

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA Medieval Studies (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip Medieval Studies PG Cert Medieval Studies
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	Creative Arts, Culture and Communication (home), Historical Studies
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 years) Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMAMDVST_C
HECoS Code	100320 (English studies) 100309 (Medieval History) 100314 (Humanities)
Start date of programme	2022-23
Date of programme approval	Autumn 2021
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2022
Valid for academic year and cohorts	2023-24
Programme Director	Kate Franklin
Date of last revision to document	19/10/2022

Admissions requirements

Our standard postgraduate entry requirement is a second-class honours degree (2:2 or above) from [a UK university](#), or an [equivalent international qualification](#).

We will review every postgraduate application to Birkbeck on its individual merits and your professional qualifications and/or relevant work experience will be taken into consideration positively. We actively support and encourage applications from mature learners.

On your application form, please list all your relevant qualifications and experience, including those you expect to achieve.

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

This programme offers the opportunity to encounter the Middle Ages from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including the study of literature, history, material culture, and the visual arts. At its heart is a core module shared with MA Early Modern and Renaissance Studies, 'Medieval and Early Modern Worlds', which pairs broader study of current scholarly approaches to these periods with more focused study of Medieval cultures. This module cuts across different fields to consider the riches of these pasts from an integrated, holistic perspective, in which you will be guided by experts in interdisciplinary research methods.

In addition to 'Medieval and Early Modern Worlds' you will take three further option modules that offer the opportunity for studying the cultures of the Middle Ages in history, literature, art history, archaeology, and other related fields. These will allow you to:

- dive deeper into ongoing discussions in these areas, whether focused within the Medieval, Early Modern or Renaissance periods, or exploring interdisciplinary themes that link across this dynamic time period.
- As an alternative, you also have the option to pursue a module in independent Directed Reading, in which you will receive one-to-one support in writing a research essay on a topic of your choosing.
- Preparation for your dissertation is supported by a programme of research methods classes that cover broader research skills across Medieval and Early Modern studies, whilst also developing specialist knowledge necessary for Medieval research; this will hone the skills needed to complete your final research project.
- This programme is ideal for students approaching postgraduate study from a range of backgrounds. In addition to providing rigorous preparation for PhD research, it is equally well suited to the interests of the enthusiast, those who wish to deepen their knowledge of the Middle Ages, and those who are returning to study to pursue a personal passion.

Students write essays grounded in primary research that allow them to begin situating themselves within and contributing to a given field within Medieval studies. The culmination of the programme is the production of a piece of original, independent scholarly work in the form of the MA dissertation that could potentially support the pursuit of the PhD.

A combination of taught core and option modules with an independent research component enables you to tailor the programme to your personal interests. The programme allows you to engage with advanced work at MA level and is also an excellent preparation for doctoral research.

Students at Birkbeck have access to some of the best resources in the world for research in this period, being close to many renowned research libraries, galleries, museums, and manuscript repositories. This programme teaches the skills which are needed to explore those riches in original and scholarly ways.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	AREN293S7	Medieval and Early Modern Worlds	30	Compulsory	1
7		Option module 1	30	Option	1
7		Option module 2	30	Option	2
7		Option module 3	30	Option	2
7	AREN294D7	Medieval, Early Modern and Renaissance Studies Dissertation	60	Core	3
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	AREN293S7	Medieval and Early Modern Worlds	30	Compulsory	1
7		Option module 1	30	Option	2
Year 2					
7		Option module 2	30	Option	1
7	-	Option module 3	30	Option	2
7	AREN294D7	Medieval, Early Modern and Renaissance Studies Dissertation	60	Core	3

Indicative option modules:

AREN243S7 Songs of the Earth: Texts and Landscapes in Early Medieval England

AREN270S7 Lessons from the Medieval and Early Modern Body

SSHC488S7 Imagined Landscapes of the Middle Ages

SSHC477S7 The Silk Road: Imagining Global Cultures from the Middle Ages to UNESCO and BRI

AREN194S7 The Woman Question: Medieval to Renaissance

AREN268S7 Medievalism: Re-presenting the Middle Ages

SSHC458S7 Me, Myself and You: Histories of Self and Belonging, 1500 to the 21st Century

SSHC428S7 To See the World in a Grain of Sand: Reading and Writing Microhistories

ARVC002S7 Gothic in England: Architecture, Liturgy and Identity 1170-1360

ENHU071S7 Magic, Science and Religion in the Renaissance

AREN216S7 Renaissance Loves

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

The programme is primarily taught through seminars and short lectures, which may include elements of blended online learning, and one-to-one supervisory tutorials. This may be supplemented, where appropriate, through field trips, site visits, and visits to museum collections and archives. Learning opportunities may, where appropriate, include presentations on (e.g.) topics for class discussion and work-in-progress.

The programme also requires significant independent study in preparation for learning opportunities and coursework assignments. An optional module in independent Directed Reading offers students the opportunity to develop a shorter independent research project before completing the Dissertation.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. We use a variety of assessment methods. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Summative assessment takes place primarily through written work in the form of coursework (including essays and commentaries). It may also include other formats such as presentations and the curation of material culture and visual arts. Formative assessment may also include presentations, written work, and the preparation of other forms of media.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- apply key research skills in Medieval studies
- show awareness of how modern theoretical frameworks structure study of the literature, people, places, artistic productions, and social patterns of the Medieval past
- work with a variety of types of primary and secondary sources for Medieval cultures
- generate and develop scholarly research projects in Medieval studies
- demonstrate research skills applicable to Medieval Studies research that may include paleography, transcription, manuscript provenance, identification, and dating

Careers and further study

You will find MA Medieval Studies graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- archivist
- researcher
- teacher or lecturer

- journalist
- publisher
- arts administrator
- museum/gallery curator
- museum education officer
- librarian
- information officer
- heritage manager
- editor

Birkbeck's MA Medieval Studies graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Postgraduate research skills in Medieval Studies
- Postgraduate skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument at Postgraduate level

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives

to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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