

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



### Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

### About the course

The MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies is a two-year (six-term) course intended for students from all social science and humanities backgrounds. The course provides intensive training in a Middle Eastern language, training in research methods and topics relevant to the study of the Middle East.

The MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies accepts students who are complete beginners in a Middle Eastern language (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish). The course also accommodates students in Turkish and Arabic at an advanced level as well as Arabic at an intermediate level. If you already have research-level proficiency in one of these languages you will be required to take a different language.

Intensive language training takes place through all six terms of the course. This training takes place in classes and language laboratories. In addition to language training, in the first term you are expected to attend the weekly MPhil Qualitative Research Methods for Modern Middle Eastern Studies lecture and seminar. In addition to the lecture, this seminar is an interactive forum in which you are expected to present arguments and to respond to the lecture, associated readings, and each other's formative essays, which are a crucial element of teaching, but do not count toward the student's final marks. In addition to Qualitative Research Methods, you will be encouraged to attend other lectures and seminars offered by the teaching staff during the first term. You will complete and submit a take-home written assignment based on the Qualitative Research Methods Seminar after the end of the first term which will form the first of two elements of your Qualifying Examination. The second element of the Qualifying Examination is a language qualifying examination taken at the end of the first year (first three terms) of the course.

In the second term, in consultation with your supervisor, you will attend a series of tutorials for one of three options to be offered for the final examination. These are taught in the second, third and fourth terms of the course. Tutorials typically involve weekly meetings and between four and six formative essays, arranged between you and your tutor. Most options have an associated lecture series, either concurrent with the tutorials or in some cases delivered in a different term, which you are expected to attend.

Tutorial options offered on a regular basis 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
- Political Islam, 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.

Language training continues in the third term, and you will have tutorials for the second of your three options. You will at this stage begin your thesis preparations, meeting with staff members to identify a thesis supervisor. You will sit the qualifying language examination at the end of the third term.

During the long vacation from the end of June to early October you are urged to pursue intensive language training in an appropriate course in the region, political circumstances permitting. Information on the different courses can be obtained from the relevant language instructors, in consultation with supervisors. You are encouraged to take the opportunity provided by study abroad to conduct research for your thesis in the region.

In the first term of the second year, you will continue language training, and have tutorials for your third option. Over the Christmas vacation research and writing of the thesis should continue. In the second term, you will have further language training and attend an MPhil research seminar where you will present your research findings to your peers and faculty. A complete draft of your thesis should be ready for the supervisor to assess by the end of the second term. By the second week of the final term, you will submit your thesis. The final examination is held at the end of the final term.

To complement your studies, you will have the option to attend seminars and lectures at The Middle East Centre (MEC), which serves as both the University's Middle East Studies centre and as an Area Studies Centre of St Antony's College. It hosts a weekly seminar, and an annual lecture, The George Antonius Annual Lecture in Trinity (summer) 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 resources of the Middle East Centre (MEC) are available to all members of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The MEC 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 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 MPhil 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 University 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. University supervision and thesis supervision are separate roles. Students can secure thesis supervision from a member of staff other than their University supervisor. Under exceptional circumstances a thesis supervisor may be found outside the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

### **Assessment**

You are evaluated in five areas: a language examination, three written examinations on course options taught through tutorials and lectures, and a thesis.

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	£22,520
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

You will normally be expected to spend the summer after your first year attending an intensive language course in the Middle East. The faculty estimates the cost of attendance to be between £1,400 and £3,000, depending on the country and the fees charged by the various institutes that provide such courses. This estimate includes tuition fees, living expenses (both housing and food) and airfare. The faculty currently provides some funding toward these costs.

## 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
<b>Food</b>	£330	£515
<b>Accommodation</b>	£790	£955
<b>Personal items</b>	£200	£335
<b>Social activities</b>	£45	£100
<b>Study costs</b>	£40	£90
<b>Other</b>	£20	£40
<b>Total</b>	£1,425	£2,035

### Likely living costs for nine months

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

### Likely living costs for twelve months

	Lower range	Upper range
<b>Food</b>	£3,960	£6,180
<b>Accommodation</b>	£9,480	£11,460
<b>Personal items</b>	£2,400	£4,020
<b>Social activities</b>	£540	£1,200
<b>Study costs</b>	£480	£1,080
<b>Other</b>	£240	£480
<b>Total</b>	£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](http://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](mailto:graduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk)) or via the online form (<http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/ask/form>).