

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSc in African Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSc in African Studies is a three-term course, designed both as a stand-alone interdisciplinary introduction to current debates about Africa, and as a preparation for doctoral research on Africa. This advanced degree course provides an excellent foundation for those who wish to expand their knowledge of African studies.

There are five components to the MSc in African Studies:

- Core Course One: Methodology, Ethics and Research Strategies
- Core Course Two: Disciplines in African Studies
- Core Course Three: Debates in African Studies
- Option paper
- Dissertation

The teaching on the MSc in African Studies is built around the three core courses listed above.

The first core course examines research methodologies and strategies, including the politics of researching and writing on Africa, and is taught in Michaelmas term through a weekly lecture and seminar.

The second is a weekly lecture and seminar in Michaelmas term, covering the evolution of African states; the rise and fall of colonial rule, social and economic change and the dilemmas of development; politics, globalisation and conflict in the post-colonial era.

The third is taught in Hilary term and covers thematic enquiries into the social, political, cultural and economic dynamics that shape the African continent today; historical perspectives on the present; global context and comparisons between Africa and other regions. The core courses form compulsory elements of this degree and are open only to students taking the MSc in African Studies.

In addition to the three core courses, you will take an optional paper on a particular theme and within a specific discipline. A wide selection of optional papers is available each year. Optional papers are taught in Hilary term, through a weekly lecture and seminar.

Finally, you will write a dissertation on a research topic of your choosing, which must include discussion of the comparative reading, historiography, or theory relevant to the dissertation. You will undertake fieldwork at the end of Hilary term and will be provided with thesis supervision throughout the year.

Students dedicate six hours per week to classes and lectures and they will typically meet their thesis supervisor once every fortnight.

The department runs a weekly seminar series in Michaelmas term and Hilary term which provides an opportunity for networking with other Africanists.

Attendance

The course is full-time and requires attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements.

Resources to support your study

As a graduate student, you will have access to the University's wide range of world-class 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.

The African Studies Centre has a library which holds a collection of relevant books and also off-print sources that you may consult. Other teaching material is available online.

The centre has its own seminar room used for classes and seminars. When this room is not in use you are welcome to use it to meet with other students and discuss your studies.

Several networking events are organised by the department throughout the three-term course. These will allow you to meet colleagues and members of staff, and you will be encouraged to be involved in the organisation of these events.

Supervision

Supervision for the dissertation element of this course runs through the year.

For this course, the allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the African Studies Centre 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 African Studies Centre.

Assessment

In Hilary term you will submit examined essays for core courses one and two. In Trinity term you will submit examined essays for core course three and your chosen option paper.

You will submit your dissertation near to the end of Trinity term.

Changes to this course

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 you commence your course. These might include significant changes made necessary by any pandemic, 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>).

Costs

Annual fees for entry in 2025-26

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£20,230
Overseas	£36,250

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. The dissertation component of the course requires conducting original research. This research can be archival only, or can be theoretical, or based on quantitative analysis of data. Students who wish to collect original empirical material through fieldwork can do so during the Easter vacation, and this is a very popular option. Small grants will be available from the African Studies Centre and you may also be able to apply for fieldwork and research/travel grants from your college. However, students should be aware that the costs of fieldwork - on average around £1,500, but with great variation depending on country - will typically be higher than the funds available, and that they will be required to fund any shortfall. 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 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.

The likely living costs for the 2025-26 academic year 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	£330	£515
Accommodation	£790	£955
Personal items	£200	£335
Social activities	£45	£100
Study costs	£40	£90
Other	£20	£40
Total	£1,425	£2,035

Likely living costs for nine months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£2,970	£4,635
Accommodation	£7,110	£8,595
Personal items	£1,800	£3,015
Social activities	£405	£900
Study costs	£360	£810
Other	£180	£360
Total	£12,825	£18,315

Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£3,960	£6,180
Accommodation	£9,480	£11,460
Personal items	£2,400	£4,020
Social activities	£540	£1,200
Study costs	£480	£1,080
Other	£240	£480
Total	£17,100	£24,420

When planning your finances for any future years of study at Oxford beyond the 2025-26 academic year, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

More information about how these figures have been calculated is available at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/livingcosts.

Document accessibility

If you require a more accessible version of this 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/form>).