

## Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

### About the course

The MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation is a nine-month, interdisciplinary course designed to give you critical, theoretical and research expertise in the fields of comparative and world literature and translation studies.

The course is attached to Oxford's research centre in Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT) and builds on the recent growth in scholarly awareness of the importance of translation to comparative and world literary study. This is what is meant by 'critical translation': not translator training, but rather an interest in the role played by translation and re-writing in literary history, and an alertness to the uses of translation in critical practice.

To take this course, you must be able to work with two relevant languages and their literature, details of which can be found under Entry Requirements.

You will be able to participate in the rich research culture of OCCT. This includes the lively postgraduate-led discussion group, regular research seminars and workshops, the public events of Oxford Translation Day, and lectures by the Weidenfeld Visiting Professor in Comparative European Literature (recent incumbents have included Ali Smith, Elif Shafak, Durs Grünbein, Véronique Tadjo, Jhumpa Lahiri).

The academic mentor and the graduate teaching assistant who are attached to the course will help you to orient yourself in the research culture of OCCT and the wider university.

You will also be able to attend seminars and other events from across the faculties of Medieval and Modern Languages, English Language and Literature, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, thereby encountering a wide range of leading writers, critics, and theorists from within and beyond the University.

If you wish, you may also choose to study another language at the Oxford University Language Centre. This opportunity is free of charge for students taking the MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation, though it is not an assessed part of your MSt course.

### Course structure

An overview of the course structure is provided below. Details of the compulsory and optional elements of the course are provided in the *Course components* section of this page.

The MSt is comprised of a core course, two option courses and a dissertation.

The core course is taught by a weekly lecture and seminar, for the first six weeks in Michaelmas (autumn) and Hilary (spring) terms. You will give presentations in the seminars (usually twice each term), and write a short practice essay at the end of Michaelmas term: these formative assignments will not affect your degree result.

You will take one option course in Michaelmas term and one option course in Hilary term. These options are chosen from a wide range available in the faculties of Medieval and Modern Languages, English Language and Literature, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Teaching for an option consists of regular one-to-one or small-group meetings, with feedback being given as appropriate. Your options must focus on literature in different languages (eg Arabic in one term, English in the other; or French in one term, Russian in the other). Some options may not have a language requirement, or may span more than one language: in such cases, the course convener will advise you so that your choices cover an appropriate range.

For the dissertation, you will work closely with a supervisor, starting at the end of Michaelmas term and continuing through Hilary term, though the bulk of the work will be concentrated in Trinity (summer) term. You will present your dissertation work-in-progress at a seminar day organised jointly with the OCCT discussion group in Trinity term.

Your dissertation will be submitted at the end of Trinity term.

### Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the [University's Residence requirements](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements). ([/www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements))

Alongside the weekly teaching sessions for the core and option courses, you should expect to undertake approximately 30 hours of self-directed study each week.

## Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of resources including libraries, museums, galleries, digital resources and IT services.

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest library system in the UK. It includes the main Bodleian Library and libraries across Oxford, including major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries. Together, the Libraries hold more than 13 million printed items, provide access to e-journals, and contain outstanding special collections including rare books and manuscripts, classical papyri, maps, music, art and printed ephemera.

The University's IT Services is available to all students to support with core university IT systems and tools, as well as many other services and facilities. IT Services also offers a range of IT learning courses for students to support with learning and research, as well as [guidance on what technology to bring with you as a new student](https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring) (<https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/what-to-bring>) at Oxford.

## The Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

You will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford expected to open in 2025, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. Each faculty will have its own centre and social hub within a building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The building will enable the recently-established Cultural Programme to flourish, with a 500-seat world class concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance venue, 100-seat cinema, and exhibition hall. Many of these venues will support academic and student-led activities, as well as performances and creative works by professional artists. The cultural programme will enrich the lives of students, and will also provide opportunities to get involved.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will be open to all students, and will house lending collections for English, Film Studies, History of Medicine, Internet Studies, Music, Philosophy and Theology. There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library.

Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

## Assessment

In addition to the dissertation, you will be assessed on the core course by an essay written at the end of Hilary term and by written work for each of the two option courses, to be submitted after the end of the term in which the option has been taught.

## Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the steering committee for the MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation in consultation with faculties in the Humanities Division, 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 Humanities Division.

Most students have the opportunity to have termly catch-ups with the course convenor, as well as up to six hours of contact time/support from their dissertation supervisors, the majority of which will take place in late Hilary and Trinity terms.

## Course components

### Compulsory Study

The core course will introduce you to key topics in comparative and world literature and translation studies, and give you the skills needed to develop your own arguments and pursue original research.

The list below provides an indication of the topics covered in the core course, though please note that it may vary from year to year:

- histories of comparison
- theories of comparison
- worlds of comparison
- figures
- genres and forms
- migration, travel and encounter
- translation studies and comparative literatures
- translation and transmediality
- translation and circulation
- translingual and multilingual texts
- untranslatables and universals
- translational critical practices.

You will write and submit a dissertation, which may be on any topic in comparative literature and/or literary translation studies that involves two or more languages.

## Options

You will complete two option courses. The option courses available change from year to year, but the following list is indicative of the types of topics which may be offered by participating faculties:

- Travel, Belonging, Identity: 1550-1700
- Utopian Writing from More to Hume
- Victorian and Edwardian Drama 1850-1914
- 19th and 20th Century Spanish Women Writers
- 20th Century German Drama and Theatre
- Contemporary Brazilian Fiction
- Francophone Literature
- Gender and Representation in Russian Culture from 1800
- Greek Literature & Culture after the 19th century: Themes, Texts and Contexts
- The Body in 20th- and 21st-Century Spanish American Fiction
- The Italian Novel in the 19th and 20th Century
- Translation and Adaptation: Texts, Histories, Practices
- Topics in Classical Japanese Poetry
- Womanhood in Korean Literature
- Authority and Rebellion in Modern Arabic Literature
- Chinese Fiction After Tiananmen
- Topics in Modern Hebrew Literature 1900-present.

## Changes to this course

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course page. 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. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made if a pandemic, epidemic or local health emergency occurs. In addition, in certain circumstances, for example due to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

Where possible your academic supervisor will not change for the duration of your course. However, it may be necessary to assign a new academic supervisor during the course of study or before registration for reasons which might include illness, sabbatical leave, parental leave or change in employment.

For further information please see our page on [changes to courses \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) and the [provisions of the student contract \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract\)](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) regarding changes to courses.

## Costs

### Annual course fees

The fees for this course are charged on an annual basis.

### Fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£19,900
Overseas	£43,730

### What do course fees cover?

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional information section 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 costs information below.

### How long do I need to pay 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 fees will usually increase annually, as explained in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

Our [fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges) pages provide further information, including details about:

- [course fees and fee liability \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/courses-fees-and-liability);
- [how your fee status is determined \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/fee-status); and
- [changes to fees and other charges \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/fees-and-other-charges/changes-to-fees-and-charges).

Information about how much fees and other costs will usually increase each academic year is set out in the University's [Terms and Conditions \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/contract).

### Additional costs

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

### Living costs

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

### Living costs for full-time study

For the 2026-27 academic year, the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student is between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month spent in Oxford. We provide the cost per month so you can multiply up by the number of months you expect to live in Oxford. Depending on your circumstances, you may also need to budget for the [costs of a student visa and immigration health surcharge \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field\\_listing\\_content\\_content-item--2\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2), that you plan to bring with you to Oxford (if [dependant visa eligibility criteria \(//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) are met).

### Further information about living costs

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. For study in Oxford beyond the 2026-27 academic year, it is suggested that you budget for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

A breakdown of likely living costs for one month during the 2026-27 academic year are shown below. These costs are based on a single, full-time graduate student, with no dependants, living in Oxford.

**Likely living costs for one month in Oxford during the 2026-27 academic year**

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£315	£545
<b>Accommodation</b>	£825	£990
<b>Personal items</b>	£160	£310
<b>Social activities</b>	£50	£130
<b>Study costs</b>	£35	£90
<b>Other</b>	£20	£40
<b>Total</b>	£1,405	£2,105

For information about how these figures have been calculated as well as tables showing the likely living costs for nine and twelve months, please refer to the [living costs \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

**Document accessibility**

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