

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in English (1830-1914)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in English (1830-1914) is designed to serve both as an autonomous degree for students wishing to pursue more advanced studies in English literature, and as a solid foundation for doctoral research.

The MSt in English Literature (1830-1914) offers you the opportunity to expand your knowledge and critical understanding of nineteenth-century literature and culture. The responses of writers to cultural change in this period, provoked—and continue to provoke—animated debate about language and literature, aesthetics and politics, and the objects and purposes of cultural criticism.

English Faculty staff teaching on this course have a wide variety of interests, and encourage a wide range of critical perspectives. Areas of special strength include:

- the history and practice of cultural criticism,
- literature and science,
- English and world literature,
- transatlantic cultural exchange,
- theatre and drama,
- life writing,
- material culture,
- comic and nonsense literature,
- aestheticism and decadence,
- poetry and poetics.

Individual profiles are available on the English Faculty website.

Course structure

The course consists of four main components spread over three academic terms, through which you have the opportunity to pursue interests within your chosen MSt strand, as well as across period boundaries.

In the first two terms, you will take a core course (A) and a course in book history and theories of text (B), both tailored to your MSt. You will also choose two courses from a wide range of options (C).

Under the guidance of a specialist supervisor you will also research and write a dissertation, which is submitted in the final term.

You will also have the opportunity to hear lectures and papers by leading writers, critics, and theorists from inside and outside the University. You are encouraged to participate in the many research seminars and reading groups that run throughout term time, many of which are coordinated by graduates themselves. There is an active and lively graduate organisation funded by the faculty, English Graduates at Oxford (EGO), that organises study skills, training and career development seminars, as well as social events and conferences.

A. Core course: Literature, Contexts and Approaches

This is the core course and is compulsory for all students. It is taught in weekly classes in the first term.

Classes on literature, contexts and approaches introduce representative key texts and current debates on the literature and cultural history of the period.

There is no formal assessment for the A Course, but written work and/or oral presentations may be required.

B. Core course: Bibliography, Theories of Text, History of the Book, Manuscript Studies

This is a compulsory, assessed course, taught via a range of lectures and seminars in the first two terms.

It introduces students to the methodology and theory of bibliography, manuscript studies, textual scholarship and book history.

C. Special options

Students take two special option courses, one in the first term and one in the second term. Options change from year to year, depending on the availability of faculty members and on their current teaching and research interests.

The courses are taught in weekly, small group seminars.

You are not constrained to follow option courses in the designated period and, indeed, option courses often traverse the boundaries of the broad periods and subject groups.

Recent C course options for this strand have included 'Literary London, 1820-1920', 'Victorian Futures', 'Beastly Victorians', 'Literatures of Empire and Nation 1880-1935', 'Henry James and his Literary Legacies' and 'Citizens of Nowhere: Literary Cosmopolitanism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century'.

D. Dissertation

You will write a dissertation on a subject of your choice, but related to the work you have been doing over the year. You will be assigned to a member of academic staff who will act as your supervisor.

Students will have the opportunity to present their dissertation ideas at a one-day conference that they organise, usually at the start of 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 Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities

The Faculty of English Language and Literature will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford due to open in 2025, which will accommodate seven faculties, two institutes, a new library, a large number of well-equipped teaching and seminar rooms, and performance and arts venues. The faculty will have its own centre and social hub within the building which will also facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative work. At the heart of the building will be a large atrium – called the Great Hall – which will be a beautiful space, bringing light into the building, and serving as a space for informal work, relaxation, meeting with friends, taking breaks, having refreshments – and much more.

The library, part of the Bodleian Libraries, will house lending collections for English. There will be 340 general reader seats, and around 80 graduate study seats – with a further 320 formal and informal study seats throughout the building outside the library. Open-shelf lending collections will be complemented by access to electronic resources, scan on demand, and material requested from the Bodleian's Collections Storage Facility. As well as the Library's extensive staffed hours, there will be a 24/7 study space, including smart lockers for self-collect of borrowable items out of hours. Subject support is provided by a team of subject librarians.

Further library and archival resources

The Bodleian and college libraries hold wonderful collections of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts and printed texts from Britain, America and beyond, many of them by men and women who studied at Oxford or spent a period of their lives in the city. They include materials relating to Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, 'Lewis Carroll', Arthur Hugh Clough, 'Michael Field', G. M. Hopkins, Benjamin Jowett, John Keble, Edward Lear, John Henry Newman, Walter Pater, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Ruskin, Mary Shelley, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Anthony Trollope, Queen Victoria, Mrs Humphry Ward, Oscar Wilde. The Benjamin Disraeli papers preserve the great bulk of Disraeli's private papers and correspondence; Somerville College holds the major part of the private library of John Stuart Mill and one of the best Edward Lear archives in the UK.

There are extensive collections relevant to women's education in the period, and the Oxford History Faculty provides regular updates on Bodleian and other archival sources for nineteenth-century women's history. There are also fascinating

collections of periodicals and ephemera, including the John Johnson Collection of printed materials about popular entertainment, the book trade, print making, advertising, and observations of politics, race, class, crime and punishment, and much else. The Bodleian has recently digitised its complete collection of the photographs of William Henry Fox Talbot. The Ashmolean Museum is home to a rich variety of Victorian and Edwardian paintings and art objects, with Thomas Combe's collection of Pre-Raphaelite art at its centre. It also holds excellent collections of objects from Asian, African and other cultures for students with comparative interests.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of English 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 English.

Assessment

The MSt is assessed via the submission of four pieces of coursework. In addition to the dissertation, you will submit three essays – one at the end of the first term, and two at the end of the second term – relating to the 'B' and 'C' courses that have been taken. All course work will be completed by the end of the second term (Hilary term), leaving the summer term (Trinity term) to complete the dissertation, which is submitted in June. The outcomes of the MSt examination are pass, fail, merit, or distinction. Candidates must achieve a pass mark on each element of the examination to be awarded the MSt.

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	£16,900
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>).