



**MPhil Traditional East Asia**  
**Course Handbook**  
**Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**  
**University of Oxford**  
Academic Year 2023-24 v.4

FACULTY OF  
**ASIAN AND  
MIDDLE  
EASTERN  
STUDIES**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**OXFORD**



# Master of Philosophy in Traditional East Asia

## Course Handbook

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2023-24 v.4

Course Director – Prof. [Dirk Meyer](#)

### THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas Term 2023. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

The information in this handbook is accurate as at Hilary Term 2024; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges](http://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 Traditional East Asia, 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: [2023-24, Degrees of Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

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 Faculty's general Masters handbook;
- 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.

### Version history

1	September 2023	Original publication
2	February 2024	Updates to formatting, web links and student support information
3	October 2024	Updated location of examiners' reports and previous exam papers.

4	June 2025	General Guidelines for Thesis Writers link updated
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## INTRODUCTION TO THE MPhil TRADITIONAL EAST ASIA

### Introduction

Any understanding of East Asia, contemporary or otherwise, depends on familiarity with a general tradition expressed across the region comprising China, Korea, and Japan. That general tradition, which we might call 'Sinitic', has multiple local variations and adaptations. These variations and adaptations reveal the differences we think of as 'Chinese' or 'Korean' or 'Japanese'. An overtly comparative examination of political, economic, social, philosophical, literary, linguistic, and other disciplinary approaches reveals similarities and differences and can be more valuable than taking a single country alone.

Our course is designed to train up researchers so they can work across the region and also possess expertise in at least one of the major cultures. For the most part, we will be reading and analysing written texts. These can also include imagery and cartographic representations. Primary and secondary texts will come in a variety of languages, so we will be very concerned with your language acquisition. If you are working on China or Korea, you will quickly see that the best and most extensive modern scholarship on either is in Japanese. If you are working on Korea or Japan, you will quickly see that knowledge of Classical Chinese or Classical Japanese or Middle Korean is indispensable. We are also interested in honing your analytical abilities and bringing you up to date on current scholarship in the English language. Therefore, we will ask you to read widely in English and compare across the region. We will encourage you to follow your intuition and look for large patterns as well as local peculiarities.

The central vision of the course is regional and comparative. The main tools it teaches are linguistic, analytical, and bibliographical. With a judicious balance of language training, prescribed texts, seminar work, and a thesis, the degree is intended to provide advanced scholarly training in East Asian languages, a broad introduction to the region, and stand as preparation for advancement to the D.Phil. or M.Litt. Of course, the degree can also be an end in itself.

The MPhil is very intensive, especially in the first year. Students must treat the university vacations as integral parts of their work time and take limited holidays. Language study will be time-consuming. Terms are short and essay assignments come quickly. All essays must be completed and handed in during the term. From the start of the course students should begin thinking about their thesis topic. They should expect to spend the Easter Vacation of the second year finishing their theses, which must be submitted by the end of Sixth Week of the sixth term or the last term in the second year. The final examination is sat immediately after the end of the sixth term.

Oxford offers expertise in classical, medieval, and early-modern East Asian Studies, and we encourage you to take every opportunity the University has to offer. For example, within the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies there are scholars with specialities in Tibetan, Sanskrit, Japanese Historical Linguistics, Chinese Phonology, Korean Phonology and Historical Linguistics, and other specialities in addition to disciplinary specialities such as History, Philosophy, Literature, and Religion.

Numbers on the course are small and you will see the teaching staff very often. You are also free to come and discuss the course and your needs at any time. Because of this frequent and close contact, the information in this section is kept quite brief and supplements other documents you will receive.

### First year

Your first-year work has three parts.

You should have some proficiency in a modern East Asian language (Chinese, Korea, or Japanese). If your proficiency in your main language is not up to academic standards, you will be required to prepare for an examination in that language. If, on arrival, your proficiency is judged to be up to academic standards, you will choose a different modern East Asian language for research purposes and prepare for the examination in the selected language. A three-hour qualifying language in your modern language is held at the end of the third term.

You will be required to follow a general course in a classical East Asian language: Classical Chinese, Classical Japanese, or Middle Korean. Instruction may take the form of lectures, text classes, or some combination of the two. You will prepare and present English translations in text classes. Depending on your ability you may be permitted to follow more than one classical language, but you must choose only one classical language for assessment in your qualifying examination.

In the first year, you will be required to survey disciplinary approaches to East Asia. For this, you will be required to prepare a 2,000-word essay every two weeks for the East Asia Colloquium. You will attend this general overview graduate colloquium, for which you receive a reading list and write four 2,000-word essays per term. The essays should compare at least two scholarly pieces of writing and discuss the disciplinary approach across China, Korea, and Japan. The colloquium convenes every two weeks in a 90-minute seminar to present the gist of student essays and discuss the topic at hand. One of the course coordinators will either lead the seminar or recruit an expert colleague to lead. First Week of the first year will involve a short introduction, followed by seminars in weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8 of each term. The qualifying examination for the colloquium consists of an assessment of your three best essays from the twelve prepared over the year. No marks are given on each essay during the colloquia, but comments and feedback are given, and you must choose and submit one essay at the end of each term that you feel presents the best of your work. You may re-write and edit your original essay using the comments before you submit the essay. The topics will include but not be limited to the following:

Michaelmas Term	Hilary Term	Trinity Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography and climate</li> <li>• Archaeology and art</li> <li>• Languages</li> <li>• Kingship and bureaucracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing and texts</li> <li>• East Asian philosophy</li> <li>• East Asian religion</li> <li>• East Asian literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diplomacy and trade</li> <li>• Militarisation and war</li> <li>• Social structures and economic history</li> <li>• East Asian Art</li> </ul>

## Second year

There are no modern language requirements in the second year, but you may monitor or audit classes in a modern or classical language that you were unable to study or for which you would like further study.

Your second-year work has three parts.

In the second year, you will spend a good portion of your time researching and writing your thesis with fewer contact hours for class work. Applications for the approval of the thesis title are due by Monday of 0th Week of Hilary Term. Students present their interim research results at one public colloquium to be held at the end of the fifth term. After the first week of the Trinity Term, students may not solicit advice on their theses from their supervisors. This means that the draft of the thesis should be completed by the beginning of Trinity Term, leaving about one month for final proofreading and polishing. Such a schedule allows additional time to review and revise other material prior to the final examinations.

You will be required to continue your study of a classical language by reading prescribed texts. This requirement consists of reading texts in Classical Chinese or Classical Japanese or Middle Korean. Texts are chosen in consultation with one of the Course Coordinators and drawn from canonical literature in the areas of history, literature, and philosophy. The final examination is a three-hour written examination at the end of the second year. You will have eight one-hour classes spread over three terms.

Students will be required to choose a country specialisation out of China, Japan, or Korea. They will be expected to prepare answers to a series of exercises that require they be able to find specific and general information in the classical bibliography of one of the three countries (i.e., training in bibliography and methodology). Students will be given eight one-hour classes spread over three terms. For Korean, students may join the Methodology class that is taught for the MSt in Korean Studies. For Chinese, students may join the Methodology class that is taught for the MSt Traditional China.

## Language Requirements

Because research in East Asia before 1900 requires strong language skills, we need to know something about your skills to teach you most effectively. Thus, applicants whose native language is not Chinese, Japanese, or Korean will be asked to supply scores with their applications from one of the major international proficiency examinations. For Chinese, that would be the HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) with a target level of 4. For Japanese, that would be the Japanese Language Proficiency Test with a target of level of N2. (Additionally, applicants will be required to submit a JCAT score.) For Korean, that would be the Standard Test of Proficiency in Korean (S-TOPIK) with a target level of 4. These test scores are useful to your language teachers to place you accurately within the range of classes on offer.

Applicants with a secondary or tertiary education in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean and those who have an academic proficiency in one of these three languages will be required to study another modern or classical language for examination in the first year. Foreign applicants without a higher degree from an English-language university are expected to supply



evidence of achieving 7.5 on the IELTS. We will help students with their English, but we cannot write essays or theses for you. If you find yourself struggling too much, talk with your tutors and investigate the University's Language Centre.

### TEACHING STAFF

- Dr [Young-hae Chi](#) – Course convenor for Modern Korean
- Mr [Shio-yun Kan](#) – Course convenor Modern Chinese
- Ms [Kaori Nishizawa](#) – Course convenor for Modern Japanese

### Modern Chinese

*Mr. Shio-yun Kan*

Modern Chinese is to be taught with students following the MSc Modern Chinese Studies. The target is Upper Intermediate to Advanced Chinese Language. This nine-month course is intended for students who already have two or three years of training in the Chinese language. The objective is to help students achieve advanced levels in the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). By the end of the course, students will be able to read and write 3,000 Chinese characters; translate newspaper articles and documents to and from Chinese and English; summarise academic reading and listening texts and answer questions in English; and give academic presentations in Chinese.

### Modern Japanese

*Ms. Kaori Nishizawa*

Modern Japanese is to be taught with students following the MSc in Modern Japanese Studies. The target is Upper Intermediate to Advanced Japanese Language. This 9-month course is intended for students who already have two or three years of training in the Japanese language. The objective is to help students gain knowledge and develop language skills and strategies in the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) for academic purposes. By the end of the course students will be able to use effective skills and strategies appropriate for reading Japanese texts of an academic nature (e.g. newspaper articles, published research papers, etc); enhance their reading speed, amount of reading, and capacity for independent reading; expand their vocabulary for key concepts in relevant subject fields; learn 1,945 jōyō kanji; develop skills to summarise academic reading and listening texts; gain translation skills; develop communication skills in academic contexts, such as skills for public speaking; explain and discuss issues of their specialised field in both writing and speaking; and develop Japanese skills for conducting research according to their needs.

### Modern Korean

*Dr. Young-hae Chi*

Modern Korean is to be taught with students following the MSt in Korean Studies. The target is Upper Intermediate to Advanced Korean Language. This nine-month course is intended for students who already have two or three years of training in Korean language. The objective is to help students achieve advanced levels in the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) for academic purposes. By the end of the course students will be able to use effective skills and strategies appropriate for reading Korean texts of an academic nature (e.g. newspaper articles, published research papers, etc); enhance their reading speed, amount of reading, and capacity for independent reading; expand their vocabulary for key concepts in relevant subject fields; develop skills to summarise academic reading and listening texts; gain translation skills; develop communication skills in academic

contexts; explain and discuss issues of their specialised field in both writing and speaking; and develop Korean skills for conducting research according to their needs.

## Examination and Assessment Structure

### Year 1

You will be required to sit two examinations on the East Asian language that you have studied in your first year, including one on your modern language and one on your classical language. You will also submit your three best essays from over the course of the year, submitting one at the end of each term.

### Year 2

You will sit one examination on your chosen classical language. The exercise for the country specialisation ('Research Bibliography and Methodology') will be released after the completion of the examination on the classical language and must be submitted by Friday of the same week. You will also submit your thesis of between 20,000 and 30,000 words. Vivas are compulsory unless candidates are excused by the examiners.

### Important dates and deadlines

When			What	
Year 1	Michaelmas Term	Week 9, Friday, 12 noon	Essay 1 submission Word limit: not more than 2,500.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 1	Hilary Term	Week 9, Friday, 12 noon	Essay 2 submission Word limit: not more than 2,500.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 1	Trinity Term	Week 9, Friday, 12 noon	Essay 3 submission Word limit: not more than 2,500.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 1	Trinity Term		Qualifying language exam one	Written examination.
Year 1	Trinity Term		Qualifying language exam two	Written examination.
Year 2	Hilary Term	Week 0, Monday	Approval of the thesis subject/thesis title	Email <a href="#">Exams Administration team</a> .
Year 2	Trinity Term	Week 6, Thursday, 12 noon	Thesis submission Word limit: not more than 30,000.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 2	Trinity Term	Week 9, Tuesday, 12 noon	Research Bibliography and	Submission via Inspira.

			Methodology exercise released.	
Year 2	Trinity Term	Week 9, Friday, 5pm	Research Bibliography and Methodology exercise submission due.	Submission via Inspira.
Year 2	Trinity Term		Prescribed texts examination.	Written examination.

## Thesis

### Approval of Thesis Subject/Title

Departure from approved titles or subject matter will be penalised. The penalty applied will increase the greater the departure from the approved title or subject matter is. After your thesis subject/title is approved there may need to be changes made before submitting. These should be done in consultation with your supervisor and a request to change your thesis title should be emailed to [Exams Administration team](#), with your supervisor copied in for approval. **Changes cannot be made once your thesis is submitted.**

Examination-related forms, including thesis approval forms, are available on the Faculty webpage here: [Approval Forms](#)

### Word Limits

Submissions should not exceed the word limit given in your Examination Regulations and rubrics – including text and footnotes/endnotes but excluding 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](#) or from the Weston Library and can be searched on [SOLO](#) (Search Oxford Libraries Online). Some theses awarded a distinction are eligible to be deposited to the Bodleian Library. Should your thesis be eligible, you will be contacted regarding the procedure after your results are released.

### Required Handwritten Language Components

The ability to produce East Asian scripts independently is an essential competence standard of this course. This means that it is necessary for students to demonstrate these skills in order to successfully complete the degree programme.

Since all available software for inputting certain target scripts on a computer includes a 'predictive text' function which cannot be turned off, using such a program would prevent examiners from understanding whether the student has achieved the required proficiency in the target language. Handwriting the script is therefore required to demonstrate that the student has reached the required level of competence, ability and knowledge of the target language.

For this course, Japanese, Korean and Chinese language papers will include a requirement to handwrite in the script of the relevant primary language. The handwriting assessment component represents a competence standard for the award of the degree and there are limited alternative assessment arrangements that can be made as a reasonable adjustment for disability. All students will be required to handwrite and no adjustments to this mode of completion of the assessment can be made. However, adjustments may be available to the conditions in which the assessment is completed (for example, additional time, larger type for exam papers etc).

The Faculty appreciates the impact that these requirements may have on students with certain accessibility needs and works closely with the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) to provide appropriate support in line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010). Support within the Faculty is available in the first instance by speaking to the designated Disability Coordinators (see *Welfare and Support* below).

If you have any questions or concerns relating to this please speak with your course director or the Director of Graduate Studies.

## 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 Traditional East Asia 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 '[Exams and Assessment Guidance](#)' 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](#).**

### Note on adjustments to assessments

The faculty is committed to supporting disabled students with reasonable adjustments to examinations and assessments in order to mitigate or remove barriers. Further information on the application process for adjustments is available here:

<https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/examinations-and-assessments-0#tab-1817166>

This course involves one or more mandatory examination components that require the handwriting of a language script. The ability to handwrite in the target language is a competence standard for these courses. This means that no adjustment can be made to the requirement to handwrite the assessment, although alternative assessment arrangements may be possible for the assessment conditions (for example, additional time, larger type for exam papers, split papers etc). If your personal circumstances mean that handwriting may present a challenge, please contact your course director to discuss the options available as soon as possible.

### Examination Entry, In-person and Online Examinations

You will enter for examinations through your College. 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. Your timetable will be available approximately five weeks before your first exam. Please refer to the Oxford Students website for full examination entry and alternative examination arrangements ([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams)). Formal University examinations are normally sat in the Examination Schools or other approved locations.

### In-person Examinations

Practical information and support for sitting in-person exams is provided on the Oxford students website ([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance)).

### 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

([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/online-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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code)) and you should read this in advance of any online exams.

### Candidate number

Your candidate number will be provided by your college you can also locate it 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.**

### 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](http://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 Examinations and 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 students website ([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment](http://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

Vivas are compulsory for this course unless candidates are excused by the examiners, please refer to the Examination Conventions and Rubrics when they are released. 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.

### Feedback on Learning and Assessment

#### Informal (Formative) Assessment

Informal assessment, also known as formative assessment, is provided by tutorial feedback and interaction with the Supervisor and/or tutor, by the discussion of prepared class-work or the results of class tests (especially for language classes), and by the Supervisor's termly report, which is discussed with the student in the Faculty and separately in the College.

#### Formal (Summative) Assessment

Formal assessment, also known as summative assessment, is provided by qualifying examinations in the first year and by one or more of written examinations, submitted essays, portfolio, and a thesis or dissertation at the end of the course.

### Examiners' Reports and Previous Exam Papers (OXAM)

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

### 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. 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.

### 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:

**Chinese Subject Group Equality and Diversity Representative:** [Verna Yu](#)

**Faculty Equality and Diversity Officer:** [Richard Parkinson](#)



## 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 Najafzade](#) and [Zeynep Yürekli](#)

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.

More information about the support and resources available can be found in the general Undergraduate Handbook and on the Faculty and University websites.