

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MPhil in Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	21 months

About the course

The MPhil in Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period aims to provide you with a good general knowledge of Jewish history, religion and culture in the period from 300 BCE to 638 CE, the period of the Second Temple and the Talmud.

The course will introduce you to the range of primary sources for Jewish history in this period and equip you with both the understanding and the ability to use a range of historiographical and critical methods in the treatment of such primary sources.

The course consists of instruction in the history and institutions of the Jews and in three specialised areas of Jewish studies which involve close study of particular types of primary texts. You will be expected to have a working knowledge of the relevant languages (mainly Hebrew and ancient Greek) before starting the course, and no time is set aside for basic language instruction.

Teaching for the compulsory core course is covered by a combination of lectures, seminars and tutorials covering the principal sources of the period of the Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. The classes provide instruction in the translation and interpretation of most but not necessarily all of the set texts which you are required to study for your specialised papers. General questions about these texts are discussed in tutorials (usually eight per course), which normally consist in one-to-one discussion with a tutor of your written work. These may include selected texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Jewish-Hellenistic compositions, and Jewish papyri.

The other three papers involve the study of prescribed texts in the following subject areas that are regularly offered:

- Ancient Jewish History and Historiography,
- The Dead Sea Scrolls,
- Jewish-Hellenistic Literature,
- Early Rabbinic Literature (Mishnah, Midrash, and Targum),
- Jewish Papyrology.

Other text-based papers may sometimes be available, such as the Septuagint, the Ancient Jewish Diaspora, or any other subject approved by the Faculty.

Most teaching for this Master's course will take place in small classes or tutorials, normally given by the course convenor, but also supplemented by recommended lectures, classes and seminars taught by other colleagues. You are encouraged to attend events (reading groups, seminars, and courses) relevant to your subject of study in other faculties, eg at Classics or Theology and Religion. Numbers of students on the course are very small (1–2 per year) and so teaching is tailored according to the needs and interests of individual students.

You can expect to be engaged in academic work for at least thirty-five hours a week during the full term and to be expected to carry out a considerable amount of work during the vacations.

Most work for the written examinations is normally completed in the first year of the course, so that most of the second year can be devoted to the dissertation, but some text work may be carried over into the second year if this is convenient. You will be required to choose, in consultation with your supervisor, the special subjects that you wish to study during your first term so that set texts can be approved by the Faculty Board towards the end of that term.

After approval by the Faculty Board, set texts will be published in the Course Handbook, which can be accessed via the faculty's course webpage. There is less urgency in choosing a thesis topic, but you should have a general idea of the field you wish to work in by the middle of your second term so that thesis supervision can be arranged by your general supervisor. You should have a clear idea of your thesis topic by the end of the Trinity term in your first year so that you can work on your thesis over the summer vacation.

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.

Oxford has been an important centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies since the sixteenth century. There are unrivalled collections of Hebrew manuscripts, including Hebrew and Aramaic papyri, and printed books in the Bodleian Library. The Leopold Muller Memorial Library is housed in the Clarendon Institute and has a collection specialising mainly in the areas of Jewish history and Hebrew literature.

As well as the Bodleian Library (in particular the Bodleian Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library) and Leopold Muller library, you will have access to the Nizami Ganjavi Library part of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies which contains Biblical, Jewish, Islamic and other Asian and Middle Eastern works. Adjacent to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is the Ashmolean Museum which, amongst its many other superb collections, houses material on the archaeology and material culture of the Land of Israel.

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 are common rooms in both the Pusey Lane Building of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and the Clarendon Institute where tea and coffee is 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. Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor may be found outside the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Assessment

The course is examined at the end of the sixth term by four written essays (3,000 words each, submitted at the end of each term) and by a thesis of 30,000 words.

At the end of the first year of the course, you will be required, unless specifically exempted by the Faculty Board, to sit a qualifying examination to confirm your suitability to continue to the second year.

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	£17,250
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 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.

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>).