

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026-27: MSt in Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

This MSt in Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period aims to provide you with a good general knowledge of Jewish history, religion and culture in the period from 300 BCE to 200 CE, the period of the Second Temple and early rabbinic Judaism.

The course will introduce you to the range of primary sources for Jewish history in this period and equip you with both the understanding and the ability to use a range of historiographical and critical methods in the treatment of such primary sources.

The course consists of instruction in the history and institutions of the Jews and in three specialised areas of Jewish studies which involve close study of particular types of primary texts. You will be expected to have a working knowledge of the relevant languages (Hebrew and Greek) before starting the course, and no time is set aside for basic language instruction.

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.

Teaching for the compulsory core course is covered by a combination of lectures, seminars and tutorials covering the principal sources of the period of the Second Temple and early rabbinic Judaism. The classes provide instruction in the translation and interpretation of most but not necessarily all of the set texts which you are required to study for your specialised papers. General questions about these texts are discussed in tutorials (usually eight for each paper), which normally consists of one-to-one discussion with a tutor of your written work. These may include selected texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Jewish-Hellenistic compositions, and Jewish papyri.

Most teaching for this course will take place in small classes or tutorials and supplemented by recommended lectures and seminars. You are strongly encouraged to attend events (reading groups, seminars, and courses) relevant to your subject of study in other faculties, eg at Classics and/or Theology and Religion. Teaching for the general essay paper and the specialised papers which you will have chosen, is carried out in the first two terms of the course. The third term is primarily reserved for revision, although this may include further tutorials for consolidation. The number of places on the course are very small (1–2 per year) so the aim is to tailor teaching according to the research interests of individual students.

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). (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/after-you-apply/accommodation/residence-requirements>)

You can expect to be engaged in academic work for at least thirty-five hours a week during the full term and to be expected to carry out a considerable amount of work during the vacations.

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.

Oxford has been an important centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies since the sixteenth century. There are unrivalled collections of Hebrew manuscripts, including Hebrew and Aramaic papyri, and printed books in the Bodleian Library. The Leopold Muller Memorial Library (<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries/muller>) is housed in the Clarendon Institute and has a collection specialising mainly in the areas of Jewish history and Hebrew literature.

As well as the Bodleian Library (in particular the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library) and Leopold Muller Memorial Library, you will have access to the Nizami Ganjavi Library part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies which contains Biblical, Jewish, Islamic and other Asian and Middle Eastern works. Adjacent to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is the Ashmolean Museum which, amongst its many other superb collections, houses material on the archaeology and material culture of the Land of Israel.

You will have access to the University's centrally provided electronic resources, the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies' IT Officer, and other bibliographic, archive or material sources as appropriate to the topic. There are common rooms in both the Pusey Lane Building of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the Clarendon Institute where refreshments are available and staff and students can meet.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 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 Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Students normally have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor every fortnight, and more frequently if required and agreed upon with the supervisor.

Assessment

Each of the four papers will be assessed through two written essays of 3,000 words. One paper will be on Jewish history and institutions from 300 BCE to 200 CE, and the other three papers will be chosen from a list provided in the course handbook. A list of essay questions will be made available at the end of the term in which the paper is taught and your written essays must be submitted before the start of the following term.

Further information on the course, and the examination process, can be found in the course handbook via the course webpage on the faculty's website.

Course components

Compulsory study

You will take the core course on Jewish history and institutions from 300 BCE to 200 CE.

Options

The other three papers involve the study of prescribed texts in the following subject areas that are usually offered:

- Ancient Jewish History and Historiography
- The Dead Sea Scrolls
- Jewish-Hellenistic Literature
- Early Rabbinic Literature (Mishnah, Midrash, and Targum)
- Jewish Papyrology

Other text-based papers may sometimes be available, such as the Septuagint, the Ancient Jewish Diaspora, or any other subject approved by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

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](http://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](http://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	£24,800
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 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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](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
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 \(//www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/living-costs) page of our website.

Document accessibility

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