Master of Philosophy in Jewish Studies

Course Handbook

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2022-23 v.1

Course Director – Dr Zoe Waxman

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here (LINK TO BE ADDED WHEN 2022-23 EXAMINATION REGULATIONS PUBLISHED).

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, Chris Mitchell (chris.mitchell@orinst.ox.ac.uk).

The information in this handbook is accurate as at Michaelmas Term 2022; 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.

THIS HANDBOOK

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.

You should consult the current edition of the Examination Regulations (LINK TO BE ADDED WHEN 2022-23 EXAMINATION REGULATIONS PUBLISHED) for information regarding your course. The information in this handbook should be read in conjunction with:

- the Faculty's general Masters handbook;
- 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.

Comments and criticism of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies or the Senior Academic Administrator, Chris Mitchell.

Version history

1	September 2022	Original publication

Contents

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 2,5000 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:

Septuagint and related studies* – available in Hilary 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.

Introduction to Rabbinic Texts – available in Hilary 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 Jewish History – available in Hilary Term
Dr 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.

Modern Hebrew Literature, 1900-Present – available in Michaelmas Term
Prof Adriana X Jacobs
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. In recent years, 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 offers a chronological and thematic overview of Modern Hebrew literature from the late nineteenth century to the present day and examines, in particular, figures and themes of linguistic, cultural, geographical liminality 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 "centres and peripheries" in Modern Hebrew literature.

The course readings will address as well the politics of multilingualism and translation, 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.
This course will be examined by essay submissions.

The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism – available in Hilary 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.

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.

Holocaust: From History to Memory – available in Michaelmas Term
Dr 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.

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.

Main Themes in Israeli Society and Politics* – available in Michaelmas 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 "rebelling" 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.

Key Themes in Jewish Medieval Thought – available in Hilary Term
Dr Daniel Herskowitz

This course provides an introduction to medieval Jewish thought from its beginning in the tenth century as part of the classical period of Islam through its flourishing in the fourteenth century in Christian Europe. It is set to examine key themes and thinkers through prescribed reading of seminal or representative texts, as well as secondary literature. Among the key themes to be discussed are the relations between faith and reason, the nature of revelation, biblical interpretation, the best social order and political leader, prophecy, the question of evil, creation, and providence. Thinkers who are especially important and whose views will be highlighted are Saadia Gaon, Yehuda Halevi, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Maimonides, Gersonides, Joseph Albo, and Hasdai Crescas. The course will pay close attention to the convergences and differences, dialogues and debates of medieval Jewish thought with equivalent Islamic and Christian philosophical traditions.
This course will be examined by essay submissions.

Options will be subject to the availability of teaching each year.

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
- Dr Deborah Rooke – The Religion of Israel
- Prof. Alison Salvesen – Septuagint and related studies
- Dr Zoë Waxman – Modern Jewish History, Holocaust: From History to Memory
- Dr Haike Wiegand – Yiddish
- Dr Ben Williams – Introduction to Rabbinic Literature
- Prof. Yaacov Yadgar – Beyond Religion and Politics in Israel
- Mr. Gil Zahavi – 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.

<u>Year 1</u>
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.

<u>Year 2</u>
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	How/Format
Years 1 & 2	Michaelmas Term	Week 8, Friday	Michaelmas optional papers: essay topics **published.** **Word limit:** 2,500.	Via Inspera.
Years 1 & 2	Hilary Term	Week 0, Friday, 12 noon	Michaelmas, optional papers: essays **submitted.** **Word limit:** 2,500.	Via Inspera.
Years 1 & 2	Hilary Term	Week 8, Friday	Hilary optional papers: essay topics **published.** **Word limit:** 2,500.	Via Inspera.

Years 1 & 2	Trinity Term	Week 0, Friday, 12 noon	Hilary optional papers: essays **submitted.** **Word limit:** 2,500.	Via Inspera.
Year 1	Trinity Term	TBC	Qualifying language examination.	In-person or online examination.
Year 2	Hilary Term	Week 0, Monday	Approval of the thesis title/thesis subject.	Email: academic.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk
Year 2	Trinity Term	Week 6, Thursday, 12 noon	Thesis **submission.** **Word limit:** not more than 30,000.	Via Inspera.
Year 2	Trinity Term	TBC	Language examination.	In-person or online examination.
Year 2	Trinity Term	TBC	Year 1 optional papers' examinations.	In-person or online 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 academic.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk, 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: https://resources.orinst.ox.ac.uk/forms

Word Limits

Your submissions should not exceed the word limit given in your Examination Regulations and rubrics – including text and footnotes/endnotes but excluding appendices and bibliography.

Further guidance and more information about formatting can be found in the General Guidelines for Thesis Writers below. Examples of MPhil and MSt/MSc theses are available 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.

Language Learning and Competency Standards

Though the Faculty works closely with the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) and support students with SpLD, language papers represent competency standards and therefore cannot be replaced with easier language papers or non-language papers. 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, Conventions and Rubrics

<u>Examination Regulations</u>

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 (LINK TO BE ADDED WHEN 2022-23 EXAMINATION REGULATIONS PUBLISHED).

<u>Examination Conventions and Rubrics</u>

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 Information' site on Canvas 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 [Academic Administration team](#).

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 Asian and Middle Eastern Studies [Academic 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). 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).

Online Examinations
Online exams are taken in Inspera. 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). 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
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 Inspera
Submissions are via the University's online assessment platform, [Inspera](#). 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 Inspera link and information will be sent by the Academic Administration office 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 students 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. When making

any travel arrangements for the post-exam period, it is your responsibility to bear in mind attendance at the viva.

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.

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 'Exams and Assessment Information' site on Canvas. 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 the Oxford Examination Papers Online website (https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:oxam), you will need your SSO details to login.

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 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 (Edmund Herzig) 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).

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THESIS WRITERS

These guidelines are for assistance only, they are not exam regulations. If your tutor or supervisor has given you alternative guidelines, then you should follow those instead.

Status of the thesis within the degree course

It is imperative to recognize that the writing of a thesis involves quite as much work as for a paper, and that the work differs from conventional study in shape and demand. The subject of your thesis may, but need not, overlap with a subject or period covered by one or more of your other papers, but you must not repeat material used in your thesis in any of your papers, and you will not be given credit for material extensively repeated.

Planning and Choice of Topic

You should discuss the topic of your thesis in the first instance with your course coordinator or supervisor. If your course coordinator or supervisor does not feel qualified to give detailed advice they will put you in touch with someone suitable to supervise a thesis in the chosen area. You should do so as early as possible:

- For undergraduates, Trinity Term, Year 1 is probably the best time for preliminary discussions. In no case should you leave the choice of a subject for your thesis later than the beginning of Michaelmas Term, Year 3. Print form from: https://resources.orinst.ox.ac.uk/forms
- MSt/MSc students should discuss the possible subject of your thesis in the first instance with your supervisor during the first four weeks of Michaelmas Term. Print form from: https://resources.orinst.ox.ac.uk/forms
- MPhil students should discuss the possible subject of your thesis with your supervisor before the end of Michaelmas Term, Year 1. Print form from: https://resources.orinst.ox.ac.uk/forms

The Thesis Supervisor's Role

The supervisor of your thesis will assist in the choice of a topic and give initial advice on relevant sources and methods. They will advise on sources and presentation and assist with bibliographical advice; they will certainly expect to read draft chapters or sections. They may, but will not necessarily, read and comment on a complete first draft. But a thesis must be your own work.

Theses - Good and Indifferent

The hallmark of a good thesis is that it contains a consecutive argument or set of arguments on its topic. Apart from showing a sound grasp of the secondary literature on the subject and/or period and an awareness of the problems of the topic, you should deploy the evidence of the sources to

support the elements in your general argument. It should be made clear how you have approached the subject, what conclusions you have reached and, if appropriate, how your approach and conclusions are related to the views of other scholars.

The work should be well-written and properly presented, with footnote references in orderly, consistent and unfussy shape and a sensibly-selected bibliography. Good presentation, in the experience of many examiners, is usually combined with high quality of analysis.

Conversely, careless or unclear writing, uncorrected mis-spellings, typing errors and plain misquotations often go with an uncertain or myopic focus on the subject.

Authors sometimes become so interested in their topic that they overlook the need to provide at least a brief introduction to it and to set it in its broader historical context or contexts. (An introductory section to a thesis may often usefully include a survey of the existing literature on a topic and 'pointers' to its particular interest and problems.)

While reading and research are being carried out, you should also be planning how to shape materials into an argument. Research, while sometimes frustrating, is intensely stimulating; it can also become a beguiling end in itself. Laboriously collected materials are worthless unless they contribute to a coherent argument. For this reason, you should begin to plan the structure of your argument as early as possible; some plans may need to be discarded until the most feasible one has been found.

It is a reasonable assumption that writing the thesis will take longer than expected: a good thesis will certainly require more than one draft of parts if not of the whole. Plenty of time should be allowed for getting the final typed version into presentable form without disrupting work for other papers or revision.

Format of the Thesis

a. *Length*

Your thesis should not exceed the word limit given in the Exam Regulations (Grey Book) or in your course handbooks, including text and notes but excluding appendices and bibliography (see below).

b. *Pagination*

Pagination should run consecutively from beginning to end and include any appendices etc. Cross references should be to pages and not simply to any sectional divisions.

c. *Order of Contents*

After the title-page (N.B. This must bear your candidate number but not your name) there should normally be:

   i.   A table of contents, showing, in sequence, with page numbers, the subdivisions of the thesis. Titles of chapters and appendices should be given; titles of subsections of chapters may be given.
   ii. A list of illustrations (if appropriate)
   iii. A list of tables (if appropriate)
   iv. A list of abbreviations, cue-titles, symbols etc.
   v.   A brief introduction in which the examiners' attention is drawn to the aims and broad argument(s) of the work, and in which any relevant points about sources and obligations to the work of other scholars are made.

<ol type="i" start="6">
The thesis itself, divided into chapters. The chapters should have clear descriptive titles.
A conclusion, consisting of a few hundred words which summarize the findings and briefly explore their implications.
Any appendices (which are likely not to count towards the word limit)
A bibliography. This is essential, and should be sensibly selective, omitting nothing which has been important in the production of the thesis. Works which are not specifically mentioned in the text may be included, but it is not necessary to include everything that may have been read or consulted. Works should be listed alphabetically by surname of author.

d. *Footnotes, References, and Bibliography*

Footnotes (except for references) should be as few and as brief as possible: they count towards the overall word-limit. The practice of putting into footnotes information which cannot be digested in the text should be avoided. Notes should be printed, single-spaced, at the foot of the page. Footnote numbers should be superscript (not bracketed) and run in a continuous sequence through each chapter. In subject areas where standard abbreviations for much quoted books and periodicals are in common use, these abbreviations may be employed in text, footnotes, or bibliography; they should be listed separately after the table of contents.

When reference is given for a quotation or for a viewpoint or item of information, it must be precise. But judgment needs to be exercised as to when reference is required: statements of fact which no reader would question do not need to be supported by references.

It is recommended that references be given in footnotes by means of author's name and/or full or abbreviated title. For example: 'Beeston, Arabic Language, 72' or 'Beeston (1970), 72'. All works referred to in this way must be listed in full at the end of the text in alphabetical order by author's name. Your bibliography might take the following form; you do not have to follow exactly this format, but whichever you do adopt must be equally clear, precise and consistent.

<ol type="i">
Books
Beeston, A.F.L., *The Arabic Language Today*, London, 1970.
or
Beeston, A.F.L (1970), *The Arabic Language Today*, London.

<ol type="i" start="2">
Contributions to Books
Beeston, A.F.L, 'Background topics', in A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, and G.R. Smith (eds), *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 1-26.
or
Beeston, A.F.L. (1983), 'Background topics', in A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, and G.R. Smith (eds), *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge, pp. 1-26.

<ol type="i" start="3">
Journal Articles
Beeston, A.F.L., 'A Sabean penal law', *Le Muséon* 64 (1951): 7-15.
or
Beeston, A.F.L. (1951), 'A Sabean penal law', *Le Muséon* 64: 7-15.

e. *Tables, Photographs, Maps, Graphs and Drawings*

You are encouraged to employ tables, illustrations and graphs on any occasion when an argument can be more clearly and elegantly expressed by their employment. If they are not your own work, their original source must be acknowledged.

These should be used only to convey essential data that cannot be elegantly subsumed within the body of the text. They are particularly appropriate for material which does not count within the word limit of the thesis, such as transcriptions of texts, or catalogues of data.

f. *Italics*

These should be used for: titles of books and periodicals; technical terms or phrases in languages other than English (but not for quotations in foreign languages); for abbreviations which are abbreviations of foreign words (e.g., loc. cit.). Most such abbreviations are best avoided altogether.

g. *Capitals*

These should be used as sparingly as possible. They should be used for institutions and corporate bodies when the name used is the official title or part of the official title.

h. *Emphasis.*

Avoid the use of bold, italics, underline, exclamation marks, etc. for emphasis. It's **_rude_** to shout!!!

i. *Spelling*

English not American spelling should be used, e.g. 'colour' not 'color'. When in doubt, consult the OED, not your spell-checker.

j. *Transliteration*

Transliteration must be systematic, and follow a standard scholarly method. You should consult your supervisor as to which system is most appropriate to your subject. One system is that adopted by the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES).

k. *Submission*

The thesis must be typed double-spaced with margins not less than 2.5cm (1"). The gutter margin must be at least 3.5cm. It is recommended that you use 12-point type. Do not justify the text.

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 must 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.

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 by a qualifying examination in the first year and at the end of the course by written examinations, submitted essays, portfolio and a thesis, depending on the course.