Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26:
MSc in Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	12 months

About the course

The MSc in Modern Middle Eastern Studies is a twelve-month, taught master's course, offered jointly by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA).

The MSc in Modern Middle Eastern Studies offers research training for students already familiar with the Middle East region and its languages.

The course provides a common foundation in the methods and disciplines relevant to the study of the Middle East. It provides intensive training in several fields of knowledge based on a combination of lectures, tutorials and essay writing. This will allow you to develop research and writing skills with training in appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches, through supervision of a dissertation on a subject of your choice. The MSc teaches both qualitative and quantitative methodologies through assessed work.

To complement your studies, the Middle East Centre (MEC) serves as both the University's Middle East Studies centre and as a Centre of St Antony's College. It hosts a weekly seminar, and an annual lecture - The George Antonius Annual Lecture in trinity (summer) term.

The course offers two tracks: a language and a non-language one.

Language track

The language track is designed for students who already have intermediate to advanced -level ability in Arabic and who wish to further develop these skills through intensive classes. Students on the language track take language classes throughout the three terms of the course, plus two optional papers taken in the second and third terms.

Non-language track

The non-language track is designed for students who already have full research fluency in at least one of the languages of the region - Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish - through being either a literate native speaker, or possessing a degree in the language (a course specifically focusing on language and acquisition of the capacity to read untranslated texts in a Middle-Eastern language, not a disciplinary or area studies degree in which the applicant has taken language classes).

If you are a non-native speaker and you think you might qualify for the non-language track and you do not have such a degree, you should explain specifically why you think you qualify, eg through extensive formal study and experience in the region outside the scope of a degree program.

If you do not have formal language-study credentials, and particularly if you want to be seen as a prospective non-language-track student (including all Hebrew, Persian and Turkish applicants), you may wish to submit writing samples that demonstrate the ability to use untranslated sources (preferably written) in a Middle Eastern language.

On the non-language track, you will take three optional papers, one in each of the three terms.

Option papers

Students on both the language and the non-language track will choose from a list of optional papers published annually which are taught through a combination of lectures, tutorials, and non-assessed formative (non-assessed) essays. There will typically be eight hours of lectures/classes and eight hours of tutorial per option, but contact hours vary by option according to the instructor's methods. For example, some instructors will organise their meetings through sixteen hours in seminar format.

Tutorial options offered regularly include the following:

- Authoritarian Politics in the Middle East and North Africa
- History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- History of the Maghreb since 1830
- History of the Middle East, 1860-1970
- Islamism and Modern Islamic Movements
- Main Themes in Israeli Politics and Society

- Mass Media in the Middle East
- Modern Islamic Thought
- Modern Turkish Literature: Texts and Contexts
- The Political Economy of the Middle East and North Africa
- Clerical Institutions in Contemporary Iran
- Politics of the Maghreb
- Politics of the Middle East
- Social Anthropology of the Middle East

You may wish to confirm with the course coordinator that a specific option listed above will be available to your cohort, as scheduled sabbaticals or other research leave may sometimes interrupt the annual teaching schedule.

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 resources of the Middle East Centre (MEC) are available to all members of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Its library holds around 35,000 books in Western and Middle Eastern languages, with an emphasis on the 18th century to the present. The MEC holds an extensive collection of journals and periodicals, and receives newspapers in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew. It holds a rare book collection and an extensive microfilm and microfiche collection. The MEC Archive is home to the Private Papers Collection and photographic archive.

Aside from the MEC, there are three other libraries that will be of use to students on the MSc Modern Middle Eastern Studies course. The Nizami Ganjavi Library, part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, houses the collection of books and periodicals in Western and Middle Eastern languages with a particular emphasis on the period from the rise of Islam to the early modern period. The Charles Wendell David Reading Room of the Weston Library is the means of access to the extensive Asian and Middle Eastern manuscript collection as well as reference works and secondary sources received on deposit by the Bodleian Library. Finally, Wadham College library houses a collection of Persian books.

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 is a computing room for the use of graduate students in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as a common room 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. A supervisor may be found outside the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Assessment

Students in both tracks take assessed qualitative and quantitative research methodology modules, and both tracks write a dissertation which will be undertaken independently under the supervision of a member of faculty tutor with relevant expertise. Preparation for the dissertation will take place through the Research Methods course and relevant optional papers and submitted by the beginning of September. Fieldwork for the dissertation is not required, but it is not discouraged for those students able to carry it out.

Optional papers will be examined through essays at the end of each term.

The language paper for the language track will be examined by a timed examination at the end of Trinity 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.

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	£41,250

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 the MSc in MMES that entail additional costs beyond fees and living costs. However, as part of students' course requirements, they choose a dissertation. Depending on their choice of topic and the research required to complete it, this may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips, although this is considered unlikely for MSc students. Graduates will need to meet these additional costs, but may be able to apply for small grants to help them 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.

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).