

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MPhil in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance



About the course

The rate and complexity of environmental change poses profound economic, social and political challenges for contemporary society. Developing ways to address these challenges demands intellectual rigour, innovation and flexibility, as well as the capacity to think across existing disciplinary boundaries.

The MPhil in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance is grounded in the conviction that responses to global challenges requires researchers and practitioners trained in the social sciences, with the ability to think flexibly across disciplinary and sectorial boundaries. It will enable you to develop a theoretically sophisticated and empirically grounded understanding of the dynamic relations between environment, society and policy.

The specific objectives of the course are:

- to provide broad and critical engagements with key debates in the environmental social sciences, focusing on the relations between nature and society, science and politics, and urban natures
- to foster an understanding of the conceptual tools in human geography and learn to apply them to the challenges of real-world environmental governance
- to develop your conceptions of, and skills in, research design and methods in the contemporary environmental social sciences, providing critical foundations for further study by research
- to integrate you into world leading research in the School of Geography and the Environment by providing core teaching and supervision by research-active staff
- to enhance your personal and professional development.

This course intensively engages with ongoing theoretical debates in human geography, political geography, political ecology and science and technology studies. Students should expect to engage with theoretical material and deconstruct some of the basic assumptions underpinning terms like 'society', 'governance', 'territory', 'politics' and 'nature' in order to develop conceptual tools to understand contemporary global change. The focus on critical theory is complemented by modules covering foundational knowledge in economics of the environment, behavioural economics and environmental management in order to prepare you to think across traditional boundaries in the social sciences.

The course draws on the methods and approaches from across the social sciences, including fields such as human geography, anthropology, environmental economics, science and technology studies, and corporate environmental management. It also facilitates dialogue between researchers and practitioners concerning contemporary issues of environmental policy and politics.

Course structure

The MPhil is a two-year course. In the first year, you will take the coursework and written examinations associated with the MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance. The second year is devoted to researching and writing a thesis.

There are nine core modules organised under three themes: policy and governance, theory and analysis, and research skills. Teaching takes place through lectures, seminars and workshops which provide in-depth exploration of key environmental issues. The elective modules offer a seminar-style teaching and discussion environment within smaller groups, based on a suite of contemporary research themes that reflect the specific interests of core faculty and visiting research associates.

The teaching aim is to foster discussion and debate between academic staff and students to identify and explore theory, methods and practice in an academic space that encourages a critical dialogue.

In the second year you will work on your thesis project with the support of a specialist supervisor.

Field trips and external visits are an important component of the teaching delivery and include an induction field course in the UK and a three-day European field course.

Supervision

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

Assessment

At the end of the first year you take the written examinations associated with the MSc in Nature Society and Environmental Governance. You will also complete an additional policy brief assignment and two assessed essays linked to elective courses. You must pass the examinations taken at the end of the first year in order to proceed into the second year.

The second year consists largely of independent study and is devoted to researching and writing a thesis. The research topic will be devised in your first year and, once approved; a supervisor will be allocated to you. The thesis accounts for half the marks for the degree. In addition, in the second year you will take a further elective course, assessed by a submitted essay.

Changes to courses

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. These may include significant changes made necessary by a pandemic (including Covid-19), epidemic or local health emergency. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/terms>) and our page on changes to courses (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges>).

Expected length of course

	Full Time Only
Expected length	24 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£20,770
Overseas	£28,020

Information about course fees

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

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

Additional cost information

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

Most costs associated with compulsory fieldwork are paid for by the department. This excludes the costs associated with obtaining the appropriate visa required to attend the non-UK based field trips. Non-EEA nationals might require a visa in order to travel to the country where the field trip is being held and any costs associated with obtaining the appropriate travel visa is the responsibility of the student. Students will also have to pay for some meals during the field course. Furthermore, as part of your course requirements you need to develop and research a dissertation topic. Depending on your choice of topic and the field work research required to complete it, you may incur additional costs (eg relating to travel, accommodation, field assistants, lab fees and/or research visas). You will need to meet these additional costs, although you may be able to apply for small grants/bursaries from your department and/or college to help you cover some of these expenses.

Living costs

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

The likely living costs for 2023-24 are published below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford.

Likely living costs for one month

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£300	£470
Accommodation	£715	£860
Personal items	£180	£305
Social activities	£40	£90
Study costs	£35	£80
Other	£20	£35
Total	£1,290	£1,840

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,700	£4,230
Accommodation	£6,435	£7,740
Personal items	£1,620	£2,745
Social activities	£360	£810
Study costs	£315	£720
Other	£180	£315
Total	£11,610	£16,560

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,600	£5,640
Accommodation	£8,580	£10,320
Personal items	£2,160	£3,660
Social activities	£480	£1,080
Study costs	£420	£960
Other	£240	£420
Total	£15,480	£22,080

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2023-24, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 5% or more each year – although this rate may vary significantly depending on how the national economic situation develops.

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

Document accessibility

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