

MA in Medieval Studies

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Art and Humanities	Programme length: 12 months
For students entering in 2003	Date of specification: September 2003
Programme Director:	Dr. F. Le Saux
Board of Studies:	Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies
Accreditation:	

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 core course in literature and history aims to familiarise students with current issues of critical debate. Specific units offer the opportunity to develop linguistic and palaeographic skills. Independent study is promoted through the provision of a wide choice of options 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 an assessed core introducing select aspects of medieval history and literature and focusing on contemporary critical approaches and issues. A further compulsory unit in skills combines Medieval Latin and Medieval Palaeography. Medieval Latin can be taken either at beginners' or advanced level. Two specialised options drawn from a broad range of literary, historical and cultural areas offer the opportunity for independent and extended research. In addition, students are encouraged to attend a series of non-assessed method workshops.

Compulsory modules

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
Mod Code	<i>Module Title</i>		
GCMSCH	Medieval History	20	M
GCMSCL	Medieval Literature	20	M
GCMSBL	Medieval Latin (Beginners)	10	M

GCMSAL	Or Medieval Latin (Advanced)	10	M
GCMSCP	Medieval Palaeography	10	M

Optional modules

Students must take two Optional modules. All three modules – Literature, History and Culture – run every year. In each case, the list of available topics will vary reflecting the current research interests of staff. Where possible, in consultation with the relevant teachers and with the approval of the Director, students can devise their own Options, comprising one topic out of the annual list supplied, or combining elements from more than one topic.

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
GCMSLO	Medieval Literature Option	60	M
GCMSHO	Medieval History Option	60	M
GCMSCO	Medieval Culture Option	60	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

This programme may be taken over two years of part-time study. The normal pattern is for the compulsory modules to be taken in the first year and the two options in the second year, but this may be varied if required.

It may also be taken over five years on a modular basis. The recommended order is core modules; skills module (over two years); first option; second option, but this may be varied by agreement.

Progression requirements

Students are required to have completed the compulsory modules and the first option before progressing to the dissertation.

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

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in the two option modules. 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 be less than 60 credits.*

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

For Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in one option module. 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 be less than 60 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 awarded a Merit.

For Postgraduate 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.*

*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Summary of teaching and assessment

The core modules and skills module are delivered through small group teaching and assessed through a mixture of written assignments and timed tests. The two options are supervised on an individual basis and examined in the one case by two essays of 5,000 words each and in the other by a dissertation of 10,000-15,000 words, including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appropriate appendices. Students may choose which of the two Optional Modules they wish to have assessed by dissertation, in consultation with the Convenor and the Director.

Admission requirements

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

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.

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. In addition, recent postgraduates have gone on to pursue careers in teaching.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

N/a

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 MPhil and PhD level by equipping them with the tools necessary for further independent research.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- ▶ a broad spectrum 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 written assignments, including timed tests (Latin and Palaeography), short essays and/or critical commentaries (Literature and History), long essays (option 1) and a dissertation (option 2).

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 written assignments, including timed tests, short essays and/or critical commentaries, long 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, short essays and/or critical commentaries, long 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, short essays and/or critical commentaries, long 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.