

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Global and Area Studies



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Global and Area Studies draws on the multidisciplinary and area expertise of the Oxford School of Global and Area Studies' (OSGA) seven regional centres, to deliver an innovative Comparative Area Studies programme, which addresses contemporary global challenges through developing innovative multidisciplinary approaches.

The overall objectives of the MPhil are to:

- provide you with a multi-/interdisciplinary and comparative understanding of different regions of the world;
- allow you to work on key thematic global challenges from a comparative area studies perspective;
- equip you with the conceptual and theoretical expertise to interrogate the notions of 'area', 'comparative area' and the implications for disciplinary enquiry;
- embed inter-cultural understanding and global citizenship in the study of area;
- develop research methods and skills that are appropriate for the comparative study of areas and regions including through the development of new digital approaches for area studies; and
- promote a wider international network of area studies scholars and practitioners.

Course structure

The course is structured around six study components, facilitating an interdisciplinary approach to comparative study across two or more regions and a critical approach to area studies.

Courses are taught through a combination of lectures and classes. You will be required to submit essays and make class presentations. Through a Research Methods element, you will receive relevant training in methodologies to enable you to carry out research and writing for your 30,000 word thesis. The thesis is expected to incorporate a global, transnational or comparative area studies approach and/or to address key cross-region global challenges from an area studies perspective.

Option courses will vary from year to year.

In addition, lively programmes of seminars, workshops and conferences throughout OSGA will complement the MPhil and you are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities.

The six study components are:

1. Theories and Approaches in Global and Area Studies
2. Comparative Area Studies
3. Research Methods for Social Sciences and Humanities
4. Area Studies Immersion
5. Area Studies Options
6. Comparative Area Studies Research Thesis.

First year

In your first year you will study the following:

- Core Course One - Competing Approaches in Area Studies
- One Comparative Area Studies course from a list of options
- Research Methods: Qualitative Methods
- One additional research methods course: Quantitative Methods or Historical Methods
- One Area Studies course from a list of options.

You will also submit a research proposal in preparation for the thesis submission. Your supervisor will help you to identify a viable topic for your thesis and offer guidance regarding secondary literature, primary sources, appropriate methodologies, any fieldwork planned, and a research and writing timetable. The supervisor will also oversee your integration into OSGA and the course. With this support you will present an essay setting out your proposed research and you will present this proposal in a thesis workshop during Trinity term of the first year. This provides an additional opportunity for you to receive feedback from academic members of staff and peers. At this point, if your thesis topic has progressed in a different direction to that anticipated, your supervisory arrangements may be reviewed. By the end of the Trinity term, you will be expected to have

developed a thesis outline, identified the means (eg field or archival work) through which you will gather your primary sources, and agreed a timetable for the summer and Michaelmas term work with your supervisor.

Second year

In your second year, you will study:

- Core Course Two - Global Area Studies Seminar
- Two Area (or Comparative Area, or other approved) Studies courses from a list of options.

During this year, you will undertake a period of area studies immersion. Immersion options include but are not necessarily limited to: a period of overseas or domestic fieldwork research for your thesis; the development of advanced language skills; auditing relevant substantive courses delivered at a partner university or approved alternative; an internship period at a relevant organisation.

During the second year, you will also present your work in progress thesis in research seminar workshops or webinars convened for this purpose. Further arrangements for feedback and comments on drafts will progress through a series of meetings held by arrangement between you and your supervisor during the Hilary term of the second year. You will also submit your thesis in Trinity term.

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 Bodleian Social Science Library (SSL) is the main library for Area Studies. The SSL is housed on the ground floor of the Manor Road Building, and is open seven days a week during term-time. The library offers a variety of study spaces including graduate study rooms, individual study carrels, and group discussion rooms.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision is the responsibility of the Oxford School of Global and Area 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.

You will initially be allocated a supervisor according to your initial research and subject interests. The supervisor will typically share your broad interests and will monitor your overall progress. Most students have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor three to four times per term.

Assessment

The MPhil in Global and Area Studies is assessed using a range of formative and summative assessments. Whilst many OSGA option courses are assessed through written examinations, other elements of the course involve a range of different assessment modalities.

Core courses

- Competing Approaches to Area Studies (year one): Assessed by an end of year written examination, allowing for integration of the course content with the rest of the programme.
- Global and Area Studies (year two): Assessed by essay submission in your second year.

Research Methods Courses

- Qualitative Methods: Assessed by submission in Michaelmas (Autumn) term in your first year.
- Quantitative Methods: Assessed by submission in Hilary (Spring) term in your first year.
- Historical Research Methods: Assessed by submission of an essay in Hilary (Spring) term of your first year.

Research Proposal

A research proposal is to be submitted during Trinity term of your first year for formative purposes, providing an important building block in your thesis preparation.

Comparative Area Studies courses

Courses are typically assessed by an end of year written examination or essay submission.

Option courses

Courses are typically assessed by an end of year written examination or essay submission.

Research Thesis

The thesis will be submitted in Trinity term of the second year of the course.

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	£27,520
Overseas	£32,960

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, please note that, depending on your choice of immersion, research topic and the research required to complete the thesis, you may incur additional expenses, such as travel expenses, research expenses, and field trips. You will need to meet these additional costs, although a GAS Immersion Grant will be available for students to apply to and you may be able to apply for small grants from your 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>).