

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time Only
Expected length	9 months

About the course

The MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation is a nine-month, interdisciplinary course designed to give you critical, theoretical and research expertise in the intersecting fields of comparative and world literature and translation studies.

To take this course, you must be able to work with two languages and literatures, out of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, modern Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Sanskrit, Spanish, Turkish, and Urdu. If you are interested in studying two European languages comparatively, you may also wish to apply for the MSt in Modern Languages.

The course is attached to Oxford's research centre in Comparative Criticism and Translation (OCCT) and builds on the recent growth in scholarly awareness of the importance of translation to comparative and world literary study. This is what is meant by 'critical translation': not translator training, but rather an interest in the role played by translation and re-writing in literary history, and an alertness to the uses of translation in critical practice.

You will be able to participate in the rich research culture of OCCT. This includes the lively postgraduate-led discussion group, regular research seminars and workshops, the public events of Oxford Translation Day, and lectures by the Weidenfeld Visiting Professor in Comparative European Literature (recent incumbents have included Javier Cercas, Ali Smith, Mario Vargas Llosa, Elif Shafak and Umberto Eco).

The academic mentor and the graduate teaching assistant who are attached to the course will help you to orient yourself in the research culture of OCCT and the wider university; and you will present your dissertation work-in-progress at a seminar day organised jointly with the OCCT discussion group in Trinity term.

You will also be able to attend seminars and other events from across the faculties of Medieval and Modern Languages, English Language and Literature, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, thereby encountering a wide range of leading writers, critics, and theorists from within and beyond the University.

If you wish, you may also choose to study another language at the Oxford University Language Centre. This opportunity is free of charge for students taking the MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation, though it is not an assessed part of your MSt course.

Course structure

The MSt is comprised of a core course, two option courses and a dissertation. Alongside the weekly teaching sessions for the core and option courses, you should expect to undertake approximately 30 hours of self-directed study each week.

Core course

The core course will introduce you to key topics in comparative and world literature and translation studies, and give you the skills needed to develop your own arguments and pursue original research. It is taught by a weekly lecture and seminar in weeks one through six of Michaelmas (autumn) and Hilary (spring) terms. You will give presentations in the seminars (usually twice each term), and write a short practice essay at the end of Michaelmas term: these formative assignments will not affect your degree result.

The list below provides an indication of the topics covered in the core course, though please note that it may vary from year to year:

- histories of comparison
- theories of comparison
- worlds of comparison
- figures
- genres and forms
- migration, travel and encounter
- translation studies and comparative literatures
- translation and transmediality
- translation and circulation

- translingual and multilingual texts
- untranslatables and universals
- translational critical practices.

Option courses

You will take one option course in Michaelmas term and one option course in Hilary term. These options are chosen from a wide range available in the faculties of Medieval and Modern Languages, English Language and Literature, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The option courses available change from year to year, but the following list is indicative of the types of topics which may be offered by participating faculties:

- Travel, Belonging, Identity: 1550-1700
- Utopian Writing from More to Hume
- Victorian and Edwardian Drama 1850-1914
- 19th and 20th Century Spanish Women Writers
- 20th Century German Drama and Theatre
- Contemporary Brazilian Fiction
- Francophone Literature
- Gender and Representation in Russian Culture from 1800
- Greek Literature & Culture after the 19th century: Themes, Texts and Contexts
- The Body in 20th- and 21st-Century Spanish American Fiction
- The Italian Novel in the 19th and 20th Century
- Translation and Adaptation: Texts, Histories, Practices
- Topics in Classical Japanese Poetry
- Womanhood in Korean Literature
- Authority and Rebellion in Modern Arabic Literature
- Chinese Fiction After Tiananmen
- Topics in Modern Hebrew Literature 1900-present.

Teaching for an option consists of regular one-to-one or small-group meetings, with feedback being given as appropriate. Your options must focus on literature in different languages (eg Arabic in one term, English in the other; or French in one term, Russian in the other). Some options may not have a language requirement, or may span more than one language: in such cases, the course convener will advise you so that your choices cover an appropriate range.

Dissertation

Your dissertation may be on any topic in comparative literature and/or literary translation studies that involves two or more languages. You will work closely with a supervisor, starting at the end of Michaelmas term and continuing through Hilary term, though the bulk of the work will be concentrated in Trinity (summer) term. Your dissertation will be due in at the end 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

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.

Assessment

In addition to the dissertation, you will be assessed on the core course by an essay written at the end of Hilary term and by written work for each of the two option courses, to be submitted after the end of the term in which the option has been taught.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the steering committee for the MSt in Comparative Literature and Critical Translation 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.

Most students have the opportunity to have termly catch-ups with the course convenor, as well as up to six hours of contact time/support from their dissertation supervisors, the majority of which will take place in late Hilary and Trinity terms.

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 the course that entail additional costs beyond fees and living expenses. However, it is possible that work towards the dissertation, depending on the choice of topic, may require additional expenditure, for example on travel to a library where an archive is held.

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>).