

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR MASTER OF STUDIES IN YIDDISH STUDIES

<b>1. Awarding institution/body</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>2. Teaching institution</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>3. Programme accredited by</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>4. Final award</b>	<b>Master of Studies (M.St.)</b>
<b>5. Programme</b>	<b>Yiddish Studies</b>
<b>6. UCAS code</b>	<b>as appropriate</b>
<b>7. Relevant subject benchmark statement</b>	<b>as appropriate</b>
<b>8. Date of programme specification</b>	<b>October 2008</b>

### **9. Educational aims of the programme**

The M.St. is a one-year degree, assessed by course work and dissertation. It is more advanced and more independent than undergraduate study and more tightly structured and supervised than doctoral research. The course enables candidates to read widely, to acquire research skills, to develop their own research interest, and to pursue it in a dissertation. This course offers a variety of subjects devoted to the linguistic, historical and socio-cultural make-up of pre-modern Ashkenazic (Yiddish-speaking) society, as well as others dealing with the major trends of modern Yiddish language, literature, and culture. The wide selection of subjects is taught by Yiddish specialists working at the University and at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. The M.St. aims to provide systematic academic training for aspiring scholars, instructors, and educators in the field of Yiddish language, literature, and culture. It requires proficiency in written and spoken Yiddish, and is designed further to enhance and invigorate students' linguistic proficiency, academic competence, and cultural literacy. It can be taken both as a qualification in its own right and as a preparation for doctoral research in Yiddish studies.

## **10. Programme outcomes**

*A. Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:*

- relevant linguistic and textual knowledge;
- some specialist knowledge of relevant primary and secondary literature;
- enhanced understanding of how primary evidence is employed in philological, textual, historical and literary analysis and argument.

*Related teaching/learning methods and strategies*

The M.St. in Yiddish is an intensive one-year taught course which requires meetings with tutors or supervisors frequently, normally once a week. Research seminars will be arranged depending on the number of students researching Yiddish Studies. All M.St. students will also be fully integrated into the programme of research seminars organised by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, based both at the Oriental Institute and at Yarnton Manor. M.St. students in Yiddish will be encouraged to attend these seminars regularly and to offer papers and participate fully.

*Assessment*

Formative assessment is provided by feedback and interaction with the supervisor and/or tutor, by the discussion of prepared class-work, and by the supervisor's termly report, which is discussed with the student in the Faculty and separately in the College. A dissertation of approximately 8,000 words and not more than 10,000 words on a subject proposed by the candidate in consultation with the supervisor.

***B. Skills and other attributes***

***Students will have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:***

***I. Intellectual skills***

We seek to teach students:

to think and write clearly, coherently, and precisely;

to argue critically and rigorously, to question received opinions, and to assess critically other people's arguments;

to acquire subtlety and sophistication in understanding and applying various theoretical approaches to literature;

to work independently, but also to sharpen their ideas by constructive discussion with fellow-students and academic staff;

to improve continually their knowledge of the relevant foreign language, and where appropriate to write in the target language;

to present material orally with clarity and concision, and to lead a discussion on it;

to produce written work that corresponds in substance and presentation to high academic standards.

*Teaching/learning methods and strategies*

Assessment:

## **II. *Practical skills***

### *Teaching/learning methods and strategies*

See transferable.

### *Assessment*

## **III. *Transferable skills***

Students will acquire the ability:

to communicate effectively, both in speech and writing;

to manage time and work to short deadlines;

to write clearly, coherently, and fluently, and to present an elaborate argument lucidly;

to work independently;

to be self-critical, as well as critical of received opinions;

to participate intelligently and constructively in discussion;

to give oral presentations, with visual aids as appropriate, and to lead discussions;

to deepen their knowledge of the foreign language in which their materials are written.

### *Teaching/learning methods and strategies*

Essays, oral presentations, seminar discussions, and the writing of a dissertation are the means by which these skills are imparted and polished.

Assessment:

## 11. Programme Structures and Features

Candidates must offer both components of A below, one option from B, and a dissertation.

- A. Modern Yiddish Literature (1864-1939)  
History of the Yiddish Language.
- B. Old Yiddish Literature (survey).  
Old Yiddish Literature: Secular and Religious Trends.  
Old Yiddish: Between Folklore and Literature.  
Nineteenth-Century Yiddish Literature.  
Modern Yiddish Poetry.  
Yiddish Drama and Theatre.  
Twentieth-Century Centres of Yiddish Literature and Culture.  
Sociology of Yiddish.  
History of Yiddish Studies.  
Yiddish Stylistics.  
Yiddish Bibliography and Booklore.  
Any other option approved by the board.

*Teaching for some options listed under B may not be available in every year. Applicants for admission will be advised of this.*

A dissertation of approximately 8,000 words and not more than 10,000 words on a subject proposed by the candidate in consultation with the supervisor.

### *Learning Year 1*

*Subjects*

*Assessment*

**Year 2**

*Subjects*

*Assessment*

**Year 3**

*Subjects*

*Assessment*

**Year 4**

*Subject*

*Assessment*

## 12. Support for Students and their learning

**Supervisor.** Each student is assigned a supervisor before beginning the course, and is encouraged to contact the supervisor informally before the course begins in order to discuss options, funding possibilities, and other concerns. The supervisor normally teaches the student for one of the Special Subjects (though for one or more tutorials on very specialized topics the student may be sent to a colleague), supervises the dissertation, and may advise on the presentation of the essay on the theoretical/methodological option. The supervisor submits an online report on the student's progress each term.

**Faculty Adviser.** Each student is assigned a Faculty adviser who works in the same language and has related research interests. The student thus gets to know another member of staff with whom to discuss research and who can advise on academic or pastoral problems and mediate on the rare occasions when a conflict arises between student and supervisor.

**College Adviser.** The student's college appoints a College adviser, not necessarily in the same subject area, who primarily helps with non-academic and pastoral problems. In addition each college has a number of officers responsible for student welfare, notably the Tutor for Graduates and the Dean.

**Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).** The Director meets all new graduates at the beginning of the academic year and is available thereafter to advise them on any difficulties or uncertainties that arise during their course.

**Graduate Studies Administrator (GSA).** This official has an office in the Faculty and is available to answer minor queries from graduates and to receive the written work that they have to submit. The GSA can also provide information about scholarships, grants, prizes, and funding opportunities.

**Course information.** Written information about the course is provided in the Modern Languages Graduate Handbook and in the *Examination Regulations*. The handbook is updated each year and is also available on the Faculty website.

**Libraries.** Graduates have full access to the Taylorian Library, which is the most fully stocked Modern Languages library in this country apart from the British Library. They can enter the stacks and borrow books for a limited period. They may also use all other Oxford libraries, including the Bodleian, as well as the library of their college.

**Travel Grants.** The Faculty has limited funds to provide travel grants for research purposes. These grants do not normally exceed £300.

**Languages.** Opportunities to learn additional languages are available at the University's Language Centre.

**Careers Service.** The University Careers Service is very active in advising those who do not wish to continue in academic work.

**Computing.** There is a small computer room for Modern Languages students in 47 Wellington Square. It contains 2 modern IBM-compatible PCs connected to a laser printer for high-quality printing. All the computers are connected to the University network for services such as e-mail. Each computer also has a flat bed scanner with Optical Character Recognition software for input of textual and graphic materials. OUCS run regular IT courses which students are encouraged to attend.

**Electronic Resources.** Oxford University subscribes to a large number of electronic databases which are available through OXLIP, the Oxford Libraries Information Platform.

**Other Skills Training.** The Faculty is a member of the IGRS research skills training programme, which offers a wide range of training on its website and through seminars organized by the various participating institutions. The Faculty and the Humanities Division organize a number of training sessions during the year, with the help of OUCS and the Learning Institute.

### **13. Criteria for Admission**

Candidates are expected to have a first-class degree or a good upper-second-class degree (marks of 65 and above). A high degree of proficiency in reading and writing Yiddish is essential.

### **14. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning**

Graduates are asked to submit a self-assessment report each term via GSS (online reporting system), describing their academic work and related activities, and assessing their own progress.

At the end of each academic year the Director of Graduate Studies compiles a detailed report on the M.St. assessment process. Particular weight is attached to the report submitted by the External Examiner, which is sent first to the Vice-Chancellor and is later considered by the Faculty's Graduate Studies Committee and by the Faculty Board, and changes are made to the course in accordance with the External Examiner's recommendations. The ultimate authority within the University is the Educational Policy and Standards Committee.

## **15. Regulation of assessment**

### *Final Examination*

The pass mark is an overall average of 60. An average of 70 is required for a Distinction.

### **Marking Scale**

<b>&gt;70</b>	<b>Class I</b>	<b>A very good answer that is structured, innovative and comprehensive</b>
<b>60-69</b>	<b>Class II(i)</b>	<b>A good answer that includes major points and their significance</b>
<b>50-59</b>	<b>Class II(ii)</b>	<b>A less than satisfactory answer that includes some major points</b>
<b>40-49</b>	<b>Class III</b>	<b>A weak answer that omits several major points</b>
<b>30-39</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>A very poor answer that fails to address considerable areas of the question</b>
<b>&lt;29</b>	<b>Fail</b>	<b>Totally inadequate</b>

## **16. Indicators of quality and standards**

All subject areas within Modern Languages rated 5\* or 5 in 2001 RAE.