

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2023-24: MSt in English (1550-1700)



About the course

The English master's programmes are designed to serve both as an autonomous degree for students wishing to pursue more advanced studies in English literature, and as a solid foundation for doctoral research.

The MSt in English (1550-1700) offers students the opportunity both to explore their own interests within this remarkably rich period in English literary history, and to develop the skills necessary for pursuing these interests with real breadth and depth. Its varied components allow students to study texts in careful detail, and to pursue large and ambitious concepts: as such, the MSt is well-suited both to those who want an additional, stand-alone year of coherent literary study, and those who are interested in going on to undertake doctoral research. The mixture of interpretative, scholarly, and writerly skills that the course helps to foster are ideal for applicants interested in a range of subsequent paths, both inside and outside the academy.

Course structure

The MSt programme consists of four main components. In the first two terms, you will take a core course (A), in which specialists in Early Modern literature from across the English Faculty will introduce you to key concepts and debates within the period 1550-1700. You will also take a second core course (B), in book history and the materiality of the text, which will allow you to engage closely with the unparalleled collections of the Bodleian Libraries. You will additionally choose two courses from a wide range of thematic options (C courses), which might focus on a given author in depth, or explore a broader theme. Finally, under the guidance of a specialist supervisor you will also research and write a dissertation on a topic of your choosing, which is submitted in the final term.

A. Core course: Critical Questions in Early Modern Literature

This is the core course for this MSt, and introduces students to key texts and current debates on the literature and cultural history of the period. It is intended both to help students find their feet as they begin advanced literary study, and to allow them to sample discussions taking place at the cutting edge of the field. It is formally non-assessed but compulsory.

Each seminar of this course is led by a different scholar with expertise in the area being discussed, ensuring your exposure to a wide range of texts and approaches. Recent sessions include: 'Meddling with Allegory', 'Travel, Race, Power', and 'The Female Signature'.

B. Core course: Bibliography, Theories of Text, History of the Book, Manuscript Studies

On this course you will explore the materiality of texts: drawing on the unparalleled early modern holdings of the Bodleian Library, you will consider the production, circulation and reception of texts as physical objects. This means examining, among other things, the ways in which manuscripts moved between scribes and readers; annotated books and the history of reading; palaeography; editing and ideology; and the roles of publishers and printers in the period. Seminars will offer a blend of critical reflection alongside first-hand access to rare print and manuscript materials.

Alongside its rich holdings of printed books, the Bodleian Library contains large collections of manuscript prose and poetry which have yet to be fully charted, as well as many hybrid books that combine both print and manuscript in diverse ways. Its resources include collections in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, as well as autograph manuscripts by John Donne, John Milton and Elizabeth I. The Centre for the Study of the Book also offers MSt students a hands-on understanding of the material, intellectual and social history of Early Modern print and manuscript culture, while the Bibliography Room offers students the chance to learn how to set type and to print by hand.

Recent student work has included an edition of early modern letters (never before edited); an account of post-Reformation collecting and library-building; and a study of recently discovered women's manuscripts. The course is taught via seminars and tutorials in each of the first two terms. It forms an integral part of the skills with which the MSt equips its students, and it is compulsory and assessed.

C. Special options

The special option courses present an excellent opportunity for you to develop and pursue your research interests. Each year the special options that are offered reflect the diversity of interest and approach within the English Faculty itself, and will encompass various methodologies and degrees of focus. Recent and future options include: 'Slow Reading Spenser', 'Early Modern Life Writing', 'Of Essays: Origins and Afterlives' and 'Twelfth Night'.

You are not constrained to follow option courses within the designated period and, indeed, option courses often traverse the boundaries of the broad periods. The courses are taught in weekly, small group seminars.

D. Dissertation

You will write a 10,000- to 11,000-word dissertation on a subject of your choice, but related to the work you have been doing over the year. You will be assigned to a member of academic staff who will act as your supervisor, and will have the opportunity to work closely with them over an extended period of time while developing your work. Like all of the teaching for the MSt, the dissertation supervision is intended to help students develop both their skills as researchers, and their fluency as writers.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of English 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 Faculty of English.

Assessment

The MSt programme is assessed via the submission of four pieces of coursework. In addition to the dissertation, you will submit three essays – one at the end of the first term, and two at the end of the second term – relating to the B and C courses that have been taken.

All course work will be completed by the end of the second term (Hilary term), leaving the summer term (Trinity term) to complete the dissertation, which is submitted in June.

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	9 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2023-24

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£14,410
Overseas	£30,910

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.

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>).