

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2021-22: MSc in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology



About the course

The MSc consists of a structured programme of lectures, classes, and tutorials from October to June, followed by individual study and the writing of a dissertation over the summer. In addition to the teaching provided specifically for the VMMA programme, you will also be able to attend lectures in social anthropology to link your work to broader trends in the discipline.

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Course structure

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). 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 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.

The MSc 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 research of no more than 2,500 words. 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. The word limit is 2,500 words.

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.

Dissertation

You will then use the next three months to research and write a 10,000-word dissertation for submission in September; you will be able to choose and refine the dissertation topic in consultation with your supervisor and other tutors as appropriate, but you will be required to write the dissertation unaided as a piece of independent research.

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.

Students will normally meet with their supervisor at least twice per term, to discuss planning and progress. They also meet with their supervisors for tutorials and in other teaching contexts; students may also contact their supervisor at other times.

Assessment

Papers one and two are assessed by a 5,000-word essay. Paper three is assessed by a portfolio of methods exercises and a research proposal. Paper four is examined by a conventional three-hour unseen examination paper in June.

You will submit a 10,000-word dissertation in August, which will be assessed. You will be required to write the dissertation unaided as a piece of independent research.

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	12 months

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2021-22

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home (UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£19,200
Overseas (including EU)	£29,160

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.

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 2021-22 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 2021-22

	Likely living costs for 1 month		Likely living costs for 9 months		Likely living costs for 12 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£280	£400	£2,520	£3,600	£3,360	£4,800
Accommodation	£655	£790	£5,895	£7,110	£7,860	£9,480
Personal items	£130	£250	£1,170	£2,250	£1,560	£3,000
Social activities	£45	£115	£405	£1,035	£540	£1,380
Study costs	£45	£100	£405	£900	£540	£1,200
Other	£20	£55	£180	£495	£240	£660
Total	£1,175	£1,710	£10,575	£15,390	£14,100	£20,520

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond 2021-22, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 3% each year.

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>).