

Humanities Divisional Board

Approved by officers on behalf of the Board on 17 September 2019

Title of Programme

Master of Science by Coursework in Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Brief note about nature of change: Change to assessment structure

Location of change

In Examination Regulations 2018 (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2018-19/mosbcimmiddeaststud>)

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2019

For first examination from 2019-20

Detail of change

New text underlined, deletions struck-through:

^{1.3}2. In addition, all candidates will be required to undertake the following assessment:

^{1.4}(i) Research Methods for Area Studies: Candidates will submit a 2,500 word maximum practical exercise take-home test in the collection and analysis of qualitative data qualitative methods to be set on Monday of Week 6 and submitted by 12 noon on Monday of week 9 of Michaelmas Term; a one week take-home test in quantitative analysis to be set on Monday of Week 6 and submitted by 12 noon on Monday of week 6 9 of Hilary Term; and a 2,500 word maximum individual research proposal by 12 noon Monday of week 9 of Hilary Term, which must be approved but will not contribute to the final result.

^{1.5}(ii) One 12,000 word dissertation (including all notes and references but excluding the bibliography): the title of the dissertation must be approved by the Course Committee by 12 noon on Friday of week 2 of Hilary Term in the year in which the examination is taken. The dissertation must be submitted by 12 noon of the weekday on or nearest to 1 September in the year in which the examination is taken. The dissertation must be accompanied by a statement that the dissertation is the candidate's own work except where otherwise indicated.

^{1.6}Two typewritten or word processed copies of each of the items of written work detailed above and, in addition, an electronic copy of the dissertation in PDF format on a memory stick or CD, must be delivered to the Examination Schools, addressed to the Chair of Examiners for the M.Sc. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, c/o Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford at the times and days specified. Successful candidates will be required to deposit one copy of the dissertation in the Bodleian Library.

^{1.7}3. Candidates who fail the research methods course overall will be permitted to re-submit a new submission for the failed piece(s) of work within four weeks of publication of the failed mark, on a date specified by the Chair of Examiners. Candidates who fail one or more of the elements of the final examination will be permitted to resubmit the relevant work or retake the examination paper(s), as applicable, on one further occasion only, not later than one year after the first attempt.

SCHEDULE

^{1.8}The structure of the course is as follows:

^{1.9}Either **Mode A** (for students who do not have sufficient Arabic or Hebrew for research purposes)

^{1.10}(a) Compulsory class in either intermediate or advanced Arabic Language, or intermediate of advanced Hebrew Language; taught throughout Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Terms.

^{1.11}(b) Research Methods: taken in Michaelmas and ~~Trinity~~ Hilary terms (qualitative and quantitative methods respectively). ~~Students also submit a research proposal for the dissertation at the end of Hilary Term.~~

^{1.12}(c) Optional papers: Candidates must choose **two** optional papers, taken in Hilary and Trinity Terms.

^{1.13}(d) Dissertation: submitted by 12 noon of the weekday on or nearest to 1 September in the year in the examination is taken.

^{1.14}Or **Mode B** (for students who have sufficient Arabic or Hebrew for research purposes)

^{1.15}(a) Research Methods: taken in Michaelmas and ~~Trinity term~~ Hilary terms (qualitative and quantitative methods respectively). Students also submit a research proposal for the dissertation at the end of Hilary Term.

^{1.16}(b) Optional papers: Candidates must choose **three** optional papers, taken in Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Terms.

^{1.17}(c) Dissertation: submitted by 12 noon of the weekday on or nearest to 1 September in the year in the examination is taken.

Explanatory Notes

This change removes the research proposal from the set of summatively assessed components of the Research Methods for Area Studies core course and instead required the submission of a formatively-assessed research proposal students as part of their thesis-writing process. The rationale for the proposed changes is as follows:

- Separating the research proposal from the Research Methods core course and linking it more explicitly to the thesis assignment will mean that students can receive formative feedback that will more directly feed into their thesis work, and can make earlier progress that will build toward the final thesis project. Under the current arrangement, marks and feedback on the research proposal reach students too late to be maximally helpful for students planning to undertake research during the Easter Break. Thus, the research proposal cannot fully serve its intended purpose of helping students to refine their thesis research design.

- Given that the research proposal as it currently stands is separate from but related to the thesis project, there has been potential for students to incorrectly interpret marks on research proposals as indications of likely thesis marks. In some cases, students on the course who received high marks on the research proposal were surprised and frustrated to discover they had not received comparably high marks on the final thesis. Such confusion would be avoided by ending summative assessment of the research proposal.
- Given students' extremely high workload during Hilary Term, the current requirement for submission of an assessed research proposal at the end of the term places significant strain on students.