



**MSt Classical Armenian Studies**  
**Course Handbook**  
**Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies**  
**University of Oxford**  
Academic Year 2023-24 v.2

FACULTY OF  
**ASIAN AND  
MIDDLE  
EASTERN  
STUDIES**



# Master of Studies in Classical Armenian Studies

## Course Handbook

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2023-24 v.2

Course Director – Prof. [Theo Maarten van Lint](#), Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies

### 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 MSt in Classical Armenian Studies, and what to do should you encounter delays, setbacks, or need to make changes.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here: [2023-24, Master of Studies in Classical Armenian 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

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## INTRODUCTION

The MSt in Classical Armenian Studies is a one-year taught degree which is intended to give students experience in reading and interpreting a wide range of Armenian texts, from a choice of genres, either as a stand-alone qualification or as a solid foundation in the subject for those intending to go on to do doctoral research.

Armenia lies at the cross-roads of the Near East. To the west were the great empires of the eastern Mediterranean (Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman), to the east those of Iran (Achaemenid, Sasanian, Safavid). Dominated by Mount Ararat, the Armenian plateau separates the Caucasian range to the north from the plains of Mesopotamia to the south. A distinct Armenian people is attested from the sixth century BC; and within a century after their conversion to Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century of our era they developed a written literature in their own alphabet that existed next and partly replaced an oral literature only fragments of which have survived. During the past thousand years a widely scattered diaspora has extended Armenian life and traditions outwards from the homeland over most of the globe.

Armenians are thus heirs to many different cultures, and in their turn have made an individual contribution to numerous societies. Armenian studies have been pursued at Oxford since the mid-nineteenth century. More recently, the establishment in 1965 of the Calouste Gulbenkian Professorship has guaranteed a permanent place for Armenian in the broader field of the Near East. Within the long span of Armenian history study of Armenia at Oxford concentrates on the period when Armenian sources give valuable information not only about Armenian culture itself, but also about neighbouring peoples of the Near East. Emphasis is therefore given to the study of the classical and medieval forms of the language and to Armenian literature from the fifth to the seventeenth centuries.

Oxford is the only university in the UK where Armenian may be studied as a main subject. The Armenian resources of the Bodleian Library are excellent; the Oriental Institute also houses a working library for students.

### Courses of Instruction

Armenian may be studied at the undergraduate level in conjunction with Arabic, Greek, Persian or Turkish. At the graduate level two taught courses are offered: a one-year Master of Studies in Classical Armenian alone; and a two-year Master of Philosophy, in which Armenian is a component part of the Eastern Christian Studies M.Phil. It may also be studied as a part of the M.St. and M.Phil. in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, and as the M.Phil. in General Linguistics and Comparative Philology. Advanced research may lead to a D.Phil. in Armenian.

### Content and Teaching

After an initial introduction to the grammar and syntax of classical Armenian, the student reads a variety of texts. An understanding of the literary culture of the period and the historical background is thus obtained directly from the original sources.

Students prepare for FOUR papers, Paper I and three others.

Paper I, core course on the language, literature, history, and culture of Ancient and Medieval Armenia.

Papers II-IV, core courses on key Armenian literary genres. Students must choose to study texts in THREE of the following subjects:

1. Biblical texts
2. Homiletic and polemical literature
3. Hagiographic texts
4. Historical literature of the 5th-9th centuries
5. Historical literature of the 10th-14th centuries
6. Religious and secular verse
7. Any other subject approved by the Faculty Board

### Teaching Staff

- Prof. [Theo Maarten van Lint](#) (Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies)

## EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

### Assessment Structure

The examination (towards the end of the Trinity Term) takes the form of four three-hour papers. The first consists of essay questions on general topics of Armenian language, literature, history and culture; candidates are generally required to answer three questions out of ten or so that are set. The other three papers consist of passages to be translated from the three types of text chosen by the candidate, with brief questions on the background, content or grammar of the passages set. The passages will be taken from the texts set for the examination as agreed by the Faculty Board.

The use of an Armenian dictionary will not be permitted during these examinations.

Every candidate will be examined viva voce unless individually excused by the examiners.

Students must pass all examinations to be awarded the degree.

### Examination Regulations

Examination Regulations are the immutable framework of study and assessment of University degrees to which students must adhere. The regulations for the MSt Classical Armenian Studies can be found here: [2023-24, Master of Studies in Classical Armenian Studies \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

### 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 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 [Exams 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 [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 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](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.**

### 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

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

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

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



## Infringements for Examinations and Submitted Assessments

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

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

## 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'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 MST COURSES OF STUDY AT ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The MSt degree is awarded after a course of directed study leading to an examination. The course normally lasts one year. It is thus suitable both for students who have no more than one year available for study and for those who require a year of preliminary training in a subject before proceeding to research. A general MSt. in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is awarded to those students who have undergone training in a subject for which no specific MSt. is available. The MSt. is at the FHEQ level 7.

The MSt is available in the following subjects:

- Bible Interpretation
- Classical Armenian Studies
- Classical Hebrew Studies
- Islamic Art and Architecture
- Islamic Studies and History
- Jewish Studies
- Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period
- Korean Studies
- Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
- Syriac Studies
- Traditional China

In general, the arrangements for supervision are similar to those for the MPhil, and in the case of some subjects the course offered is actually a reduced version of a corresponding MPhil course, with the language training omitted.

### 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:

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

**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 Najafzada](#) 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.