presentations.

There will be four essay questions provided by the examiner. Students are required to answer two questions and write an essay of not more than 2,500 words on each. Each essay will count for half of the final mark.

Septuagint and related studies*

Available in Michaelmas Term, requires students to have a strong command of Greek and Hebrew. Prof. Alison Salvesen

The texts are chosen for their exegetical and/or text-critical interest, and for their relevance to formative Judaism and Christianity. The course covers general issues of the historical origins of the Septuagint version in the Alexandrian Jewish Diaspora and its subsequent revisions in Palestine, the translation technique of the individual books studied, textual criticism and exegesis of the original Hebrew. Relevant texts in Hebrew and Greek from Qumran will also be taken into consideration. The aim of the course is to demonstrate the value of the Septuagint and the three later Jewish revisions (Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, and the importance of Greek renderings of the Hebrew Bible for Hellenistic Judaism and the Greek-speaking Church. Students are expected to have a good grasp of Greek and Hebrew, and to have prepared the texts in advance of each session, which will take the form of a 1-hour lecture on broad topics and a separate 1-hour class to examine the set texts in detail.

This course will be examined by a written examination in the second year.

Written Culture in the Medieval Jewish World

*Available in Michaelmas Term
Prof. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger*

Jewish life in the Middle Ages was governed by writing. Books and written documents were essential for liturgy, professional business, law but also daily activities. Writing and reading skills were relatively well spread in medieval Jewish communities of the East and West. Books and documents

in Hebrew script are also better preserved than other material remains of the communities and individuals of the past. Both the texts they transmit and their physical features are therefore an excellent source to reconstruct history and ideas. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the different aspects and methods of Hebrew manuscript studies, to familiarize them with the corpora of manuscripts from various parts of the medieval Jewish world (Iraq, Egypt, North African, Yemen, Italy, Iberian Peninsula, Germany, France and Eastern Europe). This will allow them to use the original sources for their further study of Jewish history, literature, linguistics or anthropology. **This course will be examined by essay submissions.**

Available in Hilary Term

Main Themes in Israeli Society and Politics*

Available in Hilary Term

Prof. Yaacov Yadgar

The course looks at the complicated, unresolved relationship between what are commonly taken to be the distinct realms of “politics” and “religion” in Israel. It will do so while contesting the antimony alleged in the course’s own title (i.e. the conceptual duality of “religion and politics”, by which these are two ahistorical and cultural concepts designating coherent, separate realms of human activity, the interaction between which constitutes a “problem”; hence “Beyond Religion and Politics). Instead of this, the course offers a more nuanced, “post-secular” understanding of the theological or rather theopolitical underpinnings of the politics of the modern (allegedly secular) nation-state. In this light, the course also focuses on a new, political reading of Israeli Judaism. Among other issues, the course will ask what does it mean for Israel to be a “Jewish state”; how is the meaning of “Jewish sovereignty” constructed and understood in Israel; what ideological frameworks of Jewish nationalism has Zionist ideology constructed by way of reinterpreting Jewish tradition or “rebellious” against it; what are the implications of Israel’s Jewish identity on non-Jews in Israel; and how does this supposedly “internal” Jewish-Israeli concern shape the politics of the Middle East. These matters will be preceded by an epistemological and methodological consideration of the very discourse of “religion and politics”.

This course will be examined by a written examination in the second year.

Modern Jewish History

Available in Hilary Term

Prof. Zoe Waxman

A survey course covering the period from the mid-eighteenth century to the Second World War. The course aims to provide an overview of the Jewish experience as a minority group in Europe and Russia, introducing students to the main themes, ideologies and movements of modern Jewish history. Among the topics examined are emancipation and the Enlightenment, Jewish politics, migration, antisemitism and the Holocaust.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

On Sherd and Papyrus

(Jews in Ancient Documents from Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt)

Available in Hilary Term, a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is helpful but not required.

Prof. Meron Piotrkowski

During the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, Egypt was one of the most important centers of the Jewish Diaspora. Egyptian Jews formed an important part of the local Graeco-Egyptian society and

were deeply imbued in the local culture. They were high officials in the Ptolemaic court, important generals, ran their own temple (the so-called Temple of Onias), produced a multitude of literary works of various genres, and were responsible for the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, arguably their most stellar achievement. This course is designed to introduce students to the history and (religious) culture of the Jews in Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, relying on a body of sources that is surprisingly neglected in modern research: Jewish papyri. Studying literary and documentary papyri from Egypt, we will address and discuss topics ranging from the history of the Jews in Egypt to Jewish-Gentile (including Christians) relations, the civil status of the Jews in Egypt, their society, their religious customs, and their literature.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

The Religion of Israel

Available in Hilary Term

Dr Deborah Rooke

This course covers the religion of Israel in the Iron Age, from c. 1200-500 BCE. In biblical terms, this is the period from the appearance of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, to the early post-exilic period. The course will explore major themes in Israel's religion, covering introductory questions of methodology, the relationship of Israel's deity to those of the surrounding cultures, covenant and law, prophets and prophecy, priesthood and sacrifice, the monarchy, major festivals, and personal piety.

This course will be examined by essay submissions.

Language Studies

Biblical Hebrew or Modern Hebrew or Yiddish will be studied throughout the six terms of the MPhil course to enable students to acquire a solid foundation of vocabulary and general language facility on which they can build to read and understand complex texts in their target language and to translate basic sentences from English into their target language. This paper represents a competence standard in the chosen language and is compulsory.

Language training will be offered at two levels:

Level 1 will be for students who are complete beginners and for students who are false beginners but not up to the next level. Students are taught grammar, and reading, writing and translation skills.

Level 2 will be for students who have excelled at the beginner level. An assessment and further guidance will be given at the beginning of the academic year to students who are interested in this level.

Placement test

An assessment will be held during the induction week for students who think they might be appropriate for level 2. Students must achieve the required level in translation into English and grammar analysis to be admitted to the level 2 course.

Teaching Staff

- Dr [Miri Freud-Kandel](#) – The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism
- Prof. [Adriana X. Jacobs](#) – Modern Hebrew Literature, 1880- Present
- Dr [Dorota Molin](#) – Biblical Hebrew
- Prof. [Judith Olszowy-Schlanger](#) – Written Culture in the Medieval Jewish World

- Prof. [Meron Piotrkowski](#) - On Sherd and Papyrus: Jews in ancient documents from Hellenistic and early Roman Egypt
- Dr [Deborah Rooke](#) – The Religion of Israel
- Prof. [Alison Salvesen](#) – Septuagint and related studies
- Prof. [Zoë Waxman](#) – Modern Jewish History, Holocaust: From History to Memory
- Dr [Haïke Wiegand](#) – Yiddish
- Dr [Ben Williams](#) – Introduction to Rabbinic Texts
- Prof. [Yaacov Yadgar](#) – Main Themes in Israeli Society and Politics
- Miss Esther Yadgar – Modern Hebrew

EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

Over the two years of the MPhil you will complete two language examinations, a thesis, and four papers from an annual list of optional papers.

Year 1

In your first year you will sit a language examination in Trinity Term, and complete the submissions for any optional papers you enter for, in the relevant terms.

Year 2

In your second year you will complete the submissions for any optional papers you enter for, in the relevant terms. Also, in Trinity Term you will submit your thesis, sit a language examination and, where relevant, sit the examination for any optional papers from Year 1 assessed by examination.

Important dates and deadlines

When			What	
Year 1	Michaelmas Term	Week 2, Monday	Deadline for submission of optional papers to be taken in Year 1.	The online form can be found here .
Year 1	Trinity Term	Week 8, Monday	Deadline for submission of Final Year options to be taken in Year 2.	The online form can be found here .
Years 1 & 2	Michaelmas Term	Week 8, Friday	Michaelmas optional papers: essay topics published . Word limit: 2,500.	Via Inspira.
Years 1 & 2	Hilary Term	Week 0, Friday, 12 noon	Michaelmas optional papers: essays submitted . Word limit: 2,500.	Submission via Inspira.
Years 1 & 2	Hilary Term	Week 8, Friday	Hilary optional papers: essay topics published . Word limit: 2,500.	Via Inspira.
Years 1 & 2	Trinity Term	Week 0, Friday, 12 noon	Hilary optional papers: essays submitted . Word limit: 2,500.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 1	Trinity Term		Qualifying language examination.	Written examination.

Year 2	Hilary Term	Week 0, Monday	Submit your approval of thesis subject/ title form.	The online form can be found here .
Year 2	Trinity Term	Week 6, Thursday, 12 noon	Thesis submission. Word limit: not more than 30,000.	Via Inspira.
Year 2	Trinity Term		Language examination.	Written examination.
Year 2	Trinity Term		Year 1 optional papers' examinations.	Written examination.

Thesis

Approval of Thesis Subject/Title

Word Limit

Your submissions should not exceed the word limit given in your [Examination Regulations](#) and rubrics. The word count includes text and footnotes/endnotes but excludes appendices and bibliography.

General Guidelines for Thesis Writers

Further guidance and more information about formatting can be found in the [General Guidelines for Thesis Writers](#). Examples of MPhil and MSt/MSc theses are available on the 'Exams and Assessment Information' site on [Canvas](#). The Bodleian Libraries also holds many MPhil theses and these can be searched for on [SOLO](#). Please check the Bodleian's information [here](#) to help you search for an Oxford thesis. Some theses awarded a distinction are eligible to be deposited to the Bodleian, and should your thesis be eligible, you will be contacted regarding the procedure after your results are released.

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Examination Regulations

Examination Regulations are the immutable framework of study and assessment of University degrees to which students must adhere. The regulations for the MPhil Jewish Studies can be found [here](#).

Examination Conventions and Rubrics

These are the formal record and explanation of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award. They are approved and published by the Faculty each year and include information on:

Conventions

- Marking conventions and scaling
- Verification and reconciliation of marks
- Qualitative marking criteria for different types of assessment
- Penalties for late or non-submission; for over-length work and departure from approved title/subject matter; for poor academic practice; for non-attendance
- Progression rules and classification conventions

- Use of viva voce examinations
- Re-sits
- Consideration of mitigating circumstances
- Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners

Rubrics

- type and structure of examination (e.g. in-person or online examination)
- submission instructions
- weightings of paper
- time allowed
- instructions on the use of dictionaries and other materials
- instructions on the use of different scripts
- instructions on word limits
- instructions on handwriting

The conventions and rubrics will be published on the '[Graduate \(Taught\) Examinations and Assessment](#)' page on the Student Hub not less than one whole term before your examination takes place or, where assessment takes place in the first term of a course, at the beginning of that term.

You should take careful note of the dates for submission of essays and theses laid down in the Examination Regulations, course handbook, setting conventions, or rubrics. It is the candidate's responsibility to comply with these dates. The University Proctors, who have overall control of examinations, will not give leave for work to be submitted late except for cases of exceptional circumstances.

If there is any discrepancy in information, you should always follow the Examination Regulations and please contact the [Exams Administration team](#).

Examination Entry, In-person and Online Examinations

Entering for your exams

You will be invited by email to enter for your examinations when the examination entry window opens. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entered for the correct number of papers and correct options, but you can speak to your college's academic office or the [Exams Administration team](#) if you are unsure about what these are. Please refer to the Oxford Students website for full examination entry and alternative examination arrangements (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/examination-entry>).

Timetable

Your personal timetable showing your papers and the dates, times and location at which they will take place will be published online at least two weeks before your first examination. If you have not received your timetable, or discover any problems such as a clash of papers, contact your college as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to ensure that you sit the correct examination and misreading of information will not be considered an acceptable reason for non-attendance.

In-person Examinations

Practical information and support for sitting in-person exams is provided on the Oxford students website (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance>). The majority of in-person examinations take place at either the Examination Schools or Ewert House.

Online Examinations

Online exams are taken in Inspira. You must familiarise yourself with the system prior to taking an online exam. There are a wide range of resources to help you on the Oxford Students website, including expectations regarding standards of behaviour and good academic practice for online open-book exams(<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/online-exams>).

Online exams require you to adhere to the University's Honour Code (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code) and you should read this in advance of any online exams.

Candidate number

A candidate number is created for examinations to ensure anonymity, and you'll find your candidate number on the Examination and Assessment Information page in Student Self Service or by looking on the top of your individual timetable.

Your candidate number is not your student number.

Do not put your name or student number anywhere on your submissions or written exams.

Submissions via Inspira

Submissions are via the University's online assessment platform, [Inspira](#). Ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the Oxford students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission).

An Inspira link and information will be sent by the [Exams Administration team](#) prior to the submission deadline.

Problems Completing Your Assessments

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments or if you experience technical difficulties with an online exam or submission. Full information is available on the Oxford student website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment).

If you experience unexpected circumstances that may affect your performance, you must discuss your circumstances with your College first as any application to the Proctors will come from them. They can advise on the best course of action for your circumstances.

Mitigating circumstances notices to examiners (MCE)

The form is designed so that you can make the Board of Examiners aware of any problems that occurred before or during your exams, or in relation to your submitted coursework, that seriously affected your performance. For further information about mitigating circumstances, please refer to the rubrics and to the [Oxford students website](#).

Vivas and Resits

You may be required to attend a viva voce examination after you have completed your written examinations. This is to enable your examiners to clarify any matters in your answers, and it gives you the opportunity to improve upon your performance, should that be necessary.

Information about when resits take place can be found in your Examination Conventions and you enter for resits in the same way as the first attempt. Please contact your College with any questions about your resits.

When making any travel arrangements for the post-exam period, it is your responsibility to bear in mind attendance at the viva and when resits may take place.

Infringements for Examinations and Submitted Assessments

Please refer to the examination conventions for penalties for infringements of word limit, late submission, plagiarism and non-adherence to rubrics.

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies students should note that interpretation of the electronic word count is at the discretion of the Examiners, in view of the fact that most languages taught in the Faculty are not written in alphabetic scripts and the electronic word count may not be as accurate when taking these scripts into account.

Examiners' Reports and Previous Exam Papers

Examiners' reports from past exams are normally available from Hilary Term and will be uploaded to the '[Graduate \(Taught\) Examinations and Assessment](#)' page on the Student Hub. These reports give you an idea of how the exams were conducted and the performance of the cohort. Due to small class sizes for some degrees, it is not always possible to provide Examiners' reports for them. In these cases, please consult with your Course Director for some feedback.

Previous examination papers can be viewed on [Search Oxford Libraries Online \(SOLO\)](#), the online catalogue platform provided by the Bodleian Libraries.

GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism

The University's definition of plagiarism is:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

It is important that you take time to look at the University's guidance on plagiarism here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>.

You should refer to the University's guidance on referencing (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/referencing>). If, after having done so, you are still unsure how to reference your work properly, you should contact your supervisor for guidance.

The University employs software applications to monitor and detect plagiarism in submitted examination work, both in terms of copying and collusion. It regularly monitors online essay banks, essay-writing services, and other potential sources of material.

COMPLAINTS AND ACADEMIC APPEALS WITHIN THE FACULTY OF ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The University, Humanities Division, and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their course of study will make the need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment) infrequent.

Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below) is often the simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available from colleges, faculties/departments and bodies like the Counselling Service or the Oxford SU Student Advice Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should be raised through Joint Consultative Committees or via student representation on the faculty/department's committees.

Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the faculty/department, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies ([Margaret Hillenbrand](#)) as appropriate.

Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Departmental administrator ([Trudi Pinkerton](#)). If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Administrator ([Thomas Hall](#)) or the Faculty Board Chair ([David Rechter](#)). The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors under the University Student Complaints Procedure (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints>).

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by your college, you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates (as appropriate). Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration.

Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against the decision of an academic body (e.g. boards of examiners, transfer and confirmation decisions etc.), on grounds such as procedural error or evidence of bias. There is no right of appeal against academic judgement.

If you have any concerns about your assessment process or outcome it is advisable to discuss these first informally with your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, course director, director of studies, supervisor or college or departmental administrator as appropriate. They will be able to explain the assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners.

If you still have concerns you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors who will consider appeals under the University Academic Appeals Procedure (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/complaints>).

PROGRAMME AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR MPhil COURSES OF STUDY AT ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The MPhil is a degree awarded on the successful completion of a course of directed study leading to an examination, which is normally taken after two years; as part of their coursework students normally also submit a thesis, the regulations for which are specified under individual subject headings in the Examination Regulations.

In addition to this the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Board is jointly responsible for the MPhil in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies (with options in Arabic, Armenian and Syriac) and for the MPhil in Judaism and Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World. The MPhil is at the FHEQ level 7.

Students enter for the MPhil Qualifying and Final examinations through their College. Students who wish to defer taking the examination beyond the two years must apply for permission to the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Board.

The MPhil is available in the following subjects:

- Buddhist Studies
- Classical Indian Religion
- Cuneiform Studies
- Eastern Christian Studies
- Egyptology
- Islamic Art and Architecture
- Islamic Studies and History
- Jewish Studies
- Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period
- Modern Middle Eastern Studies
- Tibetan and Himalayan Studies
- Traditional East Asia

Educational Aims of the Programme

The programme aims to enable its students to:

- Develop the practice of analytical enquiry;
- Achieve a high level of competence in a relevant language where a study of language is part of the course;
- Achieve a good level of competence in the textual and historical analysis of texts in the relevant language;
- Gain a wide-ranging critical knowledge of relevant secondary literature and of current developments in the field;
- Reflect on relevant issues of method;
- Develop skills in written and oral communication, including sustained argument, independent thought and lucid structure and content;
- Develop the ability to identify, understand and apply key concepts and principles
- Where appropriate, prepare students for further research in the field.

Assessment

Formative assessment is provided by tutorial feedback and interaction with the Supervisor and/or tutor, by the discussion of prepared class-work, and by the Supervisor's termly report, which is discussed with the student in the Faculty and separately in the College

Summative assessment is provided at the end of the course by written examinations, submitted essays, portfolio, a thesis and *viva voce*, depending on the course.

Programme Outcomes

A. Knowledge and understanding

On completion of the course students will have:

- Acquired relevant linguistic and textual knowledge;
- Acquired some specialist knowledge of relevant primary and secondary literature;
- Gained enhanced understanding of how primary evidence is employed in philological, textual, historical and literary analysis and argument.

Related Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies

The main learning strategy is that a student should practise the relevant skills under close supervision, receive constant feedback, and have the chance to see the same skills practised by acknowledged experts in a manner which can be emulated. The methods used to achieve this aim include:

- Language and/or text-reading classes, for which students are expected to prepare
- Lectures
- Seminars with peers and senior academics
- Tutorials (individual) for which students prepare a substantial piece of written work for discussion with their tutor(s)
- Museum classes (small-group), held in the Ashmolean Museum and designed around object handling – for Egyptology

B. Skills and other attributes

1. Intellectual Skills

The ability to:

- Exercise critical judgement and undertake sophisticated analysis
- Argue clearly, relevantly and persuasively
- Approach problems with creativity and imagination
- Develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticize accepted opinion

Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies

As above.

Assessment

As above.

2. Practical Skills

All practical skills acquired are also transferable skills; see below.

3. Transferable Skills

The ability to:

- Find information, organise and deploy it;

- Use such information critically and analytically;
- Consider and solve complex problems with sensitivity to alternative traditions;
- Work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but also with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others;
- Effectively structure and communicate ideas in a variety of written and oral formats;
- Plan and organise the use of time effectively, and be able to work under pressure to deadlines;
- Make appropriate use of language skills;
- Handwrite in non-Roman script.

Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies/Assessment

Since all these skills are essential elements of the course, they are taught and assessed in the same ways as at A above.

STUDENT INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In accordance with our [Statement of Values](#), the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is committed to creating a teaching, learning, and research environment in which every member of our community – at every academic level from undergraduate to senior academic, and among library and administrative staff – can achieve their full professional potential without discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, nationality, pregnancy or parenthood, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We welcome suggestions for making our courses more diverse and inclusive. In general, you are encouraged to tell us if you see any ways in which the courses or this handbook might be improved. Staff and students are welcome to contact the Equality and Diversity team with any suggestions or concerns:

Hebrew, Jewish and Eastern Christian Studies Group Equality and Diversity Representative: [Zoe Waxman](#)

Faculty Equality and Diversity Officer: [Dominic Brookshaw](#)

Welfare and Support

Our community aims to encourage and support all students. The student experience at Oxford offers lots of opportunities for you to thrive, grow, and look after your own wellbeing, but we know that sometimes there can be stresses and challenges too.

We want to give you the agency to navigate welfare support, and to make your own decisions. This includes by:

- Keeping in touch with your College and Department, and letting them know if you need help
- Seeking support when needed
- Supporting your fellow students
- Registering with Disability Advisory Service for structured support if you have a disability

Should you have any concerns, or for guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact the following people:

Disability Coordinators: [Thomas Hall](#) and [Edmund Howard](#)

Welfare Contact: [Edmund Howard](#)

Harassment Officers: [Leyla Najafzada](#), [Claire Macleod](#) and [Laurence Mann](#)

Details of the range of sources of support available in the University are available from the [Oxford Students](#) website, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.