The University of Manchester

Faculty of Humanities

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

MA Handbook 2024-25

Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Please Note:

Information relevant to all postgraduate taught programmes in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (SALC) can be found in the Student Handbook, which should be read and used as a reference in conjunction with this Handbook. The SALC Student Handbook is available via the SALC Students Community Page

Welcome

As Director of the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Master's programme, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you on the commencement of your postgraduate studies on the MA. I hope you will find the transition to postgraduate study to be a smooth one and that you will be stimulated by the mix of modules on offer. Members of academic staff in the School, along with staff in the John Rylands Library, are all very committed to the study of the medieval and early modern periods. We aim to provide teaching of the highest standard, and we hope that you can benefit from the experience of working with leading scholars in your field and from being part of a large and diverse postgraduate student community. This Handbook contains subject-specific information intended to help orientate you as you commence your postgraduate degree studies. Further information will be disseminated during the opening week of lectures by individual course directors, but for now I would ask you to take some time to read through this Handbook in order to familiarise yourself with the staff and structure of the MA programme. Please do not be afraid to contact me directly if you have any queries.

Professor Paul Oldfield **[paul.oldfield@manchester.ac.uk]**

SALC Staff supporting the MA in Medieval and Early Modern Studies

The programme is coordinated from the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies in the School of Arts, Languages, and Cultures (SALC), with the collaboration of curators and archivists in the John Rylands Library and the additional assistance of Dr Catherine Casson in the Enterprise Centre in the Manchester Business School and postdoctoral scholars in the John Rylands Research Institute. Instructors on modules on the MA vary from year to year, but in general are drawn from the staff connected to the University's Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies: https://www.mems.manchester.ac.uk/about/people/.

John Rylands Library staff contributing to the programme include:

Anne Anderton (Special Collections Curator)

Jane Gallagher (Head of Digital Special Collections and Services)

Dr Aya Van Renterghem (Special Collections Teaching and Learning Coordinator)

Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Aims of the MA in Medieval and Early Modern Studies
- To provide, through the provision of core and optional course units, substantive study of historical, literary, art-historical and cultural topics within the field of Medieval and Early Modern studies;
- To achieve, through core course provision, advanced training in the variety of skills necessary for independent research in the Medieval and Early Modern periods;
- To encourage students in the use of primary source material, appropriate to their level, and facilitate students' use of libraries and archives;
- To provide training appropriate for future research (eg. at PhD level), future career opportunities, and personal intellectual development;
- To enable students to work across disciplinary boundaries.

The specific pathways within the MA programme have additional aims, as follows:

MA in Medieval and Early Modern Studies - Medieval Pathway
- To achieve, through core course provision, an advanced understanding of the specificity of the Middle Ages compared to other cognate chronological periods (i.e. the classical, the early modern), with a critical comprehension of how periodisation is influenced by disciplinary norms;
- To enable self-critical original research on the medieval period, through completion of a dissertation on a theme relevant to the period;
- To develop understanding of the themes and issues pertinent to contemporary approaches in medieval studies through the provision of core and optional courses on the medieval period.

MA in Medieval and Early Modern Studies - Early Modern Pathway
- To achieve, through core course provision, an advanced understanding of the specificity of the Early Modern period compared to other cognate chronological periods (i.e. the classical, the medieval) with a critical comprehension of how periodisation is influenced by disciplinary norms;
- To enable self-critical original research on the Early Modern period, through completion of a dissertation on a theme relevant to the period;
- To develop understanding of the themes and issues pertinent to contemporary approaches in early modern studies through the provision of core and optional courses on the early modern period.

Intended Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the programme a typical student should be able to:

- **Knowledge and Understanding [Applicable to all pathways]**
  - Analyse and evaluate current problems and critical debates in the field of medieval and early modern studies;
  - Develop a systematic understanding of aspects of the medieval and early modern periods as appropriate to the specialised option units selected by the student;
  - Demonstrate a conceptual grasp of the applicability of different disciplinary approaches to medieval and early modern studies;
  - Engage critically with sources from the medieval and early modern periods, while recognising the value of attaining a skill set informed by the chronological breadth of both periods.

Applicable to Medieval Pathway only:
- Synthesise a range of perspectives on the political, economic, social and cultural material of the Middle Ages, as appropriate to the specialised option units selected by the student;

Applicable to Early Modern pathway only:
- Synthesise a range of perspectives on the political, economic, social and cultural material of the Early Modern period, as appropriate to the specialised option units selected by the student.

- **Intellectual Skills [Applicable to all pathways]:**
  - Critically analyse existing scholarship on the medieval and early modern periods, and build upon it;
  - Analyse and debate complex issues pertinent to the study of the medieval and early modern period;
  - Formulate research questions effectively, and develop as a self-directed learner;
  - Use a variety of primary sources from the medieval and early modern periods, and develop skills of critical analysis relevant to these sources.

- **Practical Skills [Applicable to all pathways]**
  - Develop research and essay writing techniques appropriate to the assessment required by the course units selected;
  - Sustain intellectual debate, orally and in writing, informed by primary and secondary source analysis;
  - Learn handling techniques appropriate to the primary source material encountered in core and optional units;
  - Develop information retrieval skills applicable to a range of resources (eg. libraries, archives, internet)

- **Transferable Skills and Personal Qualities [Applicable to all pathways]**
  - Develop time-management skills through efficient and timely preparation of assignments;
  - Use ICT resources for programme support;
  - Develop oral and written skills of expression;
  - Contribute to group discussions;
  - Develop as an autonomous learner through the effective completion of a variety of research outputs of various lengths and styles.

Programme Structure

Summary of Programme Structure and Requirements

In addition to the MA Medieval Studies and Early Modern Studies, students may opt to take one of two chronologically defined pathways:

MA Medieval and Early Modern Studies (Medieval)

MA Medieval and Early Modern Studies (Early Modern)

The pathways provide the opportunity for students to create a bespoke programme that attracts their intellectual interest, while the coherence of the programme on the whole is maintained through the provision of a number of compulsory units. The *Perspectives on Medieval and Early Modern Studies* course is intended to address theoretical issues pertinent to the Medieval and Early Modern periods, and will assume a cross-disciplinary approach. The two source-based course units (*Papyrus to Print: The History of the Book* and *Reading the Medieval and Early Modern: Palaeography, Codicology and Sources*) provide a broad-based chronological and cross-disciplinary approach to sources, while introducing common and specific skills appropriate to particular chronological junctures and disciplinary norms.

The programme **(all pathways)** consists of 180 credits (maximum number of credits that can be taken by student), of which 60 comprise compulsory course units, 60 are based on dissertation research (see specifications for pathways below), and 60 are optional course units (of which at least 15 credits must lie clearly within the specialism of the pathway specified by the student).

Full-time Degree Course:

Dissertation: (60 credits)

Students on all pathways must complete a dissertation.

Medieval Pathway:
The dissertation topic selected must lie within the medieval period.

Early Modern Pathway:
The dissertation topic selected must lie within the early modern period.

Compulsory Course Units [All Pathways]: (60 credits)

Semester 1:
- Perspectives on Medieval and Early Modern Studies (30 credits)
- From Papyrus to Print: The History of the Book (15 credits)
- Reading the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Palaeography, Codicology, and Sources (15 credits)

Semester 2:
- From Papyrus to Print: The History of the Book (15 credits)
- Reading the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Palaeography, Codicology, and Sources (15 credits)

Optional Course Units: (60 credits, to be spread over Semester 1 and 2)

The course units on offer vary from year to year. Current offerings include (all 15 credits):

CAHE70171   Intensive Latin 1
ENGL64111   Vital Matters: Medieval Ecologies
SPLA61151   History of the Spanish Atlantic World: Empire, Trade, War

CAHE70182   Intensive Latin 2
ENGL60492   Shakespeare: Theory and the Archive
ENGL60872   Wondrous Transformations: Translating the Medieval Past
HIST63192   Wonders, Miracles & Supernatural Landscapes in Medieval & Early
            Modern Europe
HIST64192   Club Med? How Mediterranean Empires Went Global
RELT71152   Jews Among Christians and Muslims
AHCP61642   The Art of Medieval Manuscripts
ENGL61162   Old English: Writing the Unreadable Past
SPLA61162   Culture and Empire in the Spanish Golden Age

Language (15-30 credits) - appropriate level taken to be discussed with the Programme Director, in consultation with the relevant department. A student can take no more than 30 language credits.

Medieval Pathway:
Of the optional course units selected, 15 credits must clearly be of relevance to the medieval period.

Early Modern Pathway:
Of the optional course units selected, 15 credits must clearly be of relevance to the early modern period.

Students may choose other relevant options from across the School up to a maximum of 30 credits, subject to approval by the relevant course directors and the Programme Director. These include a work placement in an appropriate heritage-based institution or project which can be taken as a 15 or 30 credit option.

Students are allowed to submit the dissertation after satisfying the examiners in their taught course units. Dissertation supervisors will only be allocated following the successful completion of the Research Outline.

Part-Time Degree Course:
Students following the part time degree course must ensure that they take all core course units (60 credits) and 60 credits of optional course units over the course of two years, in addition to completing a dissertation (60 credits). Ideally, students should take 60 credits of optional or core course units per year, plus the dissertation in the second year, totalling 180 credits. Please contact the Programme Director (Paul Oldfield) directly to discuss tailoring your course unit selection to your needs.

Teaching and Learning:
Teaching on this course is offered by a variety of specialists drawn from across the University, notably the subject areas of History, English, Art History and Visual Studies, Religions and Theology, and Classics. The course is based in the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies in SALC; it is taught in part at the John Rylands Library, and researchers based in the library are active participants in course direction and teaching. Teaching provision varies from course to course, but primarily consists of seminars and practical workshops, and may include field trips to institutions such as Chetham's Library.

These teaching processes contribute to the attainment of the intended learning outcomes in the following ways:

- Encourage students through class discussion to interrogate and reflect on conceptual and factual issues of relevance to the medieval and early modern periods;
- Provide an arena for the development of a critical understanding of disciplinary approaches to the medieval and early modern periods;
- Permit the attainment of advanced research skills pertinent to a variety of disciplinary approaches;
- Provide advanced training in skills of academic analysis and argument;
- Require the use of ICT learning support resources.

In addition to the formal teaching offered in the programme, students are encouraged to become active participants in the research culture of the University, attending relevant seminars, visiting and reflecting on exhibitions ongoing in the city and elsewhere, and developing as self-directed researchers by reading beyond the boundaries of the course. Activities include research seminars in all the disciplines of the School as well as postgraduate forums, conferences and workshops. The most relevant seminar series are the Medieval and Early Modern Research Seminar Series, the talks given as part of the Manchester Cluster for Anglo-Saxon Studies (MANCASS) and the Manchester Medieval Society. Seminar series for History, Art History, English, and Religious Studies often include papers on the medieval and early modern periods. Please check all schedules for details of 2024-25 offerings. There are also relevant annual lectures: the Toller Lecture in Early English studies; the Brook Lecture in Middle English literature; the Stachniewski lecture in Early Modern literature.

MA Dissertation

The dissertation is the single most demanding and most important piece of work you will undertake in the course of your MA. It tests your ability to design and execute a substantial research project. As a result, it tests your ability to identify a research topic and formulate a research question, to identify and carry out the necessary research to answer that question, to synthesize and analyse the results of that research, and to present your findings in the form of a cogent and focused argument sustained over 12,000 words.

A special session on dissertation preparation, research and writing will be offered towards the conclusion of the first semester (date to be confirmed). It is important that you attend this. You will submit a Research Outline for your dissertation in mid-February. This has to be approved before you are allocated a supervisor in March. Supervision of the dissertation itself will then take place in the period from April through to the end of June.

Please take note of the University's Guidelines for Students on Plagiarism and Academic Malpractice: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2870 Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offence at the University and students are expected to be aware of its implications.

NB: Students are allowed to submit the dissertation after satisfying the examiners in their taught course units.

The MA Research Outline

Successful completion of the Research Outline is the compulsory pre-requisite for the completion of the MA dissertation (see key dates for details of submission).

We **strongly recommend** that students should make contact with one or more members of academic staff with appropriate experience in their chosen field for advice and feedback on the proposed research before submitting the written proposal. Advice on who to approach can be offered by your programme director and your course unit directors.

Aims:
- To help structure the second semester of the MA leading to the writing of a significant research-based dissertation
- To invite students to plan their project in a concise manner with a clear timetable and concrete attainable research objectives
- To give students the opportunity to develop skills in research design, project management and other transferable skills essential for their future career
- To help students considering further research to draft a potential funding application

Intended Outcomes:
- a well defined research question
- a clear awareness of sources available to address the question
- a clear awareness of the methodological issues that need to be addressed in the research
- a clear awareness of research planning and timetabling
- correct use of bibliographical conventions applied in the discipline

The Written Research Outline

Written Research Outlines should be submitted following the same guidelines as for other pieces of course-assessed work.

The research outline must consist of a **core document** of 500-750 words followed by an appendix. The core document should state clearly:
- Your reasons for undertaking this project.
- The research problems or questions you intend to address.
- The research context in which those problems or questions are located. In describing the context, you should refer to the current state of knowledge and any recent debate on the subject.
- The particular contribution to knowledge and understanding in this area that you hope to make. You should explain why the work is important. The fact that an area has not been studied previously is not, in itself, a reason for doing it.
- The methods and critical approaches that you plan to use to address the problems or questions you have set. We don't just need to know what you are going to work on, we need to know how you plan to go about it.

In the **appendix** you should provide supporting information:
- A brief breakdown of the chapters or sections of the thesis (1 page maximum)
- A timetable of research and writing (1 page maximum)
- Additional training and preparation you may need, indicating any ethical issues which may arise and could require clearance from the Ethical Committee (1 page maximum)
- A working bibliography of sources that you intend to use. In the case of unpublished or rare materials you will need to state where these sources are located and how these will be accessed. For example, if you are undertaking an archaeology project, do you need a permit to access a particular site and how will this be obtained? It is sometimes helpful to put forward alternative strategies or approaches if you are aware that problems might arise. (2 pages maximum)

Guidance for the Assessment of the Research Outline
The Research Outline is marked on a pass/refer basis: it is not given a numerical mark and in that sense does not contribute towards your overall degree result. A successful Research Outline will contain all the elements specified above, and will demonstrate satisfactorily that this is a viable project capable of being brought to completion in the time available. Successful completion of the Research Outline results in an agreement in principle to proceed to the dissertation. Students who do not achieve the agreement in principle will be allowed to resubmit the research outline up until the final submission date for semester two coursework. Re-submissions can be made at any time before that date and, in agreement with the potential supervisor, students can re-submit as many times as they wish before the final deadline. All submissions and re-submissions should be made to the Taught Programmes office.
A final fail will be recorded if the outline remains grossly inadequate on re-submission or if the student has failed to submit a research outline. Failing to resubmit the research outline will result in the student being ineligible to submit a dissertation.

Research Presentation:
You will be required to present your research project in a short presentation (unassessed) to peers and academics at a date to be confirmed in semester 2, 2025. This presentation will allow you to hone the ideas presented in your research outline and permit you to gain valuable feedback from members of the teaching cohort. Further details will be provided.

Key Dates for <u>Full Time</u> Students

Semester One Coursework
Please refer to the coursework deadlines as stated in your individual course unit outlines/handbooks

Submission of Written Research Outline
Tuesday 11th March 2025

Semester Two Coursework
Please refer to the coursework deadlines as stated in your individual course unit outlines/handbooks

Resubmitted Coursework
Monday 18th August 2025

MA Dissertation Submission
Monday 1st September 2025

Key Dates for <u>Part Time</u> Students

Semester One Coursework
Please refer to the coursework deadlines as stated in your individual course unit outlines/handbooks

Submission of Written Research Outline (for year part-time year 2 students only)
Tuesday 11th March 2025

Semester Two Coursework
Please refer to the coursework deadlines as stated in your individual course unit outlines/handbooks

Resubmitted Coursework
Monday 18th August 2025

MA Dissertation Submission (for part-time year 2 students only)
Monday 1st September 2025

Late Submission
Information relevant to all postgraduate taught programmes in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (SALC) can be found in the Student Handbook, which should be read and used as a reference in conjunction with this Handbook. The SALC Student Handbook is available via the **SALC Students Community Page**

Style Guidance for MA Medieval and Early Modern Students

It is essential that your submitted work at MA level is carefully presented in terms of structure and style. Unclear prose, writing that has not been proofed, and poorly presented work can affect your grades. All coursework must be submitted in typewritten form, using double spacing. The title should be clearly written on the first page and pages should be numbered throughout.

There are endless variations in published recommendations for academic style, and every handbook and journal style sheet differs in large or small measure. **For this programme, the recommended model to follow is that of the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA)** (full style guide available at https://www.mhra.org.uk/style/). It is important to be consistent and adhere to the model throughout your essay or dissertation. Do not switch between referencing models. Do not use 'author-date' referencing, but footnotes or endnotes (as below).

The following is a brief general guide to some of the stylistic conventions to be observed. There are important differences between the way references are presented in bibliographies and in footnotes. Pay attention to colons, commas, full stops, brackets and use of italics.

Bibliography:

The bibliography should be divided into primary and secondary sources. Within each section, sources should be listed alphabetically according to the author's name.

Books:
Carruthers, Mary, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Chapters in Books:
Taylor, Brian, 'Poetic Technique and the Liberal Arts in Italy in the Lay Schoolroom: The *Singschule* ("Singing School") of the German Mastersingers of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in *The Classics in the Medieval and Renaissance Classroom: The Role of Ancient Texts in the Arts Curriculum as Revealed by Surviving Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*, ed. by Juanita Feros Ruys, John O. Ward, and Melanie Heyworth (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 391-410

Articles:
Wiltenburg, Joy, 'True Crime: The History of Modern Sensationalism', *American Historical Review,* 109 (2004), 1377-1404

Footnotes:

In the footnote the forename of the author should appear before the surname. You may have to mention an article or book multiple times in your footnotes. You should indicate the specific page or pages you are retrieving your information from using p. or pp. On the first occasion, the citation should appear in full, giving complete title, place of publication, etc. On subsequent occasions you may use a 'short form citation' to indicate a source previously used.

Book - First Citation:

Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-12.

Book - Second and Subsequent Citations:

Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, p. 57.

Chapters in Books - First Citation:

Brian Taylor, 'Poetic Technique and the Liberal Arts in Italy in the Lay Schoolroom: The *Singschule* ("Singing School") of the German Mastersingers of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in *The Classics in the Medieval and Renaissance Classroom: The Role*

of Ancient Texts in the Arts Curriculum as Revealed by Surviving Manuscripts and Early Printed Books, ed. by Juanita Feros Ruys, John O. Ward, and Melanie Heyworth (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 391-410 (p. 392).

Chapters in Books: Second and Subsequent Citations:

Taylor, 'Poetic Technique and the Liberal Arts', pp. 395-96.

Articles in Journals - First Citation:

Joy Wiltenburg, 'True Crime: The History of Modern Sensationalism', *American Historical Review,* 109 (2004), 1377-1404 (p. 1400).

Articles in Journals - Second and Subsequent Citations:
Wiltenburg, 'True Crime', pp. 1398-1400.

<u>Internet sources:</u>

There is now a vast amount of information available to students on the Internet. When making use of this valuable research tool, it is important that you retain a critical scepticism towards the academic integrity and reliability of sources. Information taken from the Internet must be fully referenced in your footnotes/endnotes and bibliography, just as you would reference material taken from books or journals. Failure to provide full and accurate references will leave you open to charges of plagiarism. Please refer to the MHRA style guide cited above for details of how to cite Internet resources.