

# MSt in Medieval Studies



Course handbook 2024-25

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## Cover Image

Hall of Stokesay Castle (Shropshire): the trees for the roof were felled in 1284-1290; parts of the staircase also date from the late C13th; medieval floor tiles from Stokesay; images to guide prayer, from London, British Library, Royal 12.C.xii, written by the 'Ludlow scribe' in the early fourteenth century, perhaps at Stokesay.

# 1. Foreword

## 1.1 Statement of Coverage

This handbook is designed as a guide for postgraduate students undertaking the MSt Medieval Studies course. It applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas term 2024. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

This handbook is to be read in conjunction with the General information for interdisciplinary programmes students, also to be found on Canvas <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/281618>.

## 1.2 Version

This is version 1 of the Handbook for 2024-25, published in September 2024.

## 1.3 Disclaimer

The *Examination Regulations* relating to this course are the 2024-25 version and are available at

<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=mosinmedistud&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1>

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the *Examination Regulations* then you should follow the *Examination Regulations*. If you have any concerns please contact the Graduate Studies Administrator

[interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk)

The information in this handbook is accurate as at September 2024, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at [www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges](http://www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges). If such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook, together with a list of the changes, and students will be informed.

## 1.4 Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to Oxford, and look forward very much to meeting you in person. We hope that you will enjoy your time in this enormously stimulating environment, and that you will find the course both challenging and exciting.

The University of Oxford is home to an almost unprecedented number of medieval scholars across a wide range of disciplines: history, medieval languages and literature, musicology, history of art, theology, oriental studies, English literature, and archaeology. These are brought together under the umbrella of the Medieval Studies programme

(<https://torch.ox.ac.uk/medievalstudies>). You will encounter scholars working on a wide range of material, engaging with a variety of approaches, and covering an array of geographical areas. There are also plenty of occasions for these scholars to collaborate, to explore the resonances between their different areas of expertise. It is a very exciting place to study!

Oxford can be a confusing place. Not least, trying to figure out the relationship between colleges, faculties and division is a challenge. The Medieval Studies course itself is complex, precisely because it involves an exciting and unusual array of components, drawn from a large number of different faculties. If you have questions, do ask! The course convenor, course tutors, postdoctoral mentor, and your dissertation supervisors are all here to help you navigate your way through your course. Queries can also be directed to the course administrator, [interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk).

This handbook offers a comprehensive guide to the structure of your course: the teaching, assessment and administrative arrangements. It also contains useful information on other aspects of life in Oxford as a postgraduate in Medieval Studies.

Helen Gittos

## 1.5 Useful contacts

### Course Contacts

If you have any queries, one of the following people should be able to help:

**Karina Beck** – Course Administrator

Email: [interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk)

Phone: 01865 615264

**Dr Helen Gittos** – Course Convenor

Email: [helen.gittos@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:helen.gittos@history.ox.ac.uk)

Phone: 01865 271574

**Tristan Alphey** – Academic Mentor

Email: [tristan.alphey@stx.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tristan.alphey@stx.ox.ac.uk)

Any member of the course team may be contacted by email to arrange a meeting. Your course convenor and academic mentor are also available at specific times each week for discussion, please see the timetable for more details.

### Other contacts

You may also find the following contacts helpful:

#### IT Services

Online enquires: <https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/help/request>

Phone: 01865 (6)12345

#### Library

Online enquiries: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask>

#### Disability Advisory Service

Email: [disability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.ox.ac.uk)

## 1.6 Governance and Oversight of the Course

The MSt Medieval Studies is overseen by the Humanities Interdisciplinary Programmes Committee, which consists of the courses' directors and is chaired by the Associate Head for Education of the Humanities Division; the divisional masters' student representative is invited to attend. The Committee meets once each term.

The management of the programme is the responsibility of a steering committee, which consists of the course directors, senior academics from participating faculties, and two student representatives.

## 1.7 Key Places

Teaching for your courses may take place in any of the participating Faculties, or in any College.

A searchable map of Oxford University locations is available here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/visitors/map>

We anticipate your core lectures and seminars will primarily take place in the following venues.

Exam Schools, 75-81 High Street, Oxford

**Interdisciplinary Masters' Room, [Seminar Room 11, St Anne's College](#)**

This room also serves as common-room and study space when it is not being used for interdisciplinary MSt teaching.

During term time, Seminar Room 11 at St Anne's College is reserved for the sole use of the Humanities Interdisciplinary Masters programmes.

The bookings calendar can be viewed here: [24-25 Interdisciplinary Seminar Room Bookings.xlsx](#).

Whilst priority is given to teaching bookings (you may well find some of your seminars or tutorials take place in this venue), the space remains open for use by Interdisciplinary Masters students whenever it is not required for teaching.

If you would like to reserve the whole space during an available slot for academic purposes (e.g. hosting a discussion group, film screening...), please make a request via email to [interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:interdisciplinary@humanities.ox.ac.uk) at least 2 working days in advance.

Otherwise, at all times when the room appears free on the calendar, students can drop in to use it as a study space/common room. Please leave the space as you found it, taking any rubbish with you, and returning any furniture, if moved, to its original layout (as it may have been set out for an event/seminar).

Access to the building and room, is via your University card; on your first visit to the venue you will need to ask the Porters in the lodge to activate your card. If you require lift access (the room is on the top floor), please do also request the lift key from the Porters Lodge.

## The Faculties participating in the course are:

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies: <https://www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>

Faculty of English Language and Literature: <https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/>

Faculty of History: <https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/>

Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages: <https://www.mod-langs.ox.ac.uk/>

Faculty of Music: <https://www.music.ox.ac.uk/>

Faculty of Theology and Religion: <https://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/>

## 1.8 Important Dates

### Dates of Full Term

The dates of Full Term in the academic year 2024-25 are as follows:

Term	From	To
Michaelmas 2024	Sunday 13 October 2024	Saturday 7 December 2024
Hilary 2025	Sunday 14 January 2025	Saturday 9 March 2025
Trinity 2025	Sunday 21 April 2025	Saturday 15 June 2025

Where there is reference to '1<sup>st</sup> week', '6<sup>th</sup> week', etc., this applies to the weeks of Full Term, during which classes run. '9<sup>th</sup> week', '10<sup>th</sup> week', etc. are the weeks immediately after Full Term. The week immediately before Full Term is commonly known as '0<sup>th</sup> week'. By convention, Oxford weeks begin on a Sunday.

### Teaching dates

Details of your core seminars and lectures are detailed in this handbook (see Teaching and Learning, section 3), or may be confirmed early in Michaelmas Term or at your induction sessions.

Dates and times for your option course classes should be communicated to you by your host faculty or option tutor; these may have to be discussed and agreed with your option tutors and fellow students at the beginning of term to avoid clashes with core teaching.

## Summative Assessment Deadlines

Your summative assessments will be due as follows. The submission times and dates must be strictly adhered to; please see Assessment (section 4), and the Exam Conventions (Appendix A) for more details.

Assignment	Date	Time
Dissertation	Tuesday of Week 9, Trinity Term	12 noon
Option Assessments	Please refer to the host faculty to confirm submission deadlines and examination regulations for your Michaelmas, Hilary courses	
Palaeography / Codicology	Please refer to the host faculty to confirm submission deadlines and examination regulations for your Palaeography or Codicology course	

## Other important deadlines

Please also note the following important dates. Unless otherwise indicated, the required information should be sent to the course administrator.

Action required	Date
Submit Dissertation Title/Topic for Approval	Friday of Week 6, Hilary Term

## 2. Course Content and Structure

The Master of Studies in Medieval Studies is a 9 month course at FHEQ Level 7.

### 2.1 Course Aims

The programme is designed either to be taken in preparation for doctoral work, or to offer a degree in preparation for professional work in which knowledge of medieval society, politics, and culture may be an advantage.

The course aims to:

- provide intensive training in one of the languages used in the Middle Ages, and to develop reading skills to attain a research proficiency
- offer skills-based training in palaeography and codicology, enabling students to read medieval documents
- develop an in-depth understanding of medieval studies and a broad expertise in the intellectual disciplines through which medieval topics may be studied
- enable students to pursue particular areas of specialisation through a wide range of optional courses
- foster skills in research, writing, analysis and interpretation, through a combination of lectures, tutorials, essay-writing and supervision of a thesis on a subject of the student's choice
- provide students with the opportunity either to learn a new skill in an area of study which was underrepresented in their undergraduate syllabus, or to explore in more depth an area of medieval cultural heritage in which they may hope to progress to independent research

### 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will develop:

- the techniques, skills and knowledge required to contribute to the study of the European Middle Ages; to become familiar with the range of approaches, to evaluate them critically, and to engage in advanced discussion in the field
- the ability to carry out research, involving conceptual innovation and the identification and use of new information; acquire the experience of investigating and writing up an extended research project
- specialist and general skills of relevance to the continued professional development of a cultural understanding of the past, and which are also transferable into a wide range of employment contexts and life experiences
- the ability to work collaboratively in seminar and discussion contexts, as well as to work independently

### 2.3 Course Structure

The Master of Studies in Medieval Studies is a 9-month course at FHEQ Level 7. It is administered by the Humanities Division and several Faculties contribute to it. The degree is



aimed at students who wish to follow courses in more than one discipline in medieval studies, and who are keen to extend their skills.

It equips students to draw on a variety of disciplinary approaches in their study of the Middle Ages, placing emphasis on language training as well as on the development of skills in palaeography and codicology. It also offers the opportunity to undertake the acquisition of a medieval language not previously studied.

The MSt Medieval Studies has the following compulsory elements:

- A. Medieval Language Course**
- B. Research Methods Workshop**
- C. Interdisciplinary Seminars**
- D. Palaeography Course**
- E. Two Option Courses**, one in Michaelmas Term, one in Hilary Term.
- F. Dissertation**

### **A. Medieval Language Course**

All students must take **medieval** language classes, chosen from a range that may include (Medieval) Latin; Old English; Old Norse; Old French; Old Occitan; Old High German; Middle High German; Old Irish; Middle Welsh; (Byzantine) Greek. Please note that not all language options will be available every year; the majority of students will choose Latin. Language teaching will be provided by Faculty Members and Language Instructors from around the University. Please note that teaching norms, modes of delivery and assessment will vary according to the existing arrangements of participating faculties; students should not therefore expect absolute uniformity across faculties. In many cases there will be in-class or end-of-course tests, and the class teacher will report to the Board of Examiners on attendance, participation, and performance at the end of the academic year. 'Satisfactory participation' will constitute a pass in a language class.

### **B. Research Methods Workshop**

In Michaelmas and Hilary Terms candidates will follow a series of compulsory, but relatively informal, workshops on research methods and bibliography convened by the Course Convenor. Classes are designed to address a number of specific issues encountered by researchers in medieval studies at master's level (e.g. research methodologies and interdisciplinarity, how to compile bibliographies and use bibliographical tools, presentation of work in scholarly form and style, structuring extended pieces of writing), but are also intended to be responsive to, and shaped by, student concerns; students will have the opportunity to raise individual issues for discussion and make informal presentations on work in progress.

In addition, candidates should discuss with the programme convenor, or their supervisors, at the beginning of Michaelmas Term, which of the specific induction sessions to research methodologies and resources provided by individual faculties and departments they should attend.

### C. Interdisciplinary Seminars

Candidates will be expected to follow a range of seminars in relevant disciplines over the academic year. Oxford is extraordinarily rich in these, and a special medieval studies seminar booklet is issued at the beginning of each term giving full details. This booklet is also available via the TORCH Oxford Medieval Studies (OMS) website:

<http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/medievalstudies> .

Attendance at the Medieval Church and Culture seminar during Trinity Term is compulsory: students will be expected to present work in progress on their dissertations.

Apart from these seminars, a special week involving additional activities will take place in Michaelmas or Hilary; an external guest lecturer (the Medieval Studies Visiting Lecturer) with expertise in interdisciplinary study will normally offer a plenary lecture and conduct a graduate workshop. Candidates are expected to participate in these events.

### D. Palaeography/Codicology Course

All students must take one of a range of palaeography or codicology classes available, which will usually include Latin Palaeography/Codicology, options offered by the Medieval and Modern Languages Faculty and options offered by the English Language and Literature Faculty.

Language and Palaeography/Codicology courses are designed to equip you with new research skills for further study, offering the opportunity for interaction with a variety of primary manuscript sources, developing analysis of their internal construction (binding, decoration, script, etc.) as well as their external history (provenance, ownership, transmission, etc.).

Please note that teaching norms, modes of delivery and assessment will vary according to the existing arrangements of participating faculties; students should not therefore expect absolute uniformity across faculties.

### E. Option Courses

You will take one option course in **Michaelmas Term** and one option course in **Hilary Term**. These must be in different disciplines: students cannot opt for two History options, or two English options, for example. Option Paper classes, together with the dissertation, allow you to develop your understanding of a variety of primary sources, handling of secondary sources, methodological or conceptual approaches to addressing evidence, ability to construct and sustain cogent arguments in an extended essay form, and to present this in a scholarly manner.

The options are predominantly provided by tutors from the faculties that participate in the course, and may enable you to work alongside students following other Masters courses within those faculties. Please note that you are not guaranteed to get a place on your preferred options: options may be over-subscribed, others may not run because of insufficient numbers. In such circumstances, the course convenor will make every effort to

ensure that you are able to take options that are appropriate to your interests. Candidates should also keep in mind that their Options must be taken from two different subject areas.

Option courses will usually be taught through tutorials or small seminars, but teaching practices may vary across options as best accommodates the content being taught, or the number of students taking the course. As a general rule of thumb, you may expect to see your Option tutors for c. 4-6 small group sessions, for which you will produce pieces of formative written work and/or oral presentations. Your tutor will explain the precise number/combination of pieces.

## F. Dissertation

All students will write a dissertation of up to 12,000 words on an interdisciplinary topic.

### Supervision arrangements

You will have been assigned two supervisors from different subject-areas to direct your intended individual research. Your supervisors' primary responsibility is to advise you on the programme of work necessary to complete your dissertation or thesis. To this end, they should maintain a general overview of your course work and academic development. They should help you to identify and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to complete your dissertation or thesis, and to further your aims for study or employment, insofar as these build upon the programme of graduate study. The balance between the two supervisors will differ from case to case, depending on your topic and methodology. It may be roughly equal, or one may be significantly more involved than the other.

### Dissertation topic

The Examiners will expect the dissertation to be clearly distinct from the Option course essays in either chronological or geographical range, or scholarly issue. The dissertation is expected to include some study of original source material, whether in printed, manuscript, or other form, and, crucially, to have an interdisciplinary aspect.

The requirement for the dissertation to be interdisciplinary must be demonstrated by each student, but the way in which this is done will be different in each case. As they stand, the regulations require that the dissertation include: 'Reference to scholarship and evidence from more than one discipline. Use of more than one disciplinary methodology or conceptual framework in an integrated manner.'

While working on two languages (or two regions for that matter) is not *in itself* sufficient to satisfy the regulation, it is recognized that the scholarly traditions and approaches to research in two languages *can* provide various opportunities to use different methodologies or concepts. Each student must explain or demonstrate how more than one way of thinking and/or methodology has been brought together in their dissertation.

### Planning your research

The following notes for students and supervisors provide rough guidance – individual progress rates will vary, depending (for example) on the level of your background knowledge; whether you need to acquire new technical skills; the speed at which you identify a workable topic; the accessibility of sources; the time needed to process data; the

extent to which the research programme makes feasible the drafting of chapters while research is in progress, etc.

*Michaelmas term:*

- Meet supervisors
- Identify any training needs
- Plan lecture/seminar attendance and a programme of secondary reading necessary to set the scene for proposed research
- Initial exploration of primary sources
- Discuss subject and nature of the research proposal you plan to submit as part of your examination
- Expect to spend one day a week on preparing your dissertation project, and arrange to see your supervisors two, three or four times after the initial meeting

*End of Michaelmas Term:*

- Discuss whether applying for doctoral research in Oxford or elsewhere, and if so nature of doctoral research proposal (deadline for submission of the application mid-January)

*Christmas vacation*

- Proceed, against the background of continuing work as above, to refine definition of dissertation topic
- Definitively identify and establish familiarity with primary and secondary sources central to your proposed master's research
- If applying for re-admission to doctoral programme, AHRC funding, or other funding requiring a doctoral research proposal, work with supervisor to refine that well in advance of the January application deadline

*Hilary Term*

- Finalise plan of work remaining for dissertation and agree this with supervisors
- Revise the structure of your master's dissertation in the light of this ongoing exploration
- Expect to step up work on your dissertation project to about two days a week
- Again, arrange to see your supervisor for about three sessions

*Easter vacation/Trinity Term*

- Complete research, modifying plan and structure as necessary in process
- Produce draft – make sure draft is in supervisors' hands in plenty of time for them to comment (supervisors are not expected to comment on drafts received later than Monday of 6th week)
- Revise in light of comments: make the most of the opportunity to work full-time on your dissertation up to submission, extensively consulting original sources and carefully revising your dissertation, giving it a tightly-argued structure and presenting it in idiomatic English which makes it accessible to a non-specialist reader. This is important: neither of your supervisors can mark your dissertation, so if you work on a highly specialised topic (in which Oxford may have only one expert, who has been supervising you) it is in your interests to make your writing comprehensible to a trained medievalist in an allied, but not necessarily identical, area.

**No dissertation supervision will be available after the end of Week 8, Trinity term.**

## 3. Teaching and Learning

### 3.1 Organisation of Teaching and Learning

This section of the handbook aims to clarify how teaching and learning will take place on the MSt in Medieval Studies.

As an interdisciplinary programme, the degree is administered by the Humanities Division, who is responsible for the organisation and delivery of the course. The teaching is delivered by academic staff who are based in faculties or departments. The course is managed by the MSt in Medieval Studies Steering Committee.

The role of colleges is primarily supportive. You will be allocated a college advisor who will provide a focal point for your relationship with the college, and general academic or pastoral advice and assistance throughout your course of study.

The convenor of the MSt will provide you with regular information as to your progress and, where problems arise, provide guidance and assistance as to necessary corrective action.

You will be allocated a dissertation supervisor who will support you in the writing of your dissertation through a pattern of regular meetings and ensure that you work to a planned framework with clearly agreed stages.

The academic mentor supports the work of the programme convenors/ director by fostering group identity among students on the course, and will act as mentor for your studies and research.

If you have any issues with teaching or supervision please raise them with the course convenor, or with the administrators, as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly.

#### Induction

At the start of the academic year, in the week before the beginning of formal classes (this is called 0<sup>th</sup> week), there will be induction sessions to introduce you to the course and to life as a Masters student at Oxford. Here is the timetable:

Session	With	Day	Time	Venue
<b>Library Induction/Workshop</b>	Andrew Dunning	Wednesday, Week 0	3-4pm	Horton Room, Weston Library
<b>Introductions and Course Overview with Convenor</b>	Helen Gittos	Friday, Week 0, 11 October	9.30-11am	Colin Matthew Room, Radcliffe Humanities Building, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Rd, OX2 6GG
<b>IT Services</b>	Induction videos and guidance can be accessed at a time that suits you here: <a href="https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/inductions-students">https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/inductions-students</a>			

<b>Careers</b>	Information on services: <a href="http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/how-we-help">www.careers.ox.ac.uk/how-we-help</a> and events schedule: <a href="http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/term-planner">www.careers.ox.ac.uk/term-planner</a>
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## Michaelmas Term

Teaching	Day	Weeks	Time	Venue
Research Methods Workshop	Wednesday	2, 4, 5, 8	11.30-1.00pm	Examination Schools, Room 5a
Option Course	As determined by option tutor/host faculty			
Palaeography Course	As determined by option tutor/host faculty			
Language Course	As determined by language tutor			
<b>Other Key Dates/Events</b>				
Dissertation	First meeting with supervisor			
Medieval Studies Visiting Lecturer	Annual Medieval Studies lecture and accompanying workshop(s), dates to be confirmed			

## Hilary Term

Teaching	Day	Weeks	Time	Venue
Research Methods Workshop	Tuesday	tbc	tbc	tbc
Option Course	As determined by option tutor/host faculty			
Palaeography Course	As determined by option tutor/host faculty			
Language Course	As determined by language tutor			
<b>Other Key Dates/Events</b>				
Dissertation	Submit title by Friday of week 6			

## Trinity Term

Teaching	Day	Weeks	Time	Venue
Language Course	As determined by language tutor			
<b>Other Key Dates/Events</b>				
Medieval Church and Culture Seminar	Present dissertation work, date to be confirmed			

## 3.2 Expectations of Study

Students are responsible for their own academic progress. You should treat the course as a full-time job. You might therefore expect to work 35-40 hours per week during term.

In your preparation and learning, aim to be self-motivated and to pursue your interests. At Oxford, perhaps more than in some other institutions, it is hoped that you will develop your

own ideas and share them in seminar discussion, supported by appropriate evidence. In written work, try to develop your own argument, in dialogue with existing views, so that you are bringing something distinctive to the topic being explored. Seminars and tutorials are conceived as a discussion among equals, where everyone – students and tutors – collaborates in sharing thoughts and moving towards intellectual clarity.

## 4. Assessment

### 4.1 Assessment structure

The course is assessed through:

- Dissertation, 40% of final overall mark
- Michaelmas term Option essay, 20% of final overall mark
- Hilary term Option essay, 20% of final overall mark
- Palaeography or Codicology assessment, 20% of final overall mark

Deadlines for submissions are in section 1 above (Summative Assessment Deadlines).

### 4.2 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is provided in the following ways:

- A. Oral feedback in the course of option classes
- B. Written and oral feedback on language work
- C. Oral feedback on dissertation progress in the course of the Research Methods Workshops and the Medieval Church and Culture seminars in Trinity Term.

### 4.3 Summative Assessment

Full details of the procedures for summative assessment are given in the Examination Conventions and Regulations. **You should read these carefully before embarking on any examined work.**

**Examination regulations** are the formal register of the structure of the examinations of the course.

The examination regulations are at

<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=mosinmedistud&srchYear=2024&srchTerm=1&year=2024&term=1>

Marks for individual assessments will be released with the publication of the degree outcome. You will receive assessors' feedback on the dissertation at the end of the examination cycle.

**Examination conventions** are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, use of viva voce examinations, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-length work.

The examination conventions are in **Appendix A** and on **Canvas**

<https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/281618>



The structure and timetable for the examined elements of the course are as follows:

Assessment	Deadline	Time
Dissertation	Tuesday of Week 9, Trinity Term	12 noon
Option Essays	Please refer to your host faculty for submission deadlines.	
Paleaography Assessments	Please refer to your host faculty for submission deadlines.	

### Paleaography Assessment

Methods of assessment will vary according to the practices of the faculty within which the candidate is working for the Palaeography/Codicology element. The work produced will thus be assessed according to the regulations laid down by the relevant faculty. This unit accounts for 20% of the overall mark.

### Options

Option assessments are to be submitted and assessed according to the regulations of the relevant Faculty; remember that your submissions, as a Medieval Studies MSt candidate, must be between 5000 and 7000 words, even if the standard wordcount for that option (for the 'natives' of a given faculty) is longer. Candidates should make themselves aware of relevant deadlines for submission and presentation guidelines by referring to the course handbook of the Faculty under whose auspices the Option is convened, and by consulting the convenor/tutor of the individual Option Paper.

For guidance on how to present your work, including referencing styles, refer to the Appendix C of this handbook.

### Dissertation

The dissertation should consist of up to 12,000 words. It must be accompanied by a short abstract which concisely summarises its scope and principal arguments, in about 300 words.

Questions about what is, and is not, included in this wordcount are natural and important, and the following list should resolve any ambiguities:

- Your bibliography, title page and abstract do not count.
- The table of contents and list of illustrations (if there is one) do not count.
- Any table and figure titles and captions do not count.
- Any tables and images do not count.
- Translations of text in languages other than English do not count (but the text in the original language does).
- Footnotes do count.

- Appendices do count, but in this case special permission can be sought to exceed the wordcount (see below).

Part of the exercise of writing a dissertation lies in devising a topic that can be effectively handled within the word limit. However, in exceptional circumstances – for example if a large section of your dissertation is taken up with lengthy appendices – you can apply to the Chair of Examiners for permission to exceed the word limit, by contacting the Course Administrator. This should be supported by an email from your supervisor and should be done in good time (early in Trinity Term).

You should agree a definitive title/topic with your supervisor(s) and submit this to the course administrator for approval by **week 6 of Hilary Term**. Significant modification of your dissertation title is only possible up to fourteen days before the submission deadline, and requires the permission of your supervisor. Once permission has been obtained, the new title should be sent to the Graduate Studies Administrator by email. We do not need to be informed about very minor changes of wording done for the sake of style: if you want to change (for example) ‘An Investigation of Frederick II’s multilingualism’ to ‘*Stupor Mundi: An Investigation of Frederick II’s multilingualism*’, the change is unimportant; common sense applies.

**Please note that no dissertation supervision will be available after the end of Week 8, Trinity term.**

#### 4.4 Good Academic Practice and Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence. For further guidance, please see Appendix B below. More information about plagiarism may be found here: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism)

Properly referencing your sources in written work can not only help you to avoid breaking the University's plagiarism rules, but can also help you strengthen the arguments you make in your work. Advice on referencing may be found in Appendix C below. Further general guidance on referencing may be found here:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/referencing>

#### 4.5 Entering for University examinations

The Oxford Students website gives information on the examination entry process and alternative examination arrangements: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams).

## 4.6 Submitted Work

Deadlines for submitting your assessments are above.

All assessments will be submitted online via Inspira. Ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the Oxford students website ([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission)).

### Please note:

- The submission time (noon) and date must be strictly adhered to unless you have been given permission by the Proctors (via your college) to submit at a later time and date. Penalties will be imposed by the Board of Examiners for work that is submitted after the deadline.
- **No acknowledgments are to be included** in essays or the dissertation. This to minimise any possibility of students being identified; the process of assessment examination is anonymous.

### Electronic submission

- All submitted files must be in PDF format.
- Hardware or internet connectivity problems unrelated to the Inspira system will not be accepted as mitigating factors for late submission. **Make frequent backups of your work, and give yourself plenty of time to make your submission.**
- You will need to use the course coversheet (provided online) as first page of the work. Remember to put your **candidate number, assignment title and word count on the front page** of your work. **Do not** add your name, student number, college or supervisor to any part of the work.
- Take time to check your submission before submitting it online. Make absolutely sure that the file you are submitting is the correct and final version.

### Word limits:

- **Include**
  - footnotes/endnotes
  - quoted text
  - appendices
- **Exclude**
  - title
  - table of contents
  - Illustration and table captions/ legends
  - bibliography

## 4.7 Problems completing assessments

There are a number of University processes in place to help if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments, or if you experience technical difficulties with an online exam or submission. Full information is available on the Oxford students' website ([www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-)

[assessment](#)). If you are late in handing work in, or believe you will not meet a deadline, you should consult your college Senior Tutor as a matter of urgency.

## **4.8 Examiner's Reports**

Past examiner's reports can be accessed on the course Canvas site <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/281618>

# Appendix A – Examination Conventions

## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the examination conventions applying to the MSt in Medieval Studies for the academic year 2024-25. The supervisory body for this course is the Humanities Division.

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.

## 2. Rubrics for individual papers

This is outlined in Section 4 of this Handbook.

The course will be assessed in the following elements:

1. **Medieval language course:** compulsory attendance at classes and seminars of
2. **Interdisciplinary Research Methods seminars and workshops:** compulsory attendance
3. **Palaeography and/or codicology:** examination as determined by the teaching faculty
4. **Two option courses:** the examination conventions that apply to each option are those of its teaching faculty, usually an essay between 5,000 and 7,000 words
5. **Dissertation:** of between 10,000 and 12,000 words

## 3. Marking conventions

### 3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

70-100	Distinction
65-69	Merit
50-64	Pass
0-49	Fail

### 3.2 Qualitative criteria

#### Written assessments

**Distinction** quality work will demonstrate:

- Originality and a wide knowledge of relevant material
- Very clear and subtle expression and exposition

- Very well-focussed illustration
- Very good scholarly apparatus and presentation
- An elegant and incisive argument with a deep understanding of the issues involved

**Merit** quality work will demonstrate:

- Some originality and good knowledge of relevant material
- A clear argument with a good understanding of the issues involved
- Very clear expression and exposition
- Well-focussed illustration
- Good scholarly apparatus and presentation

**Pass** quality work will demonstrate:

- A good understanding of the issues and grasp of relevant literature
- A good structure and appropriate scope
- Clear expression and exposition
- Appropriate illustration
- Due attention being paid to scholarly apparatus and presentation

**Failing** work may:

- Show an insufficient depth of knowledge and understanding of issues
- Lack argumentative coherence
- Display an inadequate use of illustration
- Show problems relating to scholarly presentation

In addition to the above, a dissertation will also demonstrate:

**Distinction** quality work:

- The ability to pose and engage with sophisticated questions

**Merit** quality work:

- The ability to pose well-judged questions

### **3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks**

Each submission will be marked by two markers. The marks will fall within the range of 0 to 100 inclusive.

Each initial marker determines a mark for each submission independently of the other marker. The initial markers then confer and are encouraged to agree a mark. Where markers confer, this does not debar them from also re-reading where that may make it easier to reach an agreed mark.

In every case, the original marks from both markers are entered onto a marksheet available to all examiners, as well as the marks that result from conferring or re-reading.

If conferring or re-reading (which markers may choose to do more than once) does not reduce the gap between a pair of marks where a mark can be agreed between the markers, the submission is third-read by an examiner. A third marker will be appointed in all cases of differences of 10 marks or over between the marks awarded by the first two markers.

The third reader of a submission will adjudicate between the two internal marks, and their mark will be the final one.

The expectation is that marks established as a result of third readings would not normally fall outside the range of the original marks. However, it is permissible for the third examiner to recommend to the Board of Examiners a final mark which falls outside the bounds of the two existing marks. Such a recommendation will only be approved by the Board if it can provide clear and defensible reasons for its decision.

### **3.4 Scaling**

Scaling is not used in the assessment of this course.

### **3.5 Short-weight convention**

There are no formal penalties for work that falls short of the minimum word limit. However, work that is significantly under-length is likely to be inadequate in its coverage and content, and will be so marked. As a rough guideline, less than three-quarters of the maximum word limit is likely to be inadequate.

### **3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission of submitted work**

The scale of penalties agreed by the Board of Examiners in relation to late submission of assessed items is set out below. Details of the circumstances in which such penalties might apply can be found in the Examination Regulations (Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14.)

<b>Late submission</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
After the deadline but submitted on the same day	-5 marks
Each additional calendar day	-1 mark
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks
More than 14 days late	Fail

Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass.

### **3.7 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter in submitted work**

The Board has agreed the following tariff of marks which will be deducted for over-length work:

<b>Percentage by which the maximum word count is exceeded:</b>	<b>Penalty</b> (up to a maximum of –10)
Up to 5% over word limit	-1 mark
Up to 10% over	-2
Up to 15% over	-3
Each further 1-5% over	-1 further mark

### **3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice in submitted work**

In the case of poor academic practice, and determined by the extent of it, the board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available factual information, or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passage(s) draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passage(s) are 'grey literature' i.e. a web source with no clear owner.

If a student has previously had marks deducted for poor academic practice, or has been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism, the case will be referred to the Proctors. Also, where the deduction of marks results in failure of the assessment and of the programme, the case will be referred to the Proctors.

Serious and extensive cases of poor academic practice will be referred to the Proctors.

## **4. Progression rules and classification conventions**

### **4.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Pass, Fail**

The Humanities Division encourages examiners to mark up to 100.

The Board of Examiners has adopted the following criteria:

Over 85 : 'Highest Distinction'

Outstanding work of publishable quality demonstrating most of the following: exceptional originality, critical acumen, depth of understanding, subtle analysis, superb use of appropriate evidence and methodology; impeccable scholarly apparatus and presentation.

80-84 : 'Very High Distinction'

Excellent work with outstanding elements showing many of the following qualities: originality, wide and detailed knowledge, compelling analytical thought, excellent use of



illustration to support argument, sophisticated and lucid argument; excellent scholarly apparatus and presentation.

75-79 : 'High Distinction'

Excellent work with a deep understanding of the issues involved, originality, wide knowledge of relevant material, elegant and incisive argument, clarity of expression and exposition, the ability to pose and engage with sophisticated questions; very good scholarly apparatus and presentation.

70-74 : 'Distinction'

Excellent work with a deep understanding of the issues involved, originality, wide knowledge of relevant material, elegant and incisive argument, clarity of expression and exposition; very good scholarly apparatus and presentation, but may exhibit uneven performance.

65-69 : 'Merit'

High quality work showing some originality, a good understanding of the issues and grasp of relevant literature; good structure and scope, lucid analysis supported by well-focused illustration; good scholarly apparatus and presentation.

60-64 : 'High Pass'

Good work showing a fair grasp of issues and relevant literature; good scope, structure and illustration; clear expression and exposition; appropriate attention to scholarly apparatus and presentation.

50-59 : 'Pass'

Competent work presenting relevant material and analysis; appropriate scope, structure and illustration; fairly clear expression and exposition; adequate scholarly apparatus and presentation.

Below 49 : 'Fail'

Inadequate work which may be limited by insufficient depth of knowledge, understanding of issues or relevant literature; or by inadequate use of illustration, poor argument or organisation of material; or lack of clarity; or problems relating to scholarly presentation.

## 4.2 Final outcome rules

Weighting of each assessment:

Palaeography / Codicology assessment	20%
Michaelmas term option paper	20%
Hilary term option paper	20%
Dissertation	40%

The pass mark on each paper is 50, and this mark must be achieved on each element to gain the degree.

To achieve a Distinction:

- a weighted average mark of 70 or above across all elements;
- marks of 70 or above in at least two elements, one of which will normally be the dissertation

To achieve a Merit:

- a weighted average mark of 65-69 across all elements;
- marks of 65-69 or above in at least two elements, one of which will normally be the dissertation

### **4.3 Progression rules**

Not applicable to this course.

### **4.4 Use of vivas**

Vivas are not used in relation to this course.

## **5. Resits**

Should a candidate fail any element of the examination, that element may be re-submitted once, and as outlined in the General Regulations for the Degree of Master of Studies (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdomastofstud>)

In these circumstances, and if the re-sit is successful, the candidate's degree classification would be capped at a Pass.

## **6. Consideration of mitigating circumstances**

A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the classification rules/final outcome rules as described above in section 4. The Board of Examiners will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances where a candidate or candidates have made a submission (under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations) that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination. A subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final Board of Examiners meeting to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results.

Further information on the procedure is provided in the Examination and Assessment Framework, Annex E and information for students is provided at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment>

## **7. Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners**

The examiners are:

Dr Andrew Dunning (Chair)

Prof Sophie Marnette (Internal Examiner)

Dr Nicholas Perkins (Internal Examiner)

Prof Ad Putter (External Examiner)

Candidates should not under any circumstances contact individual internal or external examiners

## Appendix B - Plagiarism

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>

Information about what plagiarism is, and how you can avoid it.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

'Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial intelligence (save when use of AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.'

The necessity to acknowledge others' work or ideas applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs etc. It applies equally to published text and data drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished text and data, whether from lectures, theses, or other students' essays. You must also attribute text, data, or other resources downloaded from websites.

Please note that artificial intelligence (AI) can only be used within assessments where specific prior authorisation has been given, or when technology that uses AI has been agreed as reasonable adjustment for a student's disability (such as voice recognition software for transcriptions, or spelling and grammar checkers).

The best way of avoiding plagiarism is to learn and employ the principles of good academic practice from the beginning of your university career. Avoiding plagiarism is not simply a matter of making sure your references are all correct, or changing enough words so the examiner will not notice your paraphrase; it is about deploying your academic skills to make your work as good as it can be.

Students can take an [online course](#) which has been developed to provide a useful overview of the issues surrounding plagiarism and practical ways to avoid it.

### **Forms of plagiarism**

#### **Verbatim (word for word) quotation without clear acknowledgement**

Quotations must always be identified as such by the use of either quotation marks or indentation, and with full referencing of the sources cited. It must always be apparent to the reader which parts are your own independent work and where you have drawn on ideas and language from another source.

#### **Cutting and pasting from the Internet without clear acknowledgement**

Information derived from the Internet must be adequately referenced and included in the bibliography. It is important to evaluate carefully all material found on the Internet, as it is less likely to have been through the same process of scholarly peer review as published sources.

### **Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing the work of others by altering a few words and changing their order, or by closely following the structure of their argument, is plagiarism if you do not give due acknowledgement to the author whose work you are using.

A passing reference to the original author in your own text may not be enough; you must ensure that you do not create the misleading impression that the paraphrased wording or the sequence of ideas are entirely your own. It is better to write a brief summary of the author's overall argument in your own words, indicating that you are doing so, than to paraphrase particular sections of his or her writing. This will ensure you have a genuine grasp of the argument and will avoid the difficulty of paraphrasing without plagiarising. You must also properly attribute all material you derive from lectures.

### **Collusion**

This can involve unauthorised collaboration between students, failure to attribute assistance received, or failure to follow precisely regulations on group work projects. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

### **Inaccurate citation**

It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your discipline. As well as listing your sources (i.e. in a bibliography), you must indicate, using a footnote or an in-text reference, where a quoted passage comes from. Additionally, you should not include anything in your references or bibliography that you have not actually consulted. If you cannot gain access to a primary source you must make it clear in your citation that your knowledge of the work has been derived from a secondary text (for example, Bradshaw, D. Title of Book, discussed in Wilson, E., Title of Book (London, 2004), p. 189).

### **Failure to acknowledge assistance**

You must clearly acknowledge all assistance which has contributed to the production of your work, such as advice from fellow students, laboratory technicians, and other external sources. This need not apply to the assistance provided by your tutor or supervisor, or to ordinary proofreading, but it is necessary to acknowledge other guidance which leads to substantive changes of content or approach.

### **Use of material written by professional agencies or other persons**

You should neither make use of professional agencies in the production of your work nor submit material which has been written for you even with the consent of the person who has written it. It is vital to your intellectual training and development that you should undertake the research process unaided. Under Statute XI on University Discipline, all members of the University are prohibited from providing material that could be submitted in an examination by students at this University or elsewhere.

### **Auto-plagiarism**

You must not submit work for assessment that you have already submitted (partially or in full), either for your current course or for another qualification of this, or any other, university, unless this is specifically provided for in the special regulations for your course. Where earlier work by you is citable, ie. it has already been published, you must reference it clearly. **Identical pieces of work submitted concurrently will also be considered to be auto-plagiarism.**

### **Why does plagiarism matter?**

Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity. It is a principle of intellectual honesty that all members of the academic community should acknowledge their debt to the originators of the ideas, words, and data which form the basis for their own work. Passing off another's work as your own is not only poor scholarship, but also means that you have failed to complete the learning process. Plagiarism is unethical and can have serious consequences for your future career; it also undermines the standards of your institution and of the degrees it issues.

### **Why should you avoid plagiarism?**

There are many reasons to avoid plagiarism. You have come to university to learn to know and speak your own mind, not merely to reproduce the opinions of others - at least not without attribution. At first it may seem very difficult to develop your own views, and you will probably find yourself paraphrasing the writings of others as you attempt to understand and assimilate their arguments. However it is important that you learn to develop your own voice. You are not necessarily expected to become an original thinker, but you are expected to be an independent one - by learning to assess critically the work of others, weigh up differing arguments and draw your own conclusions. Students who plagiarise undermine the ethos of academic scholarship while avoiding an essential part of the learning process.

You should avoid plagiarism because you aspire to produce work of the highest quality. Once you have grasped the principles of source use and citation, you should find it relatively straightforward to steer clear of plagiarism. Moreover, you will reap the additional benefits of improvements to both the lucidity and quality of your writing. It is important to appreciate that mastery of the techniques of academic writing is not merely a practical skill, but one that lends both credibility and authority to your work, and demonstrates your commitment to the principle of intellectual honesty in scholarship.

### **What happens if you are thought to have plagiarised?**

The University regards plagiarism in examinations as a serious matter. Cases will be investigated and penalties may range from deduction of marks to expulsion from the University, depending on the seriousness of the occurrence. Even if plagiarism is inadvertent, it can result in a penalty. The forms of plagiarism listed above are all potentially disciplinary offences in the context of formal assessment requirements.

The regulations regarding conduct in examinations apply equally to the 'submission and assessment of a thesis, dissertation, essay, or other coursework not undertaken in formal examination conditions but which counts towards or constitutes the work for a degree or other academic award'. Additionally, this includes the transfer and confirmation of status exercises undertaken by graduate students. Cases of suspected plagiarism in assessed work are investigated under the disciplinary regulations concerning conduct in examinations. Intentional plagiarism in this context means that you understood that you were breaching the regulations and did so intending to gain advantage in the examination. Reckless, in this context, means that you understood or could be expected to have understood (even if you

did not specifically consider it) that your work might breach the regulations, but you took no action to avoid doing so. Intentional or reckless plagiarism may incur severe penalties, including failure of your degree or expulsion from the university.

If plagiarism is suspected in a piece of work submitted for assessment in an examination, the matter will be referred to the Proctors. They will thoroughly investigate the claim and call the student concerned for interview. If at this point there is no evidence of a breach of the regulations, no further disciplinary action will be taken although there may still be an academic penalty. However, if it is concluded that a breach of the regulations may have occurred, the Proctors will refer the case to the Student Disciplinary Panel.

If you are suspected of plagiarism your College Secretary/Academic Administrator and subject tutor will support you through the process and arrange for a member of Congregation to accompany you to all hearings. They will be able to advise you what to expect during the investigation and how best to make your case. The [OUSU Student Advice Service](#) can also provide useful information and support.

### **Does this mean that I shouldn't use the work of other authors?**

On the contrary, it is vital that you situate your writing within the intellectual debates of your discipline. Academic essays almost always involve the use and discussion of material written by others, and, with due acknowledgement and proper referencing, this is clearly distinguishable from plagiarism. The knowledge in your discipline has developed cumulatively as a result of years of research, innovation and debate. You need to give credit to the authors of the ideas and observations you cite. Not only does this accord recognition to their work, it also helps you to strengthen your argument by making clear the basis on which you make it. Moreover, good citation practice gives your reader the opportunity to follow up your references, or check the validity of your interpretation.

### **Does every statement in my essay have to be backed up with references?**

You may feel that including the citation for every point you make will interrupt the flow of your essay and make it look very unoriginal. At least initially, this may sometimes be inevitable. However, by employing good citation practice from the start, you will learn to avoid errors such as close paraphrasing or inadequately referenced quotation. It is important to understand the reasons behind the need for transparency of source use.

All academic texts, even student essays, are multi-voiced, which means they are filled with references to other texts. Rather than attempting to synthesise these voices into one narrative account, you should make it clear whose interpretation or argument you are employing at any one time - whose 'voice' is speaking.

If you are substantially indebted to a particular argument in the formulation of your own, you should make this clear both in footnotes and in the body of your text according to the agreed conventions of the discipline, before going on to describe how your own views develop or diverge from this influence.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to give references for facts that are common knowledge in your discipline. If you are unsure as to whether something is considered to be

common knowledge or not, it is safer to cite it anyway and seek clarification. You do need to document facts that are not generally known and ideas that are interpretations of facts.

### **Does this only matter in exams?**

Although plagiarism in weekly essays does not constitute a University disciplinary offence, it may well lead to College disciplinary measures. Persistent academic under-performance can even result in your being sent down from the University. Although tutorial essays traditionally do not require the full scholarly apparatus of footnotes and referencing, it is still necessary to acknowledge your sources and demonstrate the development of your argument, usually by an in-text reference. Many tutors will ask that you do employ a formal citation style early on, and you will find that this is good preparation for later project and dissertation work. In any case, your work will benefit considerably if you adopt good scholarly habits from the start, together with the techniques of critical thinking and writing described above.

As junior members of the academic community, students need to learn how to read academic literature and how to write in a style appropriate to their discipline. This does not mean that you must become masters of jargon and obfuscation; however the process is akin to learning a new language. It is necessary not only to learn new terminology, but the practical study skills and other techniques which will help you to learn effectively.

Developing these skills throughout your time at university will not only help you to produce better coursework, dissertations, projects and exam papers, but will lay the intellectual foundations for your future career. Even if you have no intention of becoming an academic, being able to analyse evidence, exercise critical judgement, and write clearly and persuasively are skills that will serve you for life, and which any employer will value.

Borrowing essays from other students to adapt and submit as your own is plagiarism, and will develop none of these necessary skills, holding back your academic development. Students who lend essays for this purpose are doing their peers no favours.

### **Unintentional plagiarism**

Not all cases of plagiarism arise from a deliberate intention to cheat. Sometimes students may omit to take down citation details when taking notes, or they may be genuinely ignorant of referencing conventions. However, these excuses offer no sure protection against a charge of plagiarism. Even in cases where the plagiarism is found to have been neither intentional nor reckless, there may still be an academic penalty for poor practice.

It is your responsibility to find out the prevailing referencing conventions in your discipline, to take adequate notes, and to avoid close paraphrasing. If you are offered induction sessions on plagiarism and study skills, you should attend. Together with the advice contained in your subject handbook, these will help you learn how to avoid common errors. If you are undertaking a project or dissertation you should ensure that you have information on plagiarism and collusion. If ever in doubt about referencing, paraphrasing or plagiarism, you have only to ask your tutor.



## Examples of plagiarism

There are some helpful examples of plagiarism-by-paraphrase and you will also find extensive advice on the [referencing](#) and [library skills](#) pages.

The following examples demonstrate some of the common pitfalls to avoid. These examples use the referencing system prescribed by the History Faculty but should be of use to students of all disciplines.

### Source text

From a class perspective this put them [highwaymen] in an ambivalent position. In aspiring to that proud, if temporary, status of 'Gentleman of the Road', they did not question the inegalitarian hierarchy of their society. Yet their boldness of act and deed, in putting them outside the law as rebellious fugitives, revived the 'animal spirits' of capitalism and became an essential part of the oppositional culture of working-class London, a serious obstacle to the formation of a tractable, obedient labour force. Therefore, it was not enough to hang them – the values they espoused or represented had to be challenged.

(Linebaugh, P., *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1991), p. 213. [You should give the reference in full the first time you use it in a footnote; thereafter it is acceptable to use an abbreviated version, e.g. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, p. 213.]

### Plagiarised

1. Although they did not question the inegalitarian hierarchy of their society, highwaymen became an essential part of the oppositional culture of working-class London, posing a serious threat to the formation of a biddable labour force. (This is a patchwork of phrases copied verbatim from the source, with just a few words changed here and there. There is no reference to the original author and no indication that these words are not the writer's own.)
2. Although they did not question the inegalitarian hierarchy of their society, highwaymen exercised a powerful attraction for the working classes. Some historians believe that this hindered the development of a submissive workforce. (This is a mixture of verbatim copying and acceptable paraphrase. Although only one phrase has been copied from the source, this would still count as plagiarism. The idea expressed in the first sentence has not been attributed at all, and the reference to 'some historians' in the second is insufficient. The writer should use clear referencing to acknowledge all ideas taken from other people's work.)
3. Although they did not question the inegalitarian hierarchy of their society, highwaymen 'became an essential part of the oppositional culture of working-class London [and] a serious obstacle to the formation of a tractable, obedient labour force'.<sup>1</sup> (This contains a mixture of attributed and unattributed quotation, which suggests to the reader that the first line is original to this writer. All quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks and adequately referenced.)
4. Highwaymen's bold deeds 'revivified the "animal spirits" of capitalism' and made them an essential part of the oppositional culture of working-class London.<sup>1</sup> Peter Linebaugh argues that they posed a major obstacle to the formation of an obedient labour force. (Although the most striking phrase has been placed within quotation

marks and correctly referenced, and the original author is referred to in the text, there has been a great deal of unacknowledged borrowing. This should have been put into the writer's own words instead.)

5. By aspiring to the title of 'Gentleman of the Road', highwaymen did not challenge the unfair taxonomy of their society. Yet their daring exploits made them into outlaws and inspired the antagonistic culture of labouring London, forming a grave impediment to the development of a submissive workforce. Ultimately, hanging them was insufficient – the ideals they personified had to be discredited.<sup>1</sup> (This may seem acceptable on a superficial level, but by imitating exactly the structure of the original passage and using synonyms for almost every word, the writer has paraphrased too closely. The reference to the original author does not make it clear how extensive the borrowing has been. Instead, the writer should try to express the argument in his or her own words, rather than relying on a 'translation' of the original.)

### **Non-plagiarised**

1. Peter Linebaugh argues that although highwaymen posed no overt challenge to social orthodoxy – they aspired to be known as 'Gentlemen of the Road' – they were often seen as anti-hero role models by the unruly working classes. He concludes that they were executed not only for their criminal acts, but in order to stamp out the threat of insubordinacy.<sup>1</sup> (This paraphrase of the passage is acceptable as the wording and structure demonstrate the reader's interpretation of the passage and do not follow the original too closely. The source of the ideas under discussion has been properly attributed in both textual and footnote references.)
2. Peter Linebaugh argues that highwaymen represented a powerful challenge to the mores of capitalist society and inspired the rebelliousness of London's working class.<sup>1</sup> (This is a brief summary of the argument with appropriate attribution.)

<sup>1</sup> Linebaugh, P., *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1991), p. 213.

## Appendix C - Guidelines for the Presentation of Written Work

Your work should be lucid and presented in a scholarly manner. Display such evidence as is essential to substantiate your argument. Elaborate it in a manner which is clear, concise, consistent, accurate and complete.

### **Styling your work as you write:**

There are several sets of conventions and published guides to explain them. None is obligatory, but some will be more appropriate (and generally used) in particular disciplines. The important point is that you should follow one system throughout all the pieces of work submitted.

The Harvard system largely avoids footnotes by citing references in the text, where they take the form of the author's surname followed by the date of publication and any page reference within brackets: e.g. (Johnston, 1989: 289). The works referred to are gathered at the end of the piece of work, arranged alphabetically by author, with full bibliographical details.

An alternative system (Chicago) confines references to footnotes, normally using the full author name, title and publication details in the first reference and an abbreviated form of author and title in subsequent references.

Whichever system you adopt, you should choose it early and learn its conventions so well that you automatically apply them consistently.

### **The relation of text, notes and appendices:**

The ideal relationship is perhaps best expressed as one of scale. The text is self-evidently your major contribution. The word-limits placed on the essays and dissertation assume a scale appropriate to the topic, the time which you have to work on it, and the importance of writing clearly and succinctly. In writing and revising your work, strive always to make it simpler and shorter without prejudicing the substance of your discussion.

The main function of a footnote is to cite the authority for statements which you make in the text, so that your readers may verify them by reference to your sources. It is crucial that these references are accurate. Try to place footnote or endnote number references at the end of sentences or paragraphs.

Footnotes, placed at the bottom of the page on which the material to which they refer is contained, should be indented as paragraphs with the footnote number (raised as superscript) preceding the note itself, and the second (and subsequent) line(s) of the note returning to the left-hand margin. They should also be single-spaced. Most word-processing programmes use this as standard form. The same holds for endnotes.

Appendices offer a convenient way of keeping your text and footnotes clear. If you have hitherto unpublished evidence of primary importance, especially if it is unlikely to be readily accessible to your examiners, it may be helpful to append it. Every case must be argued in terms of the relevance and intrinsic value of the appended matter. If the Appendix takes you over the word limit, you must seek formal approval to exceed that word limit well before submission.

Textual apparatus: if you are presenting an edition of a literary work, the textual apparatus, in single spacing, must normally appear at the foot of the page of text to which it refers.

### **Quotation in foreign languages:**

Quotations in foreign languages should be given in the text in the original language. Translations into English should be provided in footnotes, or in the body of your text if the translation forms part of the substance of your discussion. If reference is made to a substantive unpublished document in a language other than English, both the document in the original language and a translation should be printed in an Appendix.

### **Abbreviations:**

These should be used as little as possible in the body of the text. List any which you do use (other than those in general use, such as: cf., ed., e.g., etc., f., ff., i.e., n., p., pp., viz.) at the beginning of the essay (after the table of contents in the case of the dissertation), and then apply them consistently. Adopt a consistent policy on whether or not you underline abbreviations of non-English origin.

Avoid loc. cit. and op. cit. altogether. Reference to a short title of the work is less confusing and more immediately informative. Use *ibid.* (or *idem/eadem*), if at all, only for immediately successive references.

### **Italic or Roman?**

Be consistent in the forms which you italicise. Use italics for the titles of books, plays, operas, published collections; the names, full or abbreviated, of periodicals; foreign words or short phrases which have not become so common as to be regarded as English.

Use roman for the titles of articles either in periodicals or collections of essays; for poems (unless it is a long narrative poem the title of which should be italicised); and for any titled work which has not been formally published (such as a thesis or dissertation), and place the title within single inverted commas.

For such common abbreviations as *cf.*, *e.g.*, *ibid.*, *pp.*, *q.v.*, etc., use roman type.

### **Capitals**

Reserve these for institutions or corporate bodies; denominational or party terms (Anglican, Labour); and collective nouns such as Church and State. But the general rule is to be sparing in their use. The convention in English for capitalisation of titles is that the first, last and any significant words are capitalised. If citing titles in languages other than English, follow the rules of capitalisation accepted in that language.

### **Quotations:**

In quotation, accuracy is of the essence. Be sure that punctuation follows the original. For quotations in English, follow the spelling (including capitalisation) of the original. Where there

is more than one edition, the most authoritative must be cited, rather than a derivative one, unless you propose a strong reason to justify an alternative text.

Short quotations: if you incorporate a quotation of one or two lines into the structure of your own sentence, you should run it on in the text within single quotation marks.

Longer quotations: these, whether prose or verse or dramatic dialogue, should be broken off from the text, indented from the left-hand margin, and printed in single spacing. No quotation marks should be used.

Quotations within quotations: these normally reverse the conventions for quotation marks. If the primary quotation is placed within single quotation marks, the quotation within it is placed within double quotation marks.

### **Dates and Numbers**

Give dates in the form 27 January 1990. Abbreviate months only in references, not in the text.

Give pages and years as spoken: 20-21, 25-6, 68-9, 100-114, 1711-79, 1770-1827, or from 1770 to 1827.

Use numerals for figures over 100, for ages (but sixtieth year), dates, years, lists and statistics, times with a.m. and p.m. (but ten o'clock). Otherwise use words and be consistent.

Write sixteenth century (sixteenth-century if used adjectivally, as in sixteenth-century architecture), not 16th century.

### **References**

*Illustrations, tables etc.*: The sources of all photographs, tables, maps, graphs etc. which are not your own should be acknowledged on the same page as the item itself. An itemised list of illustrations, tables etc. should also be provided after the contents page at the beginning of a dissertation, and after the title page in the case of an essay.

*Books*: Precise references, e.g. in footnotes, should be brief but accurate. In Chicago style, give full details for the first reference, and a consistently abbreviated form thereafter. All such reduced or abbreviated titles should either be included in your list of abbreviated forms or should be readily interpretable from the bibliography. Follow the form:

Author's surname; comma; initials or first name (although in footnotes these should precede the surname – e.g. Henry James, W.W. Greg); comma; title (italicised); place of publication; colon; name of publisher; comma; date of publication (all this in parenthesis); comma; volume (in lower-case roman numerals); full stop; number of page or pages on which the reference occurs; full stop.

For example, an entry in the bibliography should be in the form:

Greg, W.W., *The Calculus of Variants* (Oxford, 1927).

Or:

Greg, W.W., *The Calculus of Variants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927).

But a reference in a footnote should be in one of the following forms:

*(First time cited)* Either:

See W.W. Greg, *The Calculus of Variants* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 43-4.

Or: See W.W. Greg, *The Calculus of Variants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 43-4.

*(Subsequent citations)* Either:

See Greg, *Calculus*, pp. 43-4.

Or: See Greg (1927), pp. 43-4.

*Journals*: Follow the form:

Author's surname; comma; initials or first name; title of article (in single quotation marks); comma; title of journal (either full title or standard abbreviation, italicised); volume (in lower-case roman numerals); date (in parenthesis); comma; page number(s); full stop.

For example, an entry in the bibliography should be in this form:

Bennett, H.S., 'Fifteenth-Century Secular Prose', *RES* xxi (1945), 257-63.

But a reference in a footnote should be in the form:

*(first citation)*:

H.S. Bennett, 'Fifteenth-Century Secular Prose', *RES* xxi (1945), 257-63.

*(subsequent reference)*:

*either*: Bennett, 'Secular Prose', p. 258.

*Or*: Bennett (1945), p. 258.

*Plays*: In special cases you may wish to use through line numbering, but in most instances follow the

form:

Title (italicised); comma; act (in upper-case roman numerals); full stop; scene (in lower-case roman

numerals); full stop; line (arabic numerals); full stop.

E.g. *The Winter's Tale*, III.iii.3.

*Other works*: Many works, series, as well as books of the Bible, have been abbreviated to common forms which should be used. Serial titles distinct from those of works published in the series may often be abbreviated and left in roman. Follow these examples:

Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), p. 143.

Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.3, p. 143 (for subsequent references)  
Prov. 2:5; Thess. 4:11, 14. (Do not italicise books of the Bible.)

*Manuscripts*: Both in the text and in the notes the abbreviation MS (plural MSS) is used only when it precedes a shelfmark. Cite the shelfmark according to the practice of the given library followed by either

f. 259r, ff. 259r-260v or fol. 259r, fols. 259r-260v. The forms fo. and fos. (instead of f. or fol.) are also acceptable.

The first reference to a manuscript should give the place-name, the name of the library, and the shelf-mark. Subsequent references should be abbreviated.

e.g. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 4117, ff. 108r-145r. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 5055, f. 181r.

### **Bibliography:**

A list of works consulted must be provided, usually at the end of the essay or dissertation.

The bibliography should be in alphabetical order by authors' surnames, or titles of anonymous works, or of works (especially of reference works) usually referred to by title, e.g. *Middle English Dictionary*, not under Kurath, H. and Kuhn, S., its editors.

It is sometimes helpful, and therefore preferable, to present the bibliography in sections: manuscripts, source material, and secondary writings. You might follow the pattern:

#### 1. Primary

- A. Manuscripts
- B. Printed Works

#### 2. Secondary

- A. Contemporary with the author(s) or work(s), the subject of your dissertation
- B. Later studies

References must be consistently presented, and consistently punctuated, with a full stop at the end of each item listed.

Either capitalise all significant words in the title, or capitalise the first word and only proper nouns in the rest of the title. In capitalising foreign titles follow the general rule for the given language. In Latin titles, capitalise only the first word, proper nouns and proper adjectives. In French titles, capitalise only the first word (or the second if the first is an article) and proper nouns.

Whereas in footnotes, and for series, publishing details may be placed within parentheses, for books in the bibliography the item stands alone and parenthetical forms are not normally used.

Give the author's surname first, then cite the author's first name or initials. Place the first line flush to the left-hand margin and all subsequent lines indented.

The publishing statement should normally include the place of publication; colon; publisher's name; comma; date of publication. When the imprint includes several places and multiple publishers simplify them to the first item in each case.

The conventional English form of the place-name should be given (e.g. Turin, not Torino), including the country or state if there is possible confusion (Cambridge, Mass., unless it is Cambridge in England).

For later editions and reprints, give the original date of publication only, followed by semicolon; repr. and the later publishing details: *Wuthering Heights*. 1847; repr. London: Penguin, 1989.

For monographs in series, omit the series editor's name and do not italicise the series title. Follow the form:

Borst, A., *Die Katherer*, *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* 12. (Stuttgart, 1953), pp. 45-50.

For edited or translated works, note the distinction in the use of ed. in the following examples:

Charles d'Orléans, *Choix de poésies*, ed. John Fox. Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1973. [In this case the abbreviation means that the work is edited by Fox and does not change when there is more than one editor.]

Friedberg, E., ed., *Corpus iuris canonici*. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1879-81. [Here the abbreviation refers to the editor; the plural is eds.]

Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961.