

**MA in Archaeology of the Middle East (full-time)  
For students entering in 2014/5**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Archaeology
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	25/Sep/2014
Programme Director:	Prof Roger Matthews
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Joint PGT Board of Studies (SAGES)
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The programme aims to develop critical understanding of the ancient societies of the Middle East through systematic study and interpretation of archaeological evidence. The programme is designed to develop ability to undertake independent research while following specific interests in the archaeology of regions of the Middle East, including Mesopotamia (Iraq, Syria), Iran, and Anatolia (Turkey). There is an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, including the application of social and scientific analyses to archaeological evidence. Students will gain an ability to use critical judgement in evaluating archaeological and textual sources from the ancient Middle East, as well as an informed understanding of the situation of archaeology within the socio-political context of the modern Middle East. The programme also aims to prepare students for doctoral study.

**Transferable skills**

Students on this programme will have the opportunity to develop their skills relating to oral and written communication, data collection and analysis, and information technology. They will develop skills in conducting independent research to a high level, including the ability to read selectively and to prioritise information. Students will develop skills in concise, coherent writing, as well as expertise in critical analysis of archaeological evidence. Time-management and time-keeping will be key skills developed in successfully completing this programme, as will capabilities in team-working and networking in particular through group participation in seminars and group projects. Students will be encouraged to think comparatively and cross-culturally, as well as to situate the discipline of archaeology within a broad academic context in approaching the ancient and modern Middle East.

**Programme content**

The following profile presents details on compulsory modules and a list of optional modules. Students take modules amounting to a total of 180 credits. Students must take four 10-credit modules including *Research Skills and Career Learning* and *Themes and Debates in the Archaeology of the Middle East*, and two technical optional module (40 credits in all), as well as three 20-credit specialist optional modules (60 credits in all), plus a compulsory dissertation (80 credits). Students who have not previously studied Archaeology are strongly advised to take ARMTAA *Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology* as one of the optional technical modules. A language module of 20 credits can be taken with the Institution-Wide Language Programme (IWLP) in place of two technical option modules where appropriate.

**Compulsory modules**

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ARMDISS	<i>Dissertation</i>	80	7
HEM01	<i>Research Skills and Career Learning</i>	10	7
ARMDME	<i>Themes and Debates in the Archaeology of the Middle East</i>	10	7

**Optional technical modules (all 10 credits at Level 7)**

TWO of:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ARMTAA	<i>Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology</i>	10	7
ARMR3D	<i>Archaeological Graphics</i>	10	7

ARMIAM	<i>Introduction to Applications of Micromorphological Analysis</i> (cannot be taken with ARMAMA)	10	7
ARMSHB	<i>Introduction to Human Bioarchaeology</i> (cannot be taken with ARMS10)	10	7
ARMIZO	<i>Introduction to Archaeozoology</i> (cannot be taken with ARMGZO)	10	7

OR:

One Language option with the Institution-Wide Language Programme (20 credits)

Optional specialist modules (all 20 credits at Level 7)

Please note that not all optional modules will be available every year. The range of optional modules is subject to availability of staff and each module will require a minimum number of participants. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

#### Archaeology

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ARMT01	<i>Themes and Issues in the Archaeology of Early Iran</i>	20	7
ARMT02	<i>Themes and Approaches in the Study of Mesopotamia</i>	20	7
ARMETU	<i>The Archaeology of Early Turkey</i>	20	7
ARMGCC	<i>Climate Change and Human Communities</i>	20	7
ARMREP	<i>Research and Enterprise Placement</i>	20	7

#### Bioarchaeology

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ARMS10	<i>Human Bioarchaeology</i> (cannot be taken with ARMSHB)	20	7
ARMGFC	<i>Food and Culture</i>	20	7
ARMGBC	<i>Archaeological Bone Chemistry</i>	20	7
ARMGZO	<i>Archaeozoology</i> (cannot be taken with ARMIZO)	20	7
ARMREP	<i>Research and Enterprise Placement</i>	20	7

#### Environmental Archaeology

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ARMICM	<i>Coastal and Maritime Geoarchaeology</i>	20	7
ARMAMA	<i>Applications of Micromorphological Analysis</i> (cannot be taken with ARMIAM)	20	7
ARMO44D	<i>Vegetation History and Archaeobotany</i>	20	7

#### Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme may be taken over two years on a part-time basis. Selection of modules between the two years will be agreed between the student and the Programme Director at the start of the programme. HEM01 Research Skills and Career Learning is taken in the first term of the programme. Participation in the Dissertation Workshop and submission of the Dissertation proposal is required in Year 1. The Dissertation is submitted at the end of the second year. It is anticipated that students will normally complete at least 70 credits' worth of modules in Year 1. Modules will be assessed in the year that they are taken. The programme may also be taken on a modular basis, with HEM01 Research Skills and Careers Learning being taken in the first term and the Dissertation being taken in the final year.

#### Progression requirements

##### Summary of Teaching and Assessment

The MA Archaeology of the Middle East is assessed entirely by coursework, unless students are taking a language module as part of Research Skills that will involve formal oral and written examination as appropriate. Research methods are taught through a series of workshops and seminars, and are assessed. The remaining technical options are taught through practical classes and assessed by written reports and/or portfolio. The specific teaching and learning methods vary between specialist optional modules, but all are based on a mixture of lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorials, and each module is assessed by a major essay and in some cases by a variety of other types of coursework, including oral presentation and critical review. The dissertation comprises a piece of independent research, directed through dissertation workshops plus a series of one-to-one tutorials, and is assessed by coursework and an oral presentation.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a good degree from a UK University (normally at least a high 2.2 standard) or have equivalent qualifications from outside the UK.

**Admissions Tutor:** r.j.matthews@reading.ac.uk

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

Within the Department of Archaeology student support includes allocation of a Personal Tutor. There is specialist advice available on maximising use of the University Library resources including the Maxwell-Hyslop collection of books and journals relating to the ancient Middle East. Detailed module handbooks accompany every module, including full lists of relevant reading and web-based resources. Laboratory and analytical facilities are available where appropriate, in particular for *Dissertation* research. Facilities include drawing office, geophysical and tacheometric survey equipment, excavation equipment, soil and sediment coring equipment, audio-visual resources, and a minibus.

Primary archives and materials from major excavation and survey projects in the Middle East are available for *Dissertation* research, including those relating to Jemdet Nasr Excavations (Iraq, 1988-1989), Tell Brak Excavations (Syria, 1994-1996), Project Paphlagonia Multi-Period Survey (Turkey, 1997-2001) and the Central Zagros Archaeological Project (Iran and Iraq, 2007-present). Access to collections in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and the British Museum, London, can be arranged for specific *Dissertation* projects.

### **Career prospects**

The Masters Archaeology of the Middle East at Reading is both a route into archaeology (including field archaeology, museums and heritage management), and an excellent foundation for students wishing to pursue further research at higher degree level. It also forms the basis for other careers in the areas of the arts, media, management, administration, the civil service, local government, commerce, law, publishing, librarianship and teaching. A significant number of graduates have found positions in UK and European archaeology, either directly from their Masters degree, or following further postgraduate study.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Reading has an Erasmus Exchange Agreement with Bilkent University, the top-rated university in Turkey, and there may be opportunities for MA students to spend time at Bilkent. The MA module *The Archaeology of Early Turkey* takes place partly in Turkey and students taking this optional module will experience a period of intensive teaching/learning and site/museum visits in central Turkey. Students have the opportunity to take the module ARMEREP Research and Enterprise Micro-placement and ARMREP Research and Enterprise Placement.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. A comprehensive, systematic, and up-to-date knowledge of:

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

All areas are taught primarily through seminars and problem-oriented classwork, based on independent

- a) selected aspects of the ancient Middle East from the Neolithic to the Iron Age
- b) the diverse sources of evidence used by archaeologists, their variability and reliability
- 2. A critical awareness of a wide range of:
  - a) past and current methods by which archaeologists acquire, date and analyse their primary evidence
  - b) interpretative approaches applied to archaeological evidence in their historical, political and social context, including the most recent approaches
- 3. A comprehensive understanding of a range of technical skills and/or methodologies, applicable to their specific research projects

reading, initially structured by bibliographies issued for each module.

*Assessment*

All knowledge and understanding is tested entirely by coursework, including the dissertation, with oral presentations making some contribution.

**Skills and other attributes**

**B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

- 1. integrate and synthesise large quantities of archaeological and other data from multiple and diverse sources both systematically and creatively
- 2. make sophisticated and informed judgements in the absence of complete data
- 3. recognise and evaluate critically past and current theoretical approaches and competing interpretations
- 4. formulate individual research questions at a sophisticated level and identify strategies for exploring them
- 5. think critically and independently, and to propose new hypotheses as appropriate
- 6. synthesise and articulate arguments effectively, and to communicate the conclusions clearly
- 7. develop a critical self-awareness as a working archaeologist

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are developed throughout the programme, culminating in the dissertation. All option modules deal with questions of evidence and interpretation, through seminars, essays, and other coursework which require analysis and debate of intellectual problems. Awareness of current approaches is encouraged as options are usually linked to lecturers' research interests. Independent research skills are developed through essays and the dissertation, including the formulation of topics and the identification of methodologies, for which initial preparation and regular support are provided. Individual feedback is provided on content and organisation of coursework, and a formal oral presentation is part of the dissertation.

*Assessment*

Intellectual skills are tested entirely by coursework, especially the dissertation, with oral presentations making some contribution.

**C. Practical skills - able to:**

- 1. locate, extract and appraise critically archaeological information in published sources and on the web
- 2. acquire, select and apply appropriate technical skills for specific archaeological tasks and/or research projects
- 3. select and apply appropriate methodologies in assessing the meaning and significance of evidence or data
- 4. plan and carry out a primary research project, working independently
- 5. engage in group discussion and debate on archaeological issues

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are taught through the research methods modules and in dissertation workshops, and developed by application to the option modules and dissertation. Group discussion forms an essential part of all modules.

*Assessment*

Skills 1-4 are assessed indirectly through coursework and the dissertation. Technical and research skills are also assessed through classwork exercises and short reports.

**D. Transferable skills - able to:**

- 1. communicate complex data and ideas clearly and

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

All these skills are essential for the successful

effectively in speech and in a variety of types of writing

2. deal effectively with a variety of numerical data and visual material, using the most appropriate and up-to-date techniques
3. demonstrate self-direction and originality in devising strategies for solving problems, even in complex and unpredictable situations
4. continue to develop their knowledge, technical skills, and understanding to a high level
5. exercise their own initiative and personal responsibility

completion of the programme.

Skill 1 is developed throughout the programme in the writing of essays, critiques and the dissertation, and by participation in seminars and a formal dissertation presentation. Skills 2, 3 and 5 are developed through the major essays and dissertation, and supported by the research methods and dissertation workshops. Skill 4 is particularly developed through the research methods and technical skills modules.

*Assessment*

These skills are assessed throughout the programme by a combination of coursework, essays, oral presentations, and dissertation.

**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 be expected 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 the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**