

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in History (Modern British History 1850-present)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	9 months	21 months

About the course

The MSt in History (Modern British History 1850-present), will introduce you to British political and intellectual history in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, political culture more broadly conceived, and the social and cultural history of the period.

The MSt is designed to improve your practical and intellectual grasp of research processes, ability to conceptualise and engage with historical problems, and enlarge your understanding of the historical and historiographical context in which your own research is set. The course can serve as either free-standing graduate qualifications, or as a springboard to doctoral study. Students wishing to proceed to doctoral study will be encouraged to develop their doctoral proposals during the first few months of the MSt. Skills training and option-choice are flexible and open-ended, to allow you to gain the knowledge and training needed to complete your research project.

The Modern British history group at Oxford has particular strengths in the history of women, the history of architecture, and the history of childhood, with outstanding print and digital resources of the Bodleian Library and important Special Collections, including the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera and the Conservative Party archive.

There are several faculty research seminars focusing principally on the period and interdisciplinary networks that bring historians of the period into conversation with scholars from other disciplines. Further information about Modern British history research and activities (<http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/modern-british-history-1850-to-the-present>) can be found through the faculty website.

You are encouraged to engage with the faculty's lively research culture of seminars, workshops, and discussions groups (<https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/research-seminars>), which are programmed throughout each week, and sessions often involve leading international scholars. The faculty also runs the Oxford History Graduate Network (<http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/oxford-history-graduate-network>), which fosters conversations and collaborations between graduate students. Interdisciplinary activities are available through The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH) (<http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/>).

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.

You will take one compulsory core course, two optional subject courses, and undertake an original research project.

Courses and research are supported by a skills programme for general historical or field-specific training. This structure gives access to a wide range of both general and specialised training within history.

You will work on an original research project throughout the course, under the guidance of your supervisor. You are expected to commit the Easter vacation and Trinity term to archival research and writing. You will be invited to present and receive feedback on your work-in-progress at a workshop specific to this course at the start of Trinity term. If studying part-time, you will be expected to complete the dissertation at the end of Trinity term in year two.

Additional lectures, classes, and tutorials take place in Michaelmas and Hilary terms to provide general and specific training. You will discuss what training you need to undertake your research project with your supervisor. Training available includes document and object handling, palaeography, oral history, text analysis software, GIS software, and statistical analysis.

Language training is also available, with the faculty organising special courses for historians in French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Other modern language courses are available through the University's Language Centre. Courses in Latin and other medieval languages are also available.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements. (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>). Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

Full-time students will complete the course in nine months.

Part-time students will complete the course in eighteen months and are not subject to residence requirements, but are required to attend the faculty in person for classes, skills training, research activities, and supervision. You should expect to be in Oxford for up to two days a week in term time. Distance learning is not available.

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.

You will be able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the Bodleian History Faculty Library which provides dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. You can also access the many college libraries and college archives which house significant collections of personal papers as well as institutional records dating back to the middle ages.

The outstanding print resources of the Bodleian Library are complemented by a wealth of digital resources and important Special Collections and archives, including the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera and the Conservative Party archive.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of History and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Offers will only be made if appropriate supervision is available.

It is usual practice that MSt students have one supervisor, but a co-supervisor will be appointed if additional specialist knowledge is required. One supervisor must be a member of the Faculty of History, but a co-supervisor can be appointed from a different department.

Your supervisor(s) is there to provide advice, guidance, and support throughout. You should arrange to meet your supervisor(s) early in your first term to establish a clear framework for your research and writing, and identify any skills training needed to undertake your research. There is no set timetable for the frequency of future meetings, but it is recommended that you arrange to meet your supervisor several times each term, to discuss progress of your research and writing. You should also agree a timetable for the submission and return of drafts of your dissertation.

If you contact a potential supervisor prior to submitting your application, any indication made by an academic that they may be willing to supervise a potential project, is not a guarantee that you will be offered a place, or that the supervisor in question has capacity to supervise you in that particular year.

Assessment

The Historical Methods course is assessed by an essay on historical methods submitted at the end of Hilary term, at which time you must also submit an annotated bibliography and dissertation proposal.

The optional subject courses are assessed according to the regulations for those courses, at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary terms.

The research project is examined by a 15,000-word dissertation that is submitted at the end of Trinity term.

Course components

Compulsory study

You will take one compulsory core course.

Historical Methods

The Historical Methods course is a fortnightly, two-hour class taught in Michaelmas term and designed to be taught in groups specific to each strand offered by the faculty. You will be taught as a group with other students studying Modern British

History 1850 to the present. The course will include general theoretical and methodological concepts and some specific historiographical topics.

The Historical Methods classes will ask you to reflect upon, and critically discuss, current approaches to major themes in the history of the period, including for example Empire and the Imperial turn in British History, Political Culture, Class and Social Mobility, Selfhood and Identity, Nations and Regions. These themes will be related to debates over cultural and intellectual history, political thought and practice, material culture, the history of emotions, gender history and women's history. You will also be asked to make presentations and discuss the application of discussed methods to your own research topics.

Research Project

You will work on original research project throughout the course, under the guidance of your supervisor. Students are expected to commit the Easter vacation and Trinity term to archival research and writing. You will be invited to present and receive feedback on your work-in-progress at a workshop specific to this course at the start of Trinity term. If studying part-time, you will be expected to complete the dissertation at the end of Trinity term in year two.

Recent topics have included:

- Suburbanisation and class cultures in post-war London
- The national impact of the Lancashire Cotton Famine on popular political opinion
- Ireland and the Second Boer War- Partisan opinion and the ideological agency of the Uitlander
- British children on the Home Front – the experience and agency of children during the Second World War
- Thatcherism and national identity in the 1984-5 Miners' strike

Options

You will choose two optional subject courses.

Subject courses are taught in six, two-hour, tutor-led group classes in Michaelmas and Hilary terms. Part-time students will take an option course in year one and one in year two.

Approximately 30 courses run each year across the faculty.

Recent subject courses particularly relevant to Modern British History 1850 to the present include:

- Approaches to Queer and Trans Histories: Britain 1800-2000
- Europe in the 20th Century, 1914-1989: National, Transnational and International Histories
- Youth Culture, Generational Revolt and Sexual Politics in Britain and Europe since 1945
- Imperial Political Thought in Britain, 1770-1900
- War in the Modern World
- Race, Law, and Empire, c.1600-1850
- The British Marxist historians: Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Thompson

Not every subject course will be on offer every year. You will choose from a list of available courses.

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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/changes-to-courses) and the [provisions of the student contract \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/your-offer-and-contract) regarding changes to courses.

Costs

Annual course fees for the 2026-27 academic year at the University of Oxford

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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£17,910
Overseas	£43,730

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£8,955
Overseas	£21,865

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

Full-time study

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 their faculty to help cover some of these expenses.

Part-time study

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 their faculty 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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/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)) and/or [living costs for family members or other dependants](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs#field_listing_content_content-item--2) ([//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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/family)) are met).

Living costs for part-time study

Your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you will still need to cover your cost of living on a full-time basis for the duration of your course, even if you will not be based in Oxford throughout your studies. While the range of likely living costs for a single, full-time student living in Oxford in the 2026-27 academic year is between £1,405 and £2,105 per month, living costs outside Oxford may be different.

Part-time students who are not based in Oxford will need to calculate travel and accommodation costs carefully. Depending on your circumstances and study plans, this may include the [cost of a visitor visa to attend for short blocks of time](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/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)) (if [visitor visa eligibility criteria](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors) ([//www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors](https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/before/visitors)) 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
Food	£315	£545
Accommodation	£825	£990
Personal items	£160	£310
Social activities	£50	£130
Study costs	£35	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£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](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/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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