European, Latin American, and Comparative Literatures and Cultures (ELAC)
MPhil by Advanced Study
Guidelines 2023-24

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This document, intended as a reference for both students and staff, provides guidance on the ELAC *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 European and/or Latin American Literature, Culture and Critical theory, 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 any area of literature and culture in the languages offered in the MMLL Faculty.

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 ELAC 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 lecture classes and mini-seminars designed to give them a broad insight into European literature and culture. Lecture classes are 2 hours x 8 sessions. Students take two sets of mini-seminars; each set is 2 hours x 4 sessions.

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. Film) and other Departments and Faculties/Centres within the University, such as the Centre of Latin American Studies. The list of modules can change from year to year depending on the availability of academic staff. Students attend weekly group seminars led by the module convener. Module seminars are 1.5 to 2 hours per session. The list of modules offered each year (subject to take-up) is circulated to students in the summer prior to starting the course, and is also available on the [ELAC website.](#)

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 early June.

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

1.2 Attendance

Attendance at assigned Seminars, Modules and Core Course lectures

Attendance at assigned Seminars, Modules and Core Course lectures 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.

Attendance at Research Seminars

Students are also encouraged to attend the Research Seminar series hosted by the French, German, Italian, Slavonic, Spanish & Portuguese Sections which most fit their own areas of interest (and if the timetable allows). The best way to find out about these is to ask directly the lecturers in the relevant areas. They take different forms in different areas (e.g. French has separate 19th century, 20th-21st century, Early Modern, and Medieval research seminars which welcome local and international speakers to talk about their work, often in convivial surroundings, usually two, three or four times per term). Each Section organizes Research Seminars of various kinds, and this can be a stimulating addition to your mandatory classes, especially if you are thinking about the possibility of doing a PhD later.

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 medieval manuscripts, nineteenth-century novels or contemporary films). It is not sufficient merely to 'tell the story' of a novel (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 Core Course essay in English. In January, after Core Course marks have been received, any student who wishes to submit a module essay in a language other than English should seek formal permission from the Course Director and the relevant supervisor. The dissertation must be written in English, but it should ordinarily engage with material in the original language of its publication. The chosen language should be appropriate to the essay topic and there should be good intellectual reasons for submitting the work in that language.
The quality and comprehensibility of English in essays and dissertations will be taken into account by assessors. Supervisors will be concentrating on content and will not have time to correct all grammatical and stylistic mistakes. Non-native English speakers should pay particular attention to this and perhaps ask a non-specialist friend to read through work before submission.

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

General guidance on topics
All written work submitted for the course must fall within the field of European, Latin American, or Comparative Literature and Culture. We are a Faculty of Modern Languages, not English, and students may not submit work that focuses predominantly on literature written in English or other cultural artifacts from the Anglophone world. Students may submit comparative essays and dissertations in which Anglophone material offers one of the points of comparison, but the work in question should devote as much time to the non-Anglophone material as it does to the Anglophone. The same guidelines apply to material created in the cultures that are covered by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies or the Faculty of Classics.

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

The Critical Theory essay may be either 'pure' or 'applied', that is, it may study some aspect of a theory at first hand, or it may explore the implications of a theory in relation to a chosen text or texts. The main aim here is to show the critical ability to handle and assess theoretical positions; while references to literary or other cultural material should of course be accurate and well-judged, candidates are not expected to show as substantial a contextual or bibliographical range in this respect as for the module essays.

Students should seek approval of essay topics from their module convenor/(s). 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. 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.

MPhil Course Director will have the 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 MMLL 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 Faculty 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 1.8 on supervision.

Please refer to the key dates document 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 Pathways

Students may opt to take a Medieval and Early Modern pathway through the Core Course. The pathway is aimed at students who wish to specialize in subjects linked to Medieval and/or Early Modern studies. The course offers tailored training to students working in this field, providing theoretical and practical tools to read, understand and work on pre-modern sources. The pathway is a flexible structure that can be adjusted to particular needs and interests offering a wide range of approaches to a variety of texts and historical contexts. This course is particularly suited to students wishing to pursue their postgraduate studies further and work on a PhD in Medieval and/or Early Modern studies. Students in this pathway would ordinarily select Palaeography and Editorial Techniques as one of their mini-seminars in the first term. They may choose either to submit an

editing project for their Core Course work, or a Core Course essay related to their other mini-seminar. In the Lent term, they should take at least one module focusing on medieval or early modern material.

In a similar vein, students may opt for the Latin American pathway, by choosing two of the three relevant Latin American MPhil modules.

1.7 Palaeography Coursework

Students following the core course seminars in palaeography and editorial techniques may submit an essay of 4,500 words, of which around 1,500 words will be a text from a local collection or available in high-quality digitization, edited or transcribed, and around 3000 words will be an introductory study and relevant critical apparatus.

This exercise is intended to demonstrate critical awareness of the issues around transcription and editing that have been explored in the seminars, and the ability to apply them to a specific example, making rational and defensible decisions in relation to the problems presented. The introductory study should foreground the approach adopted and justify it, demonstrating a good knowledge of relevant theories. The critical apparatus must include rejected readings and may also include significant variants from a selection of additional manuscripts, if available. Exercises can vary, though they should usually include a transcription of a source and/or a collation with other sources. **Students should include good quality reproductions of the text edited or a link to the on-line digital source.**

1.8 Supervision

General information on supervisions

The [Code of Practice for Master's 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 may find it helpful to look at the MMLL website and find profiles of the Faculty members in the different language sections 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 <u>prior</u> to the week preceding submission.

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 prior to the week preceding 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 involving two members of the MMLL Faculty is not normally permitted, as it cannot 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.

1.9 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 4: Students to confirm Core Course Essay topic and supervisor name

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

Lent Term

Friday, week 3: Students confirm dissertation topic and dissertation supervisor name

Friday, week 5: Students confirm both Module Essay topics and Module supervisor names.

Wednesday, week 8: Students submit both Module Essays

Thursday, out of Term: Students submit dissertation proposal

Easter Term

Friday, week 4: Students confirm dissertation working title

Early June: Students submit the dissertation.

 Any **vivas** (if needed) take place in mid-late June.

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

Exact dates are given in the relevant Key Dates document on Moodle.

1.10   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, filmography (if applicable), 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).

1.11   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.

1.12   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.

1.13   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.

For the MPhil in European, Latin American, and Comparative Literatures and Cultures, quotation in the original language will be expected to be the norm. Students wishing to depart from this norm, or who have other questions relating to the language of quotations should contact the Course Director.

1.14   Deadlines and extensions

General guidance on deadlines and extensions
Few pieces of written work would not benefit from some extra hours or days of perfectionism. But remember: 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, submitted before the deadline, **where students can show that a circumstance has had a significant and disproportionate effect on their ability to submit the coursework by the deadline**. If the circumstance does not have a significant impact, or if students are unable to provide the evidence which would normally be expected in support, they should not apply for an extension.

Requests will be reviewed by the Faculty and will be treated confidentially and sympathetically, whatever the eventual outcome.

Application procedure
All students wishing to apply for an extension should complete the Extension Request Form, available via [Moodle](). Students should email the form to their College for approval before returning to the Postgraduate Office on [postgraduatestudies@mmll.cam.ac.uk](). For those applying for an extension for the dissertation, a formal application is also required via CamSiS (see next section).

Application via CamSiS for dissertation extensions
If an extension request (of any length) is approved internally by the Faculty **for the dissertation**, students will also be asked to make a request via CamSiS for '[Extending your submission date]()'. This is

because the assessment will need to be undertaken outside of the usual schedule, and therefore **the Student Registry will also need to approve** the request and update the student record accordingly. For this reason it is important to apply as early as possible to allow time for the approval processes.

Is supporting evidence required?

The provision of supporting evidence is not required when requesting an extension of one week or less for an essay submission. Essay extension requests for 8 days or more, or dissertation extensions of any length **do** require supporting evidence (unless specified otherwise below). In all cases students will need a supporting note from their College Tutor via the Extension Request Form.

Types of medical evidence

Where medical evidence is required, students must provide sufficiently detailed contemporary evidence from a medically qualified practitioner, for example a doctor's report. Where appropriate, evidence from an accredited counsellor may also be considered. The University is not able to cover the cost of medical documents submitted in support of an application. The evidence:

- should provide a clear diagnosis which includes the nature and severity of the illness;
- should state when and how the condition is likely to have affected the candidate's ability to submit their thesis by their deadline;
- should be precise and self-explanatory. The amount of evidence required will vary from case to case. For example, hospital admission will need a shorter explanation than will a less obvious or less serious condition where background information and details of the candidate's medical history may be required;
- must be in English. If the documents are not originally in English, they must be translated by a professional translating service. In some cases, it is acceptable for documents to be translated by a member of the student's College;
- should be on headed paper which includes full address and role title of the practitioner, dated and signed by the practitioner (or other appropriate professional).

Extension requests for conditions such as severe anxiety/depression fall under the 'medical' category.

Types of non-medical evidence

Students may not be required to provide evidence if their extension request relates to an ongoing circumstance for which they have previously submitted evidence (such as a flare-up of an existing condition). If a bereavement is suffered following the death of a close relative or friend, evidence is not normally required. If a student is a victim of crime which significantly disrupts their work, evidence such as a police incident report should be provided or, if this is not available, the student should contact their College Tutor for advice.

A supporting note from the student's College Tutor is required via the Extension Request Form.

Length of extensions

Only in the most severe cases will an extension be granted for more than seven days.

Students who find themselves unable to study for a prolonged period because of medical reasons or family emergencies should normally apply for [intermission](#). For this reason, applications for extensions based on medical grounds or grave cause are normally limited to one month.

Impact of extensions

Students should weigh the benefits of an extension against the risk of it impacting their ongoing studies. When an extension is granted, it should not be assumed that any future deadlines will be extended. For example, if a student has been granted an extension on the module essay round, there is no automatic extension given to the dissertation deadline. Permission for an extension on the dissertation deadline would need to be sought separately, and further justification given. Students with extensions should note that the timings for supervisions cannot normally be extended (see section 1.8 for information).

Students who are granted an extension on their dissertation submission will not be able to receive their results in time to graduate in July; and will need to wait until a later degree ceremony.

When to apply
Extension requests must be submitted as early as possible, and no later than 24 hours before the deadline. The only exceptions to the rule would be in case of emergency or accident. Students should work to their current due date until a decision has been communicated.

Uncertainty
Students who are unsure whether or not an extension is needed should discuss the situation with their College Tutor or Supervisor or Course Director **as soon as they can**, even if at that stage it is not clear how the situation will develop. If appropriate, a request for an extension can then be made once the situation is clear (as long as this is ahead of the deadline). The discussion could be used as support for students requesting a coursework extension, and could help in identifying alternative options to requesting an extension.

Outcomes
Students will receive an email from the Faculty either approving the requested extension, approving a different due date to the one requested, or declining the request for an extension.

Visa implications
If students have an extension for the submission of the dissertation, there may be visa implications. Visa advice is available from the International Students Team on international.students@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Extensions for students with a disability
The University makes special arrangements for students with a disability, including those with a long-term ongoing condition. Students may speak to their College Tutor in these cases, and where appropriate with the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre, in order to establish what appropriate adjustments should be made to your MPhil studies. Further, the MMLL Faculty has a Disability Officer, and you can find out more regarding their role and how to contact them via the Student welfare and wellbeing at MMLL webpage.

1.15   Submission of written work

Electronic (pdf) submission via Moodle 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 on Moodle for details of submission dates.

Since both of the 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: high distinction
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: distinction
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 distinction range will demonstrate readiness for advanced research.

Pass marks

65-74: high pass
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: pass
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: Marginal fail
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: Fail
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 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. 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

The essays and dissertations are all marked independently by two assessors, and a number will additionally be considered by the External Examiner.

The MPhil always has an External Examiner from another institution. The usual role of the External Examiner is that of moderator (and in some cases) adjudicator. Only in exceptional circumstances will the External be called to act as a regular assessor.

In all cases, the Examiners' reports and marks are made available to the External Examiner.

3.1 Essays

Each essay will be marked independently by two assessors, who will then, after consultation, submit their separate marks, an agreed mark and a joint report to the Postgraduate Office.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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, normally the External Examiner, will be asked to adjudicate. The mark allotted by the adjudicator will be regarded as the agreed mark, subject to the approval of the Examiners' Meeting. This will normally be expected to fall within the boundaries of the original two assessors' marks.
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> Where there is no adjudication, any agreed mark should not be lower than the lower of the two individual marks submitted by the assessors.
>
> When the marks have been agreed by the individual assessors, in consultation with the adjudicator if necessary, coursework falling into the following categories will be sent to the External Examiner for moderation: all failed work (57 and under), and borderline work (those given marks within the following bands: 58-60, 74-75, 84-85), and those with high distinctions (85 and over). Normal practice would be for the External either to confirm borderline marks, or to raise or lower them by up to three points. Samples from the middle of the pass and distinction range may also be sent to the External. They may also request to see any other essay/dissertation.
>
> Dissertations will also be sent to the External in cases where the dissertation mark is more than 8 marks below the Coursework Mark.

3.5 Examiners' Meetings

For each of the two the 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.

3.6 Degree approval and graduation

The Postgraduate Office will 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.

3.7 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. Please note, however, that the Examiners' decision is final.

4.   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 your examination outcome.

5.   GUIDANCE ON PREPARING ASSESSED WORK

5.1 Title page / cover sheet

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

  [Blind Grade Number: xxx]
  [Submission Date: xxx]
  [Core Course Essay/ Module Essay / Dissertation]
  [MPhil in European, Latin American and Comparative Literatures and Cultures 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 Blind Grade Number.

5.2 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).

5.3 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.

5.4 Sectioning etc

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 counter-productive. If in doubt, consult your supervisor. In the case of dissertations a contents page will provide useful orientation. Remember to number pages.

5.5 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)

5.6 List of references

An alphabetically organised section, headed References, at the end of your document should give full details of all cited works. 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.

5.7 Footnotes

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

The best way of ensuring that you are meeting the right standards of style and presentation is by allowing time before submission for your supervisor to read a final draft.

5.8 Bibliography / Filmography

Please note that a bibliography, and possibly a filmography, is an essential part of your essay and you will lose marks if you do not include this.

5.9 Palaeography

Palaeography students are encouraged to include line numbers when quoting text. However, please ensure that line numbers and text appear in separate columns of a table, so as to enable independent word limit checks.

5.10 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 http://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.

6. MISCELLANEOUS RESEARCH-RELATED MATTERS

6.1 Retaining work

The Faculty 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.

6.2 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 on 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.

6.3 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!

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

Dr Timothy Chesters, Course Director: MPhil in European, Latin American, and Comparative Literatures and Cultures

October 2023