

MA Archaeology (full-time)
For students entering in 2017/8

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	15/Aug/2017
Programme Director:	Prof Grenville Astill
Board of Studies:	MA in Archaeology

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide a flexible, systematic and advanced understanding of the human past through the study and interpretation of archaeological evidence, with a strong emphasis on independent research. The programme offers students the opportunity to develop archaeological knowledge either by studying a variety of periods and themes or by choosing period and/or regionally specific aspects, such as the Archaeology of Medieval Europe or Bioarchaeology. A further study choice could be to develop research expertise by a higher proportion of guided self-study. Students can also choose vocational and workplace based modules. They are taught to recognise current weaknesses in our understanding of the past, either due to lack of evidence, poor methodology or inappropriate theory, and to propose means by which such weaknesses can be rectified. It also aims to prepare students for further research and doctoral study.

Transferable skills

In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop their skills relating to oral and written communication, data collection and analysis, and information technology to a high level, providing the independent learning ability that is essential for future professional development. They will gain vocational training which will enhance students' employability. Students will also develop skills in the critical analysis of archaeological evidence, and be able to think comparatively and cross-culturally. They will be able to exercise their own initiative, and make decisions in complex situations.

Programme content

The following profile states which modules are compulsory. Students then have the choice of following three pathways: a multi-period and themed archaeology (World Archaeology) or one of the two specialist pathways. Those following specialist pathways 1 or 2 must choose two options from the dedicated list for that particular pathway (40 credits) and write the compulsory dissertation (80 credits) related to their specialism. The remaining credits may be chosen from any of the pathways.

Students who have not previously studied Archaeology are recommended to take ARMTAA *Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology* as one of the 10 credit modules. A language module of 20 credits can be taken with the Institution Wide Language Programme (IWLP) in place of two 10 credit modules, where appropriate.

Compulsory modules:

ARMDISS	Dissertation (80c)
HEM01	Research Skills and Careers Learning (10c)

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).

World Archaeology Pathway

ARMTAA	Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology (10c)
ARMR3D	Archaeological Graphics (10c)
ARMEMP	Research and Enterprise Micro-Placement (10c, cannot be taken with ARMREMP)
ARMQME	Quantitative Methods (10c)

ARMREP	Research and Enterprise Placement (20c)
ARMNEA	Our Closest Cousins? The Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology of the Neanderthals (20c)
ARMMNEO	Interpreting the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Britain (20c)
ARMT02	Themes and Approaches in the Study of Mesopotamia (20c)
ARMR27	Material Cultures and Identities in the Roman Empire (20c)
ARMO50D	The Archaeology of Money: Coins, Power, Society (20c)
REMH06	Management of Heritage Assets (20c)

Or ONE *Language option* with the Institution-wide Language Programme (20c)

Specialist Pathway 1: Archaeology of Medieval Europe

Compulsory

ARMR4D Issues and Debates in Medieval Archaeology (10c)

Compulsory: Two of the following options (40c)

ARMM02 Viking Interactions in the West (20c)

ARMM06 Colonisation and Cultural Transformation: The Archaeology of Crusading (20c)

ARMINT International Study - ERASMUS (20c)

MSMLPA Medieval Latin and Palaeography (20c; cannot be taken with MSMSTA)

MSMSTA Option A (20c; cannot be taken with MSMLPA)

Specialist Pathway 2: Bioarchaeology

Compulsory

ARMIDB Issues and Debates in Bioarchaeology (10c)

Compulsory: Two of the following options (40c)

ARMS10 Human Bioarchaeology (20c)

ARMGBC Archaeological Bone Chemistry (20c)

AMRGZO Zooarchaeology (20c; cannot be taken with ARMIZO)

ARMICM Coastal and Maritime Geoarchaeology (20c)

AMAMA Applications of Micromorphological Analysis (20c; cannot be taken with ARMIAM)

ARMO44D Vegetation History and Archaeobotany (20c; cannot be taken with ARMIVH)

ARMGCC Climate Change and Human Communities (20c; cannot be taken with ARMICC)

ARMGMB Molluscan Biostratigraphy (20c)

10 credit options

ARMGFC Food and Culture (10c)

ARMIZO Introduction to Zooarchaeology (10c; cannot be taken with ARMGZO)

ARMIAM Introduction to Applications of Micromorphological Analysis (10c; cannot be taken with ARMAMA)

ARMICC Introduction to Holocene Climate Change and Human Society (10c; cannot be taken with ARMGCC)

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, submission of the Dissertation proposal and the Conference presentation 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.

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

The MA in Archaeology is assessed entirely by coursework, unless students are taking a language module as that will involve formal oral and written examination as appropriate). HEM01 *Research Skills and Career-Learning* is taught through a series of workshops and seminars, and is assessed. The 10 credit 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.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark Interpretation

70 - 100% Distinction
60 - 69% Merit
50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard
0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For the Masters Degree

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits for all modules marked below 50 and must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For the PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For the PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

Admission requirements

For acceptance onto the course, a student must already possess a good degree from a UK University (a high 2.2) or have equivalent qualifications from abroad. Language requirements for students where English is not their first language is IELTS 6.5, or score 6.0 if students take the University of Reading's Pre-sessional English course.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Mary Lewis

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, In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 the Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

The Departmental Handbook issued to MA Archaeology students provides extensive information on resources and study skills. The Department occupies a purpose-built structure with further shared facilities providing a research laboratory, teaching laboratories, computer laboratories, and space for postgraduates to work in the Department. There are also traditional and digital drawing office facilities; geophysical and tachometric survey equipment; excavation equipment; soil and sediment coring equipment; audio-visual resources; and a minibuss. The University Library is well stocked with works relating to many different aspects of archaeology.

Career prospects

The Masters in Archaeology 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

There are opportunities to participate in departmental research projects, including fieldwork and post-excavation; and students will have the chance to work with QUEST. Quaternary Scientific is the commercial arm of the School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science, providing archaeological, forensic and environmental scientific services to industry. Students have the opportunity to take one of the following modules ARMEMP Research and Enterprise Micro-placement or ARMREP Research and Enterprise Placement. International placement opportunities are available particularly for students interested in medieval Central and Eastern European archaeology. Our Erasmus exchange agreements, with the Department of Medieval Studies at the Central European University in Budapest, as well as the institutes of archaeology at the University of Lund (Sweden), Aarhus (Denmark) and Torun (Poland), enable students to take advantage of courses and facilities focusing on the inter-disciplinary study of the Middle Ages. Placements are also available on excavations taking place in the UK and in north-eastern Europe associated with major departmental projects.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. A comprehensive, systematic, and up-to-date knowledge of:
 - selected aspects of human societies from our earliest ancestors to the medieval period, particularly in Europe and the Mediterranean and Near East;
 - the diverse sources of evidence used by archaeologists, their variability and reliability
2. A critical awareness of a wide range of:
 - past and current methods by which archaeologists acquire, date and analyse their primary evidence
 - 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.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

All areas are taught primarily through seminars and problem-oriented classwork, based on independent 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. to integrate and synthesise large quantities of archaeological and other data from multiple and diverse sources both systematically and creatively;
2. to make sophisticated and informed judgements in the absence of complete data;
3. to recognise and evaluate critically past and current theoretical approaches and competing

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.

- interpretations;
4. to formulate individual research questions at a sophisticated level and identify strategies for exploring them;
 5. to think critically and independently, and to propose new hypotheses as appropriate;
 6. to synthesise and articulate arguments effectively, and to communicate the conclusions clearly;
 7. to develop a critical self-awareness as a working archaeologist

C. Practical skills - *able to*:

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

D. Transferable skills - *able to*:

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

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.

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 most 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.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

All these skills are essential for the successful 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.