

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



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSc in Contemporary Chinese Studies is a three-term, nine-month course offered jointly by the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA) and the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies designed to provide high quality graduate research training with an emphasis on an appreciation of research methods and on deepening your understanding of contemporary China.

You will develop or extend your knowledge and understanding of:

- the key approaches to the social scientific study of modern and contemporary China
- research methods, strategies and ethics that will be of relevance to the social scientific study of China
- critical analysis of sources and ability to present findings effectively, both verbally and in sustained writing exercises
- framing and executing a workable research topic
- interdisciplinary research and its potential.

Modules involve lectures as well as seminar or class discussions, for both of which you will receive reading lists. It is a fundamental component of the Oxford educational system that you engage in individual reading and study in order to broaden and deepen your knowledge of your chosen field. You will also have the opportunity to meet with a supervisor on a one-to-one basis, to help guide you in your dissertation research. In addition to your supervisor, other staff members will be available to advise you on reading, literature and topics. Students normally have some familiarity with Chinese language.

The teaching on the MSc course is built around two core courses. The first core course, Research Methods, will introduce you to the strengths and weaknesses of contrasting discipline-based approaches to Area Studies, and the study of China. It explores both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The second core course, The Study of Contemporary China, teaches foundational knowledge of modern Chinese history, politics and society needed for further study or research in all disciplines, and introduces the different disciplinary approaches to the study of modern China.

In addition to the two core courses you will choose two option courses and complete a research dissertation.

The overall structure of the course is as follows:

- Compulsory core course on The Study of Contemporary China
- Compulsory core course in Research Methods for Area Studies
- Elective papers: Candidates must choose two option papers from a list published annually by the Contemporary Chinese Studies Management Committee
- Research supervision in preparation for a 12,000 word thesis.

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 Dickson Poon University of Oxford China Centre building, based on Canterbury Road, brings together academics drawn from across a range of disciplines, who have in common research and teaching interests related to China. The building has a

lecture theatre, a dining area and a range of conference and seminar facilities. These facilities provide opportunities for interaction with students on a range of China-related degrees as well as lectures and other academic activities.

The Bodleian Chinese Studies Library and the Bodleian Social Science Library are the main read-only and lending services respectively, for the material you will require. Reading lists and copies of course PowerPoint slides will be made available to you on Canvas across the academic year. In addition to this, there is a world-renowned collection of Chinese rare books housed in the Bodleian Oriental collections and the superb collections of the Ashmolean Museum.

Supervision

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

Students would normally expect to have 9-10 meetings with their supervisors from the start of the course until thesis submissions at the end of week 6 of Trinity Term.

Assessment

Assessment for Research Methods comprises two parts, each weighted equally: a take-home submission in the collection and analysis of qualitative data at the end of Michaelmas Term, and a take-home submission in quantitative analysis at the end of Hilary Term.

The Study of Contemporary China core course is assessed by one unseen exam at the beginning of Hilary Term. Option courses are assessed by either unseen exams or officially submitted essays in Trinity Term.

Finally, from the start of Michaelmas term and continuing across the next two terms, including during the Easter vacation, until submission on Friday of Week 6 of Trinity term, you will research and write a dissertation on a topic of your choosing, subject to approval by the Graduate Studies Committee. Your research topic for your dissertation will be formally approved by your supervisor and Course Director during Michaelmas 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	£23,400
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. 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 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>).