Film and Screen Studies (FSS)
MPhil by Advanced Study
Guidelines 2024-25

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This document, intended as a reference for both students and staff, provides guidance on the Film and Screen Studies *MPhil by Advanced Study*, involving essays and a dissertation.[1]

This course provides the opportunity to make a self-contained, in-depth study of specific aspects of Film and Screen Studies, and to write a short dissertation on a topic of personal interest. It is also designed to serve as the first year of study for students who intend to continue with PhD research at Cambridge in Film and Screen Studies.

The University issues a [Code of Practice for Master's Students](#) which sets out the University's guidelines for these courses. Students, Course Directors, and Supervisors are encouraged to read/discuss the contents of the Code in addition to the following guidelines.

1   TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

1.1   The overall structure of the course

This is a nine-month course that runs from October to June of any given academic year. Students are expected to submit coursework and a dissertation during the year, as follows:

Michaelmas Term (Core Course):

During the first term of study, students attend weekly lectures, proseminars, and seminars (totalling 5 hours a week), as well as film screenings. These are designed to provide a broad insight into moving image theory and culture.

The [core course](#) is divided into two strands: 'Theorising Moving Images' and 'Topics in Film and Screen Studies'. Topics in Film and Screen Studies is conducted as a proseminar; sessions are two hours long and combine lecture and seminar format. Theorising Moving Images is taught as a series of one-hour lectures accompanied by two-hour weekly seminars for deeper, student-led discussion of films and texts. Please see section 1.2, Attendance and Participation, for more on seminars.

At the end of this term, students submit one 4,500-word essay. The essay focuses on a specific theoretical framework or critical approach.

Lent Term (modules):

During Lent term, students take two modules chosen from a range of module options. Some are shared with different MPhils (e.g. ELAC) and other Departments/Faculties/Centres within the University, such as the Centre of Latin American Studies or the Faculty of English. Students must choose two modules, and **at least** one must be from the Film module list (i.e. students may not choose two modules listed under the ELAC MPhil list unless they have written consent from the Course Director). The list of modules can change from year to year depending on the availability of

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[1] There is a separate set of Guidelines for Film and Screen Studies *MPhil by Thesis*, which is a different course.

academic staff. Students attend weekly group seminars led by the module convener. Module seminars are 1.5 to 2 hours per session.

2 x 4,500 word essays are submitted at the end of Lent term.

Easter Term (dissertation):

Full-time research on the dissertation.

A dissertation of no more than 15,000 words is submitted in mid-June.

1.2   Attendance and Participation

Attendance at assigned Seminars and Modules
Attendance at assigned Seminars, Modules and Core Course lectures and proseminars is mandatory, and non-attendance will be reported to the Course Director. Absence may have particular implications for students on visas, and those who have received scholarships, as regular attendance is usually required by funding bodies as a condition of any award.

Participation in Seminars and Modules
Participation in core course seminars and modules is likewise essential. An important catalyst for conversation and debate in Core Course Seminars, and often in Modules as well, are student presentations. For Core Course Seminars, every student is required to present once during the term; while the presentations are not assessed, they are key to the learning process, offering opportunities to practice close reading and viewing prior to writing MPhil essays.

Core Course student presentations should be roughly 10 minutes long and will engage the film(s) assigned for Theorising Moving Images that week by identifying key themes, concerns, and questions for the group to discuss. Students should open up lines of inquiry pertinent to the broad task of historicising and theorising moving-image works and the more specific aim of contextualising such works according to the theme at hand that week (e.g. 'Time'). Presentations may refer to the week's lecture, but need not restate points from the lecture, and should offer fresh insights and questions. It is helpful though not strictly required to use slides with text, images and, if appropriate, short video clips. The Course Director or Core Course lecturers will offer further details on expectations for Presentations at or prior to the first Core Course seminar.

Attendance at Research Seminars

Across both the Michaelmas and Lent terms, students are expected to attend the Film and Screen Studies Research Seminar series and other related master classes and events.

1.3   The nature of the assessed work

Three 4,500-word essays and a 14-15,000-word dissertation are all assessed as examples of postgraduate writing and as such we expect them to combine scholarly research and critical analysis. What we mean by these terms is explained below.

By 'scholarly research', we mean that the work should show detailed knowledge and careful analysis of primary texts (whether these are avant-garde films, documentaries, websites, installations or other audiovisual or artistic artefacts). It is not sufficient merely to 'tell the story' of a film (however complex) or to paraphrase a theory (however difficult). Students writing on film and other screen

media are reminded that they should pay attention where appropriate to the visual organization, sound and music as well as dialogue and/or titles. Research also requires awareness of the relevant secondary literature (critical monographs, theoretical analyses of the genre, surveys of the field, etc.), and an ability to assess, assimilate and master such material. It is not good practice either to paraphrase one or two critics, or to 'drop' the names of dozens. Proper acknowledgement should be given when drawing on other scholars' work.

By 'critical analysis', we mean that the work should develop an argument (as indeed the term 'dissertation' itself suggests). This may be more or less polemical, but should in any case be a lucid, coherent and carefully substantiated exposition of a critical viewpoint in its own right. It is not acceptable to produce an unstructured meditation, an unmotivated appreciation or an unexplained critique, nor even to string together a series of divergent comments, however apt these might be if taken separately.

An essay or dissertation is subject to all such normal requirements of publishable academic writing as to relevance, clarity, and correctness.

Writing must be in clear, grammatically correct, continuous prose. It must build up a single, comprehensible, persuasive, cumulative demonstration, not a series of disconnected insights. Essays that contain irrelevant or digressive material will be penalised. The quality of the argument and the debate are at least as important to the examiners as the flash of insight that inspired the piece of work in the first place. The organisation of the argument of the essay or dissertation, and its prose style, are of crucial importance in giving cogency and credibility to your research and critical position.

The dissertation must be clearly written, take into account previously published work on the subject, and represent a contribution to learning. The contribution to learning may consist in developing new angles on familiar material or in uncovering and analysing unknown or little-known texts.

1.4   Language used in Coursework

All students must submit their coursework in English. The quality and comprehensibility of English in essays and dissertations will be taken into account by assessors. Non-native English speakers should pay particular attention to this and perhaps ask a non-specialist friend to read through work before submission. Your Supervisor will be concentrating on content and will not have time to correct all grammatical and stylistic mistakes.

It is important that students, supervisors, examiners and proofreaders understand what is and is not acceptable when checking text. The University has issued Guidance on proofreading which can help to define the roles and responsibilities of students and proofreaders.

International students may wish to make use of the Language Centre's Academic Development and Training for International Students (ADTIS), to assist them in reaching their potential by focusing on the communication and language proficiencies essential in academic work. Colleges may also be able to offer study skills support.

1.5   Topics and Titles

Essay topics
Essays are to be written on a topic chosen individually by each student in consultation with one of the course lecturers or module leaders, and relating to the lectures or modules on the course.

Essays do not have to be 'original' in the sense of discovering new material or presenting previously unpublished ideas, but they should show evidence of independent research, interpretation and judgement.

Students may plan their essays as part of an ongoing research enterprise, fitting in with their other essays and their dissertation, if they wish, but they are also at liberty to write an entirely self-sufficient piece. While there may well be a continuity of ideas between the different pieces of work, each must stand in its own right, and any substantial duplication of argument will be subject to penalty. Students may well find it useful to test out ideas for the dissertation in a module paper.

Students should seek approval of essay topics from their module convenor/(s). Module essays must in some way engage with films, audiovisual media, and/or film and screen studies as a discipline. Module convenors will not normally reject any topic which may reasonably be deemed to fall within the remit of the module's general subject area. The MPhil Course Director will have the final overall approval and will be responsible for resolving any cases of conflict that may arise, and the Faculty Degree Committee retains oversight on approved topics.

Students are not required to submit titles of their essay in advance of submission.

Dissertation topics and titles

Topics must be submitted by a deadline early in Lent term. Up to this point the Course Director is the titular Supervisor of MPhil students, until a specialist Supervisor is approved for each student. Students should approach a potential Supervisor with an outline before committing to a dissertation topic. The MPhil Course Director will have final approval of the dissertation topic and will be responsible for resolving any cases of conflict that may arise. The Faculty Degree Committee retains oversight on approved topics.

Comparative projects that reach beyond the disciplines represented in Film and Screen Studies would ordinarily require co-supervision involving a specialist in the outside discipline, and they would usually also require the appointment of an examiner from outside the Centre for Film and Screen Studies prior to approval of the dissertation title by the Director. While this kind of undertaking is possible, students should be aware that it requires them to be proactive about seeking advice and approvals at an early date. See also section 1.6 on supervision.

Please refer to the key dates document on Moodle for the deadlines for topics, working titles and the final submission. Please note that *minor* changes to the dissertation title are still permitted after the deadline to submit the working title (students should email the Postgraduate Office if such minor amendments are required).

1.6   Supervision

General information on supervisions
The Code of Practice for MPhil By Advanced Study Students sets out the University's expectations regarding supervision.

The Course Director is initially the titular Supervisor of all MPhil students (shown on CamSiS), up to the point where the dissertation Supervisor has been agreed.

Students may choose to use seminars as a place to test out their ideas for an essay and obtain feedback on them. Students are also entitled to individual supervisions. These sessions provide advice on focusing the topic, suggestions for relevant reading, and comments on a rough draft. Usually, the Supervisor will be the senior member most obviously identified with the topic in question: for example, the person who gave the most closely related lecture or led the most closely

related seminar. For the dissertation, students are encouraged to look at the Film & Screen website and find profiles of the academic staff who might supervise their work.

It is expected that the student will be capable of largely independent work. Supervisors are permitted only to read **one** draft of each section, and students are then responsible for implementing any changes.

Feedback is normally given on **sections as they are written** rather than of the whole work at a late stage when it may be too late to implement more substantial revisions.

Students should note that the course of supervisions should be completed at least one week before the **original** submission date. Students with extensions should note that supervisions will not be held during the extension period, except under truly exceptional circumstances. Students should plan ahead as much as possible and arrange for supervisions to occur at least one week before the **original** submission date.

Length of supervisions
For equity, there are norms for the amount of supervision each student can expect to receive.

The following supervision is provided:

• One hour per essay; this is split into two sessions of 30 minutes.

• Four hours for the dissertation; split into sessions as appropriate and as agreed with the Supervisor.

It is the student's responsibility to approach the relevant Supervisor and make an appointment.

Plan of work
It is most efficient for students to **make an outline, or skeletal plan, occupying no more than one side of A4 paper** which can be discussed during the supervision to ensure coverage of the necessary points.

Approaching a Supervisor
Students should approach a potential Supervisor with an outline before committing to a topic.

Co-supervision
Students should approach a **single Supervisor for each piece of coursework,** as co-supervision is not normally permitted, because it cannot easily be supported at the examination stage.

In the **rare** event that a dissertation is co-supervised (see Section 1.5 on comparative projects that reach beyond the disciplines represented in MMLL), a candidate may expect two hours of individual supervision from each Supervisor. Only one Supervisor is permitted to comment on one draft of the dissertation.

Advice on choosing/securing a Supervisor
Students may contact the Course Director for advice or in case of any issues in choosing or securing a Supervisor.

1.7   Outline assessment schedule

Cambridge teaching weeks start on a Thursday. So, Thursday of week 1 of Michaelmas Term is the first day of lectures.

Michaelmas Term

Monday, week 5: Students to confirm Core Course Essay topic

Friday, out of term (equivalent of week 10): Deadline for Submission of Core Course Essay

Lent Term

Friday, week 3: Students to confirm both Module Essay topics

Friday, week 4: Students confirm dissertation topic and dissertation Supervisor name

Wednesday, week 9: Students submit both Module Essays

Thursday, out of Term: Students submit dissertation proposal (a brief description of the dissertation topic and the materials being worked on, 150-200 words)

Easter Term

Friday, week 4: Students confirm dissertation working title

Mid-June: Students submit the dissertation.

Any **vivas** (if needed) take place in early July.

Submission deadlines are at midday (see also Section 2.4 on penalties for late submission).

The full schedule for the year, with exact dates, is given in the relevant Key Dates document on Moodle.

1.8   Word Limits

All word limits are strict maxima and must not be exceeded. A word count must be included for each essay and for the dissertation. In the case of the essays, a word count of 4,500 should never be exceeded. In the case of the dissertation, a word count of 15,000 words should never be exceeded.

Essays and dissertations are not allowed to exceed the word limit, though they may be shorter.

The word count includes notes, footnotes, subheadings, and tables in the text but excludes the bibliography, contents page, filmography, page numbering and any appendices or translations that the student has been asked to provide. The title page does not count towards the word limit.

Students should tick the 'include footnotes and endnotes' box in their word processing package when checking the length. Some students forget this, and then lose marks as a result of exceeding the word count. All quotations etc. are counted within the word count total.

The word count must be stated clearly on the coversheet of the essay/dissertation. The word count of the electronic copy will be checked. Marks are deducted routinely for work exceeding the word limit (see Section 2.4).

1.9   Appendices

Permission to attach an appendix must be sought from the Course Director, and the student should give clear justification for including it. Appendices may not be used to provide quotations that readers will need to understand your analysis, for example; those must be included in your text. An appendix submitted with an essay or dissertation, for which permission has not been given, will be

deemed to be part of the wordcount, and penalties (outlined above) applied.

1.10 Images

Including images in coursework, if desired, is permitted. Images should be captioned. Captions should be brief, factual, and non-discursive, and are included in the word count.

1.11 Quotations

Where examples are cited in a language other than English, only the examples themselves will be taken into account for the purposes of the word limit: any associated glosses and/or translations will be exempt. In cases where this results in a total which exceeds the word limit, the total number of words (including the exempt material) should still be declared, together with the number of words comprised by the exempt material.

1.12 Deadlines and extensions

Few pieces of written work would not benefit from some extra hours or days of perfectionism. But remember that those marking your work will never judge your essay or dissertation in absolute terms, but **as the best you can produce in the timeframe specified for its completion**. Therefore, in a spirit of fairness to all members of our MPhil cohort, we do not allow a given student flexibility over deadlines. This means planning for the unexpected (the printer breaking, the network crashing, and so on) to allow a safety margin. Because coursework submission deadlines are set some time in advance, you should plan your work so that submission is not delayed by a short-term circumstance such as a minor illness or other short disruption to your study. Extensions are not permitted in these circumstances.

The Faculty will only be able to consider extension requests where students can show that a circumstance has had a significant and disproportionate effect on their ability to submit the coursework by the deadline.

For further information on extensions, and for the application procedure, please see the document entitled 'MPhil by Advanced Study extensions guidance' on Moodle.

1.13   Submission of written work

Electronic (pdf) submission via Moodle (using Turnitin) is required, as detailed below.

Essays	1 pdf file of each essay
Dissertation	1 pdf file

Please note that submitted work cannot be retracted or amended, so students should be careful to check the correct file is uploaded when submitting.

See separate key dates document for details of submission dates.

Since both module essays are due on the same date, students may prefer to submit one of them earlier.

2 DETAILS OF ASSESSMENT

2.1 Contribution of marks for each examined component

The Coursework Mark carries 50% of the final MPhil mark and the dissertation carries the remaining 50%.

The Coursework Mark is the sum of twice the two highest essay marks, plus the lowest mark, divided by 5. It is calculated to 2 decimal points. No rounding up is done.

The overall MPhil mark is the average of the Coursework Mark and the dissertation mark. This overall mark will be averaged to two decimal places and rounded up or down at the final Examiners' meeting. Marks are rounded down from .40, and up from .50 (e.g 71.30 = 71, and 67.60 = 68).

Successful candidates will be expected to achieve a pass in both the Coursework Mark (i.e the weighted average of the essays)' and the dissertation element of the course, except that candidates whose overall mark for the Coursework Mark is equivalent to a marginal fail (58-59) will be considered eligible for the award of MPhil if their dissertation achieves at least a high pass mark (65-74), and vice versa.

2.2 Marking scales and criteria

The Faculty uses a criterion marking reference system. The marking scale is numerical, nominally from 0 to 100, but, in line with widespread practice in arts subjects in British universities, marks are not awarded above a particular threshold, in this case 90. The use of the mark scale can be glossed as follows, although officially the MPhil is a 'distinction/pass/fail' degree only. **The Faculty specifies an overall course mark of distinction, ≥75, as the threshold for continuation to the PhD.**

2.3 Marking criteria for written work

The subdivisions of the mark range, and the criteria by which written work is judged, are as follows:

Distinction marks

85-90:
Outstanding work that excels in all the criteria required for a distinction and is of publishable or near-publishable quality. Disagreements or objections that the work may provoke will be of the kind that stimulate academic debate.

75-84:
Work in this range will engage critically with and develop an independent perspective on existing scholarship on the subject. It will display rigorous handling of theoretical, critical, conceptual or

contextual issues. Work at the upper end of this category will display particular sophistication in relation to these criteria.

Work in the 75+ range will demonstrate readiness for advanced research.

Pass marks

65-74:
Work that shows at least three of the following:
- Good knowledge and understanding of the material studied
- Competence in theoretical and conceptual issues
- Capacity for critical analysis
- Arguments supported by detailed reference to the relevant materials
- Arguments well-structured and relevant to the topic

60-64:
Work that shows some competence and knowledge, with satisfactory presentation and documentation, but is characterized by one or more of the following:
- Inaccurate or insufficient detailed reference to materials studied
- Limited understanding of theoretical or conceptual issues
- Limited critical analysis
- Arguments not always well constructed or presented or relevant to the topic

Fail marks

58-59:
Work showing any one of the following (in practice, these shortcomings tend to co-occur and are not easily separated):
- Lack of knowledge or understanding of the material studied
- Lack of knowledge or understanding of relevant theoretical or conceptual issues
- Incompetence in methods of analysis and procedures that are routinely applied to the kind of material under discussion
- Inability to construct and present an argument

less than 58:
Work that reveals serious confusion and/or which is significantly unscholarly in its method, argument, or presentation.

2.4   Misdemeanours, felonies, and penalties

Exceeding the word limit

1 mark per 100 words or part thereof will be automatically deducted for work which is over the word limit.

Although marks will not be deducted for work which is under the word limit, it must be remembered that the quality of a piece of work which is significantly under the limit may well suffer adversely when compared to work which is nearer the word limit. Examiners will expect an argument of a certain complexity, fully contextualised and with well-developed examples. It is rarely possible to achieve that in fewer words.

Late submission

Out of fairness to the great majority of students who do meet deadlines, work which is submitted late will be penalised if no extension has been granted. Any late submission will incur an automatic three-point penalty for work submitted after the deadline but within one day of the deadline. Following this, one further mark for each further day or part thereof will be deducted.

Academic misconduct

Substantive duplication of work in different assignments will be penalised, as will any form of academic misconduct. See https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/definition for information on what constitutes academic misconduct. Students must read the full information on this webpage and click on each of the links on the left hand-side of the page for more detail.

Students who use proofreading services should ensure they are aware of the University guidelines on this: https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/collusion

At the very least, academic misconduct is likely to result in loss of marks. Serious cases may result in a student being withdrawn from the University and the degree sought.

A type of academic misconduct is plagiarism: using someone else's ideas, words, data, or other material produced by them without acknowledgement.Therefore, copying out someone else's work without due indication and acknowledgement (quotation marks and source: page citation) is plagiarism. So is rewording someone else's work in order to present it as original without acknowledging the intellectual debt. So, too, is presenting any 'writing' by artificially intelligent agents as one's own (see Plagiarism - AI). Candidates must avoid (the appearance of) plagiarism by carefully acknowledging sources.

Plagiarism is unethical and corrodes the principles of scholarship. It is not tolerated at any level in the University.

Collaboration

Collaborative preparation of assessed work is not permitted.

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3   CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATIONS

3.1   Role of the External Examiner

The MPhil always has an External Examiner from another institution. The usual role of the External Examiner is to act in a moderating capacity (and also sometimes in an adjudicating capacity). They also provide an independent assessment of academic standards. The reports of External Examiners contribute to the University's monitoring and quality assurance activities each year.

External Examiners do not carry out marking of assessed work. Rather, they are involved in assessing whether internal marking has been appropriately and consistently applied. External Examiners are entitled to see all work that contributes to the assessment and subsequent classification. More usually however, External Examiners will review a sample of work to ensure that internal marking is accurate and consistent and that classifications are of an appropriate standard. External Examiners are expected to advise on the borderlines between classes and between passing and failing.

The sample of work to be referred to the External Examiner will include work from the top, middle and bottom of the range, borderline candidates. Reports from the assessors will be referred with work. External Examiners should discuss with the Senior Examiner the number of essays/dissertations to be referred.

In circumstances where the External Examiner raises a legitimate concern regarding marks, it is generally not be appropriate to adjust the marks of a limited number of students whose work has been sampled. Under such circumstances, adjustments to marks should be made with reference to the entire cohort.

Internal examiners should attempt to agree marks where possible. The External Examiner should be in a position to report on the soundness of the procedures used to reach a final agreed mark, by obtaining information on the method used to reconcile divergent marks. In exceptional circumstances, where marks cannot be reconciled, the External Examiner may be asked to provide their view.

3.2   Essays

Essays are marked by a first assessor, and then will undergo an internal moderation process by a second assessor.

3.3   Dissertation

The research presented in the dissertation is evaluated independently by two examiners on the basis of the written dissertation. Where it is felt further information is needed, a viva voce examination of the candidate may be held (see next section). The dissertation Supervisor cannot examine the dissertation.

3.4   Viva

A viva voce examination following submission of the dissertation, but not of the essays, may be held at the discretion of the examiners. The purpose of this viva is to give the examiners additional information, if needed, to agree a mark. A viva must also be held if academic misconduct is suspected. Candidates should not jump to negative conclusions from being asked to a viva.

Where assessors decide to hold a viva as part of the assessment process, the decision on an agreed mark will be deferred until after the candidate's viva has taken place. Students who are asked to attend a viva should note that vivas provide an opportunity for students to respond to any questions that assessors may have. They should prepare to discuss the content of their dissertations in detail.

Any viva is chaired by either the Director of the MPhil or a substitute appointed by them. The Chair does not normally ask questions during the examination. In addition to chairing the meeting, their role is to ensure that the examination process conforms to the regulations. The viva is expected to last approximately 30 minutes. The External Examiner may choose to attend any viva and ask questions.

3.5   Moderation of marks and adjudication

Where the two assessors have been unable to agree, or where their marks diverge by 8 or more points, they will be asked to submit separate reports. In such cases, the External Examiner will normally be asked to give their view, which will be subject to the approval of the Examiners'

Meeting. The proposed mark will normally be expected to fall within the boundaries of the original two assessors' marks.

At each stage of the assessment, the External Examiner will be invited to read, for calibration, a selection of written work from the top, middle and bottom of the range. Additionally, those with a borderline pass, and any work achieving a fail mark will be standardly referred. The External Examiner may also choose to read any other work.

3.6   Examiners' Meetings

For each of the two essay assessment rounds, outcomes are discussed and approved at Examiners' Meetings. Examiners consider and approve the final essay marksheets.

Following the dissertation assessment round, a Final Examiners' Meeting is held, and this is attended by the External Examiner. The final dissertation marksheet is approved, as well as the final marksheet for the course with the final overall result for each student. Marks agreed at the final meeting with the External Examiner cannot normally be altered at any later stage of the examining process.

Course marks and the approved marksheet are considered by the Degree Committee before the degree is awarded.

When each essay round of the process is complete, students will receive a copy of the assessors' joint report on their work. For the dissertation, two independent reports are provided. Where an essay has been referred for adjudication, the assessors will take account of the adjudicator's comments when compiling their joint report.

Examiners' reports should not only clarify how the mark was arrived at, but additionally the reports serve as feedback: it is helpful for students to know how they might improve their coursework in future. For this reason, feedback should not be too general; Examiners should refer to specific portions of the essay in their feedback whenever possible.

3.7   Degree approval and graduation

The Postgraduate Office will email students once their final result is available. Those who have not been granted any extension on the dissertation submission deadline will normally be eligible to apply for a graduation ceremony to be held in July (although there may be exceptional circumstances in which the examining process may not be completed in time). All other successful candidates will normally be eligible to apply to attend a graduation ceremony at a later date. Dates of graduation ceremonies are available here, and students should contact their College for any queries on reserving a place. See Degree Approval and Conferment for further information.

3.8   Feedback on assessed work

When marks for assessed work are finalised, they are made available individually to students, along with the Assessors' Joint Report (for the dissertation, students receive an independent report from each Assessor). In the case of the dissertation and the overall MPhil result, this will be once the Degree Committee has approved the Examiners' recommendations.

These marks are absolutely confidential. No student is entitled to know or discuss any other student's mark. Students may obtain feedback on their performance from the person who taught

them, and seek advice on how to improve if necessary. The Course Director is also available (in office hours) to provide advice and help if called upon.

3.9   Mitigation

For issues relating to assessment, a student's College Tutor will be able to discuss with them a number of existing mechanisms of support for the examination period.

Examination allowances can be applied for where students feel their exams were affected by medical or grave cause.

Examination Reviews may be requested in rare cases where students feel a procedural irregularity has occurred during the examination, or there is a perception of bias or withdrawal of academic provision that affected the examination outcome.

4   GUIDANCE ON PREPARING ASSESSED WORK

4.1   Title page / cover sheet

Please display the following information at the very top of your title page:

  [Candidate Number]
  [Submission Date: xxx]
  [Core Course Essay/ Module Essay / Dissertation]
  [MPhil in Film and Screen Studies By Advanced Study]

Lower down the page, please display the **coursework title**.

At the bottom of the page, please note your **word count and the type of referencing system used**.

In the case of the module essays, the module to which the essay relates should be clearly stated.

Additionally, for the dissertation, you should include the following wording on your title page:

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

Students will be emailed by the Postgraduate Office regarding their Candidate Number. This number should be used on final essay/dissertation submissions in place of student names.

Please see the separate guidance document available on Moodle entitled 'anonymising your submission'. This explains how you can remove metadata from your document before uploading it.

4.2   Style and relevance

For presentation and referencing, no single style is imposed, but students must use a style developed by one of the major professional associations or publishers. They must identify it on the title page and apply it consistently throughout the text, notes, and bibliography or reference list (this includes such details as the choice and placement of punctuation marks, the use of italics, and the conventions for capitalising names and words in titles). We

particularly recommend the *MHRA Style Book*, the *MLA Handbook*, or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. If you are not sure what style to use, please liaise with your Supervisor for advice. Please ensure you state which convention (e.g. style name and any qualifications such as 'author/date method') you are using on the title page.

Successful essays submitted by previous years' MPhil students may also be consulted; these are available on the Moodle course page.

Essays must be typed or word-processed, in a sans-serif font (e.g. Helvetica, Avant Garde, Arial, Geneva), and be double-spaced with adequate margins. These style guidelines are an accessibility / inclusivity requirement for readers with a range of impairments. In the case of the module essays, the module to which the essay relates should be clearly designated on the title page. An electronic copy (pdf) of each essay must be submitted (see separate key dates document for details of submission dates).

4.3   Planning

Before you begin to write in earnest, draw up an outline plan (no more than one A4 sheet). This will clarify your intentions as a basis for initial guidance as to scope and organisation from your supervisor.

4.4   Sectioning

It can be helpful to subdivide your argument into titled sections, especially to signpost the reader through the longer dissertation format. Excessive subdivision can, of course, be counterproductive. If in doubt, consult your Supervisor. In the case of dissertations a contents page will provide useful orientation. Remember to number pages.

4.5   References

Whether you choose to cite the work of others by direct quotation or by careful paraphrase will clearly depend upon how particular its significance is for your argument. Any points of substance, quoted or paraphrased from other authors, should be properly attributed, using a clear and consistent format. The author/date method is probably most practical for this type of work. It uses the author's surname, followed by the date of publication in brackets: **Kittler (1981)**. Where a specific passage is involved, add page numbers: **Kittler (1981: 157-8)**. If you are citing more than one work of the same year by the same author, distinguish them as follows: **Kittler (1992a)/Kittler (1992b)**. If two cited authors share the same surname, add their initials: **F. Kittler (1981)/W. Kittler (1986)**. Double-authored works are referred to thus: **Kittler and Schmidt (1990)**. Longer author lists are given in full in the first citation and may subsequently be abbreviated as follows: **Kittler et al. (1996)**.

Examples:
- Kittler (1992b: 129-32) argues that...
- Kittler argues that this is 'an untenable proposition' (1992b: 129-32)

4.6   List of works cited

An alphabetically organised section, headed References or Works Cited, at the end of your document should give full details of all cited works. (You may also choose to sub-divide these into two lists: a Bibliography and Filmography.) Remember to note these details carefully when consulting the texts concerned, rather than having to scramble to find them with a deadline

looming. If you wish to list works which have informed your argument without being cited in it, do so under a separate heading **(Other sources)**. No single style is imposed, but students should state which convention they are using at the beginning of the essays and dissertation.

4.7   Footnotes

Keep these to a minimum. In general, if something is worth saying, it is worth saying it in the main text.

4.8   Films and other sources not easily available

If your dissertation discusses a film, images or other sources which are not easily accessible via the University's libraries, you may wish to consider making CD or DVD copies available to your assessors, or alternatively upload any films or images onto www.dropbox.com and let the Postgraduate Office have the link, so that examiners can access these. However, there is no requirement to do this.

5   MISCELLANEOUS RESEARCH-RELATED MATTERS

5.1   Retaining work

The Section will retain copies of dissertations and essays and may make them available to future candidates (subject to them receiving a mark of distinction or above) unless the student makes a written request to the contrary to postgraduatestudies@mmll.cam.ac.uk. Copies will be kept for four years only.

5.2   Insurance and Working Away

If a student's research for the MPhil requires travel abroad, it may be possible to obtain travel cover under the [University's insurance policy](). In order to qualify for travel insurance, ALL trips outside the UK must be risk assessed, and [Risk Assessment Forms]() can be found on Moodle under the 'Resources' heading.

For any trips of 2 weeks or more, students must apply via their CamSiS Self-Service for permission to '[Work Away]() from Cambridge', and the Risk Assessment Form should be uploaded to the application.

For trips of less than 2 weeks, an application via CamSiS is not necessary but the Risk Assessment form should be completed and sent to your Supervisor for approval, and then emailed to the Postgraduate Office at [postgraduatestudies@mmll.cam.ac.uk](). Students are responsible for evaluating any risks to themselves, seeking appropriate advice, and giving personal safety due priority.For overseas trips, it is essential that students check [government advice]() on foreign travel frequently (when planning their trip, on the day of travel), and remain vigilant of any updates whilst away.

5.3   Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students using AI tools and websites must consider the [guiding principles]() laid out by the University (see Section entitled 'Guidance for Students').

5.4   Risk

Commonly in the MPhil the notion of risk is relevant in the academic domain. Part of planning research consists in trying to foresee what could go wrong. A historical manuscript or a corpus could become unexpectedly unavailable, a corpus of literature could fail to yield the interesting things you had hoped, and so on. If such a risk has more than a negligible probability, it is wise to think of a 'plan B' for completing the work.

The commonest risks, however, subsist in the temperament of our technological infrastructure. We cannot rely on our computers, disk drives, and printers having the same cool, logical, and robust approach to life we humans have. They are especially prone to crises at times of stress, even if treated with sympathy and understanding. Always, therefore, anticipate such crises, which, because predictable, are not grounds for a deadline extension. In particular:

> **Always keep complete and up-to-date backups of your work**.

> **Set yourself your own deadline a week before the official deadline.**
> **This will give you leeway in case there is a last-minute problem.**

Good luck and enjoy the course!

NB: These guidelines are intended to lay down normal practice and do not have any legal status.

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Dr Kareem Estefan, Course Director: MPhil Film and Screen Studies
October 2024