

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MPhil in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology



About the course

The MPhil acts as a terminal degree but will also prepare you for doctoral research by introducing a wide range of theories and perspectives on museum anthropology, visual anthropology, and material culture theory, as well as practical field- and museum-based research methodologies. It is intended both as a standalone degree and as a broader and deeper preparation for doctoral research than is possible with the MSc.

The School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography takes the view that full-time degrees require full-time study (ie equivalent to typical employment, around 40 hours per week, throughout the year).

The periods outside term time are considered to be opportunities for further independent study, consolidating and supplementing the knowledge gained during the preceding term and preparing work for examination, as well as for an appropriate break from study.

First year

The first year of the MPhil consists of a structured programme of lectures, classes, and tutorials from October to June. You will then start the research for their MPhil dissertation over the summer.

You should expect to spend six to eight hours per week in term time in formal teaching contexts (lectures, seminar groups, tutorials, classes), which can be supplemented with attendance of the many research and visiting speaker seminars on offer; the remainder of your time (ie around 30 hours per week) should be spent on independent study and preparation of submitted work.

The first year of the MPhil is structured around teaching for four papers.

1. Contemporary themes in visual, material and museum anthropology

This paper focuses on topics such as visual culture (including photography, the internet, art and aesthetics); music and performance; museum ethics and relationships with 'source communities'; landscape and the built environment; dress and body modification; religion and ritual; material culture, mass production and trade; debates concerning tradition, modernity and authenticity; transnational cultural flows and the wider issues of cross-cultural investigation.

2. Option paper

You will select one option paper from those taught each year for students in the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography (SAME). Titles of options available will be made known at the beginning of each academic year.

3. Research methods in visual, material and museum anthropology

This paper consists of two parts. Paper 3a is an outline proposal for the MSc dissertation. Paper 3b is a methods portfolio consisting of reports (including notes) on trials of three visual and material anthropological methods and/or ethnographic museological methods relevant to the research proposed in paper 3a.

4. Fundamental concepts in visual, material, and museum anthropology

This paper focuses on anthropology's distinctive contribution to understanding social and cultural form and process, and the role of human creativity within them, with particular reference to artefacts of material and visual culture, and to the collection, display, production, circulation and consumption of such artefacts.

Second year

You will spend the summer conducting preliminary research. You will then focus principally on research and writing for your thesis in the second year, so the emphasis is on independent study. However, you will still be expected to spend three to four hours per week in term time in formal teaching contexts, including a writing-up seminar and field research training, as well as regular meetings with your thesis supervisor, again supplemented by attendance of research seminars and lectures as you choose.

Fieldwork is not expected as a basis for the MPhil thesis, but it can be conducted, and you will be encouraged to make use of the extensive visual and material cultural resources available in the department and the museum in selecting and researching dissertation and thesis topics.

You will also take another option paper, again selected from any of the options offered within the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography 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 Anthropology and Museum Ethnography.

Assessment

During the first year, papers one, two and four are assessed by a 5,000-word essay. Paper three is assessed by a portfolio of methods exercises and a research proposal. The examination of these papers in the first year constitutes the 'qualifying' examination for continuation to the second year.

In addition to the thesis in the second year, you will also be examined in your second-year option course, and long 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	21 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£21,570
Overseas	£35,180

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. Standard travel insurance can be provided by the University. However, students may be required to pay any additional insurance premiums associated with travel to areas with an increased level of risk, and should factor this into their planning for fieldwork.

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>).