

MA in Medieval Studies

For students entering in 2005

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Programme length: 12 months
Date of specification: October 2005
Programme Director: Professor P S Noble
Board of Studies: Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies
Accreditation: none

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide graduate students with a thorough grounding in contemporary approaches to key aspects of the culture of the Middle Ages and to equip them with the tools for further research by developing their critical and conceptual understanding. The approach is multidisciplinary. A Research Skills module aims to give students thorough and wide-ranging training in all areas relevant to medieval studies. Specific modules offer the opportunity to develop linguistic and palaeographic skills. Independent study is promoted through the provision of a wide choice of special topics geared towards the individual requirements and interests of students and through the supervised dissertation.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working and use of information technology. In addition to providing a grounding for further research, the programme aims to enhance students' personal and interpersonal skills in relation to future employment: in particular, to promote the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; to develop the ability to make decisions and to communicate effectively as both communicator and recipient; and to encourage the faculty of independent learning with a view to continuing professional development.

Programme content

All students take a core research methods module introducing a wide range of skills and approaches necessary for research in the field of medieval studies. A further compulsory module combines Medieval Latin and Medieval Palaeography. A Special Topic may be chosen from a broad range of literary, historical, linguistic and cultural areas, offering the opportunity for independent research. This may be replaced by language training or by a module offered in another MA programme. A Dissertation provides for extensive independent research, and includes an oral presentation.

Compulsory modules

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
Mod Code	<i>Module Title</i>	X	X
MSMRM	Researching the Middle Ages: Research Methods	60	M
MSMLP	Medieval Latin and Palaeography	30	M

MSMDIS	Dissertation	60	M
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Optional modules

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
MSMSPT	Special topic	30	M
	This may be replaced by:		
IWLP	IWLP language module	20	C
MSMFLM	Reading in a foreign language for medievalists	10	M

The Special Topic may also be replaced by a 30-credit module from another MA programme at the discretion of the Director

Part-time/Modular arrangements

This programme may be taken over two years of part-time study. The normal pattern is for the Research Methods and Palaeography and Medieval Latin modules to be taken in the first year and the Special Topic and Dissertation in the second year, but this may be varied if required. It may also be taken over up to five years. The recommended order is Skills module (over two years); Palaeography and Medieval Latin; Special Topic; Dissertation, but this may be varied by agreement.

Certificate/ Diploma in Medieval Studies

Students who do not wish to take the full MA programme may obtain

a) a Certificate in Medieval Studies on satisfactory completion of 60 credits of modules, to be chosen as follows:

EITHER

MSMRM	Researching the Middle Ages: Research Methods	60	M
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OR

MSMLP	Medieval Latin and Palaeography	30	M
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With

MSMSPT	Special topic	30	M
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This may be replaced by:

IWLP	IWLP language module	20	C
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MSMFLM	Reading in a foreign language for medievalists	10	M
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b) a Diploma in Medieval Studies on satisfactory completion of 120 credits of modules, comprising all the programme components except the Dissertation module.

Summary of teaching and assessment

The compulsory modules are delivered through small group teaching. The Latin and Palaeography module is assessed through a mixture of written assignments and timed tests. The Research Skills module is assessed through a dossier of student work. The Special Topic and the Dissertation are supervised on an individual basis. The Special Topic is assessed EITHER by one essay of 5,000 words, OR by coursework and a timed test, depending on the topic chosen. The Dissertation is assessed by a Dissertation of 15,000–18,000 words, including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appropriate appendices.

Admission requirements

The qualifications of students will be assessed on an individual basis. Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained upper second class in an undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. Overseas students are also required to fulfil the university standards of English language proficiency.

Admissions Tutor: The Director, Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, School of History (GCMS@reading.ac.uk)

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

In addition, the GCMS has its own dedicated room offering a private study area supported by its own specialised library, with access to microfilm and microfiche readers.

Career prospects

The programme leads predominantly to further research, typically at a doctoral level. It is also a useful training for students wishing to pursue a career in archival work, and in the Heritage industry. In addition, recent postgraduates have gone on to pursue careers in teaching.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

Where appropriate, opportunities are open to individual students to study in France in the University of Paris VII, with which the School of History has links.

Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to provide graduate students with a thorough grounding in contemporary approaches to key aspects of medieval culture. In particular, it aims to develop a systematic approach to the acquisition of knowledge together with a critical awareness of current issues of debate and the ability to evaluate and develop appropriate conceptual frameworks. In addition it aims to prepare them for study at doctoral level by equipping them with the tools necessary for further independent research.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- ▶ medieval history, literature and culture approached through selected aspects and topics
- ▶ specific areas and topics of the student's choice and researched in greater depth
- ▶ key issues of contemporary debate and scholarly enquiry
- ▶ a range of current critical approaches and methodologies
- ▶ a range of research techniques drawn from different areas at a theoretical and a practical level of application
- ▶ specific linguistic and/or palaeographic skills

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Knowledge and understanding are gained through formal teaching (seminars, tutorials), organised visits (to archive collections), informal activities (attendance at Centre lecture and seminar series), independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

Assessment

Knowledge and understanding is assessed through a range of oral and written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

- ▶ engage in analytical and evaluative discussion of a range of texts and sources
- ▶ estimate the relevance of specific arguments and interpretations
- ▶ discriminate between opposing theories and interpretations
- ▶ formulate and present judgements, both orally and in written form, on the basis of evidence and argument
- ▶ follow original lines of thought and investigation and propose new hypotheses as appropriate

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Intellectual skills are developed through formal teaching, participation in informal activities, independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

Assessment

Intellectual skills are assessed informally through discussion and formally through a range of oral and written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation.

C. Practical skills – able to:

- ▶ gather, organise and deploy evidence and information, and make judgements in the absence of complete data
- ▶ deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, showing critical judgement and applying appropriate methodologies
- ▶ communicate conclusions effectively in oral and written form to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- ▶ have effective bibliographical and library research skills
- ▶ demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical skills are developed through participation in formal and informal activities, independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

Assessment

Practical skills are assessed through a range of written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation, and through participation in a range of formal and informal activities.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- ▶ present material in a written form, with discrimination and lucidity in the use of language, professional referencing and clear layout
- ▶ present material orally in a clear and effective manner
- ▶ act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks
- ▶ work creatively, flexibly and adaptably with others
- ▶ display the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are acquired through participation in seminars, tutorials, attendance at lectures and seminars with internal and external speakers, and applied in self-study and the writing of assignments

Assessment

Transferable skills are assessed formally through a range of written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation, and informally through participation in Centre activities.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.