

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Film Aesthetics



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Film Aesthetics equips you with the skills and knowledge necessary for analysing film as an art form. It concentrates on film criticism, detailed film analysis, film theory and philosophy insofar as they relate to film aesthetics. It teaches the history and the contemporary developments in the scholarly literature relating to these aspects. It encourages analytical, thoughtful and imaginative engagement with film as a medium and with individual films.

The MSt in Film Aesthetics is a degree in the humanities run by the Humanities Division.

The course concentrates on film from the point of view of aesthetics, including:

- the detailed study of film style and form, and the articulation of it in writing - for example, narrative structure, use of camera, colour, performance, sound, music, editing and composition;
- matters of philosophical aesthetics, and their particular application to film; and
- classic and contemporary film theory and philosophy as they relate to film aesthetics.

Many master's courses concentrate on historical, cultural, geographical, or political approaches to film and may only contain an aesthetic component. This course is dedicated to the specialist study of film form, and film as an art form. Applicants should note that historical, cultural, geographical, and political approaches to film study may feature in courses and in written work, but they are not prioritised in the teaching and assessment of the degree.

The course runs from late September to June, from a week before the first term to the end of the last term.

A week before term officially begins, you will attend a practical film workshop for one week. Although the degree itself is not practical, this week acts as an introduction to film techniques and allows the group to work with each other before the degree begins. This part of the course is not assessed.

In the first two terms the course is taught by seminar only, although there will be individual meetings with tutors to discuss essay preparation and feedback. There will be two seminars per week and they will vary in length depending on the module.

The first term of the course will look at the analysis of film style and film form, train techniques of film analysis and look at key concepts in film form, film criticism, film theory and philosophy.

The second term consists of four short segments, each covering a particular aesthetic topic. Each segment is compulsory and there are no optional components. This part of the course provides you with the opportunity to engage with four different areas of specialisation.

The courses for the second term change from year to year but may include:

- aesthetics of Italian cinema
- aesthetics of African cinema
- aesthetics of contemporary Chinese film
- screening cities
- the film-philosophy of Stanley Cavell

In the third term the course is taught by individual supervision focussing on the dissertation.

You will be expected to read quite extensively for seminars and supervisions, and also view films.

Academics who teach on the course have previously included:

- Professor Andrew Klevan (Convenor)
- Dr Reidar Due (Convenor)
- Professor Nikolaj Lubecker
- Professor Guido Bonsaver
- Professor Margaret Hillenbrand
- Professor Stephen Mullhall
- Dr Janina Schupp

- Dr Alexandra Grieve

Opportunities for exchange are provided by the interdisciplinary communities fostered within individual colleges, which also offer you dedicated support by means of personal advisors. The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH) offers a stimulating range of interdisciplinary activities.

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

You will be based in the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, a brand-new building at the University of Oxford expected 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. Each faculty will have its own centre and social hub within a 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 be open to all students, and will house lending collections for English, Film Studies, History of Medicine, Internet Studies, Music, Philosophy and Theology. 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.

The building will enable the recently-established Cultural Programme to flourish, with a 500-seat world class concert hall, a theatre, experimental performance venue, 100-seat cinema, and exhibition hall. Many of these venues will support academic and student-led activities, as well as performances and creative works by professional artists. The cultural programme will enrich the lives of students, and will also provide opportunities to get involved.

Supervision

Students can expect three one-hour supervisions with their dissertation supervisor in Trinity Term. The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Steering Committee for the MSt in Film Aesthetics, in consultation with faculties in the Humanities Division 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 Humanities Division.

Assessment

Assessment is by two essays and a dissertation. The dissertation, written in the final term, provides an opportunity to work with a tutor in your chosen area of specialisation.

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	£18,770
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>).