

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2025-26: MSt in History (Modern British History 1850-present)



Course facts

Mode of study	Full Time	Part Time
Expected length	9 months	21 months

About the course

The MSt in History (Modern British History 1850-present), will introduce you to British political and intellectual history in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, political culture more broadly conceived, and the social and cultural history of the period.

The MSt is designed to improve your practical and intellectual grasp of research processes, ability to conceptualise and engage with historical problems, and enlarge your understanding of the historical and historiographical context in which your own research is set. The course can serve as either free-standing graduate qualifications, or as a springboard to doctoral study. Students wishing to proceed to doctoral study will be encouraged to develop their doctoral proposals during the first few months of the MSt. Skills training and option-choice are flexible and open-ended, to allow you to gain the knowledge and training needed to complete your research project.

The Modern British history group at Oxford has particular strengths in the history of women, the history of architecture, and the history of childhood, with outstanding print and digital resources of the Bodleian Library and important Special Collections, including the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera and the Conservative Party archive.

There are several faculty research seminars focusing principally on the period and interdisciplinary networks that bring historians of the period into conversation with scholars from other disciplines. Further information about Modern British history research and activities can be found through the faculty website.

You are encouraged to engage with the faculty's lively research culture of seminars, workshops, and discussions groups, which are programmed throughout each week, and sessions often involve leading international scholars. The faculty also runs the Oxford History Graduate Network, which fosters conversations and collaborations between graduate students. Interdisciplinary activities are available through The Oxford Centre for Research in the Humanities (TORCH).

Course structure

You will take two compulsory core courses and an optional subject course, as well as undertake an original research project. These courses are supported by a skills programme for general historical or field-specific training. This structure gives access to a wide range of both general and specialised training within the field of history.

Core courses

1. Sources and Historiography

This is a weekly 1.5 hour seminar in Michaelmas term. You will be asked to reflect upon and critically discuss current approaches to major themes in the history of the period, including for example Empire and the Imperial turn in British History, Political Culture, Class and Social Mobility, Selfhood and Identity, Nations and Regions. These themes will be related to debates over cultural and intellectual history, political thought and practice, material culture, the history of emotions, gender history and women's history. You will also be asked to make presentations and discuss the application to your own research topics of the research methods presented in plenary sessions. Part-time students will take this course in year one.

2. Theory and Methods

The format is a 1.5 hour weekly seminar in Michaelmas term. It will cover current methodological and theoretical approaches. Students and course tutors will choose six of these from a syllabus of nine. Part-time students will take this course in year two.

Optional subject course

Options are taught in a tutor-led, group setting in Hilary term. You will choose one option course from a list and this will be taught in six weekly two-hour classes during Hilary term. Part-time students will take an option course in year one. Options particularly relevant to Modern British history include:

- Selfhood in History: 1500 to the present
- Europe in the 20th Century, 1914-1989: National, Transnational and International Histories

- Youth Culture, Generational Revolt and Sexual Politics in Britain and Europe since 1945

More information on options is available through the faculty website. Not every optional subject listed may be on offer every year.

Research Project

You will work on original research project throughout the course, under the guidance of your supervisor. Students are expected to commit the Easter vacation and Trinity term to archival research and writing. You will be invited to present and receive feedback on your work-in-progress at a workshop specific to this course at the start of Trinity term. If studying part-time, you will be expected to complete the dissertation at the end of Trinity term in year two.

Recent topics have included:

- Suburbanisation and class cultures in post-war London
- The national impact of the Lancashire Cotton Famine on popular political opinion
- Ireland and the Second Boer War- Partisan opinion and the ideological agency of the Uitlander
- British children on the Home Front – the experience and agency of children during the Second World War
- Thatcherism and national identity in the 1984-5 Miners' strike

More details of core and optional papers are available on the course webpage of the faculty's website (see the Further information and enquiries section for further details).

Skills Provision

Additional lectures, classes, and tutorials take place in Michaelmas and Hilary terms to provide general and specific training. You will discuss what training you need to undertake your research project with your supervisor. Training available includes document and object handling, palaeography, oral history, text analysis software, GIS software, and statistical analysis.

Language training is also available, with the Faculty organising special courses for historians in French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Other modern language courses are available through the University's Language Centre. Courses in Latin and other medieval languages are also available. Further details on language learning can be found on the faculty website.

Attendance

The course can be studied full-time or part-time with both modes requiring attendance in Oxford. Full-time students are subject to the University's Residence requirements. Part-time students are required to attend course-related activities in Oxford for a minimum of 30 days each year.

Full-time students will complete the course in nine months.

Part-time students will complete the course in eighteen months and are not subject to residence requirements, but are required to attend the faculty in person for classes, skills training, research activities, and supervision. You should expect to be in Oxford for up to two days a week in term time. Distance learning is not available.

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.

You will be able to draw on the specialist resources offered by the Bodleian History Faculty Library which provides dedicated support and training courses for all graduates. You can also access the many college libraries and college archives which house significant collections of personal papers as well as institutional records dating back to the middle ages.

The outstanding print resources of the Bodleian Library are complemented by a wealth of digital resources and important Special Collections and archives, including the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera and the Conservative Party archive.

Supervision

The allocation of graduate supervision for this course is the responsibility of the Faculty of History and it is not always possible to accommodate the preferences of incoming graduate students to work with a particular member of staff. Offers will only be made if appropriate supervision is available.

It is usual practice that MSt students have one supervisor, but a co-supervisor will be appointed if additional specialist knowledge is required. One supervisor must be a member of the Faculty of History, but a co-supervisor can be appointed from a different department.

Your supervisor(s) is there to provide advice, guidance, and support throughout. You should arrange to meet your supervisor(s) early in your first term to establish a clear framework for your research and writing, and identify any skills training needed to undertake your research. There is no set timetable for the frequency of future meetings, but it is recommended that you arrange to meet your supervisor several times each term, to discuss progress of your research and writing. You should also agree a timetable for the submission and return of drafts of your dissertation.

If you contact a potential supervisor prior to submitting your application, any indication made by an academic that they may be willing to supervise a potential project, is not a guarantee that you will be offered a place, or that the supervisor in question has capacity to supervise you in that particular year.

Assessment

The core courses are assessed by a Methodology Essay and you must also submit an annotated bibliography and dissertation proposal, all to be submitted in January.

The optional subject course is assessed according to the regulations for that course, usually an assessed essay or exam, at the end of Hilary term.

The research project is examined by a 15,000-word dissertation that is submitted at the end of Trinity term.

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

Full-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£16,900
Overseas	£41,250

Part-time study

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home	£8,450
Overseas	£20,625

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

Full-time study

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.

Part-time study

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.

If you are studying part-time your living costs may vary depending on your personal circumstances but you must still ensure that you will have sufficient funding to meet these 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>).