

## University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant teaching Faculty or Department. It is, however, natural for courses to develop and change over time and we reserve the right, without notice, to withdraw, update or amend this programme specification at any time.

## MPHIL in ENGLISH STUDIES: CRITICISM AND CULTURE

<b>1 Awarding body</b>	University of Cambridge
<b>2 Teaching Institution</b>	University of Cambridge
<b>3 Accreditation details</b>	None
<b>4 Name of Final award</b>	M.Phil.
<b>5 Programme Title</b>	Criticism and Culture
<b>6 UCAS Code</b>	None
<b>7 Benchmark Statement</b>	None
<b>8 Qualifications Framework Level</b>	M
<b>9 Date of production/revision</b>	October 2005

### 1 Educational aims of the programme

- To give students with relevant experience at first-degree level the opportunity to develop an approach to literary study with an interdisciplinary and comparative focus, including aspects of contemporary literary criticism and literary and cultural theory, both in taught seminar groups and individual supervised research.
- To give students the opportunity to acquire or develop a critical and methodological framework, drawing on a variety of theoretical approaches, and to acquire relevant bibliographical and electronic skills.
- To prepare students for doctoral research in a range of different research areas with a literary dimension, including but not necessarily historically specific research.

These aims are achieved by:

- i) Providing students with guidance in formulating a feasible research proposal, and in producing written work based on such a proposal to a clearly-defined timetable;
- ii) broadening their appreciation of the issues which shape the field of their dissertation topic, while encouraging the development of specific insights which might form the basis for an original contribution to the field;
- iii) developing students' competence in theoretical approaches to literature and literary and cultural production, and in the critical assessment of research in the field, as well as in bibliographical methods (including the use of information technology). Giving students the opportunity to prepare a written exercise or assessment in these areas;
- iv) providing seminar teaching on a range of topics that may be either conceptually or historically oriented, or both (Option A courses), which may be combined with courses drawn from other M.Phils. in English and cooperating faculties (Option B courses), and giving students the opportunity to prepare course-work essays in these areas.
- v) Developing students' competence in contributing to a three-term reading seminar, including presenting their dissertation projects and communicating their written research to an audience of peers.

## **Programme outcomes**

### **11.1 Knowledge and understanding**

By the end of the course students should have:

1. developed a deeper knowledge of contemporary literary criticism and literary and cultural theory in general, and of their chosen area of research in particular.
2. developed an understanding of critical debates which allows the evaluation of current research in their dissertation field.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

(1) and (2) above are developed through:

- independent research and study;
- discussions with supervisor;
- participation in taught seminars and reading seminar.

#### **Assessment**

(1) and (2) are assessed through two Course-work essays and short reports or a combined longer paper, developing a detailed bibliography and project proposal, Dissertation, and viva-voce examination.

### **11.2 Skills and other attributes**

By the end of the course students should have:

3. demonstrated independent judgement based on their own research;
4. acquired or consolidated critical, IT, bibliographical and other scholarly skills;
5. participated effectively in seminar discussions and made an oral presentation of their work;
6. learnt how to timetable independent research to produce written work of a high standard to a strict deadline.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

(3) and (6) are developed through close interaction between supervisor and student throughout the year. (4) are developed through specific training sessions, as well as through dissertation work and the preparation of bibliography and project description. (5) are developed through preparation for and feedback from taught seminars, reading seminar, and dissertation prospectus and writing seminar.

#### **Assessment**

(3) are assessed by the dissertation and the two course-work essays and short reports. (4) are assessed by the bibliography and detailed prospectus. (5) and (6) are formatively assessed.

## Programme Structure

<b>July</b>	<i>Viva-voce</i> examination	Examiners' meeting; degree awarded
<b>June</b>	Dissertation due (50%)	Dissertations double marked; All work to External Examiner
<b>End March</b>	Detailed project description due (10%)	Feedback (supervisor)
<b>March</b>	Second Course-work essay due (20%) plus shorter essay (10%) or combined essay (30%).	Double-marked; feedback given
<b>Mid February</b>	Dissertation titles submitted to DC office for approval.	Approved by GSC.
<b>Mid December</b>	100-item Bibliography submitted to DC office. (Pass/fail)	Assessed by supervisor; feedback given
<b>December</b>	First Course-work essay due (20%) plus shorter essay (10%); or combined essay (30%)	Double-marked; feedback given
<b>October</b>	Entry	First Class or high 2(i) in first degree or equivalent required.

M.Phil. Reading Seminar (MT); Dissertation Project seminar (LT), Dissertation Writing seminar (ET)

## Requirements for the award of the degree

The examination is divided into the following elements:

- Bibliography (not exceeding 100 items) (pass/fail);
- first Course-Work essay not exceeding 4,000 words (20%) plus shorter essay of 2,500 words (10%), or combined essay of 6,500 words (30%);
- second Course-Work essay not exceeding 4,000 words (20%) plus shorter essay of 2,500 words (10%), or combined essay of 6,500 words (30%);
- a Dissertation of between 10,000 and 15,000 words,
- and viva (40%).

In order to pass the M.Phil., students must achieve an overall mark of at least 60. Candidates whose failure in the essays is more than marginal may not be permitted to proceed further with the course. There is no provision in normal circumstances for resubmission, or the re-sitting of any part of the examination, although cases of illness will be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies.

The overall result in the M.Phil. is either a Pass or Fail. There is no 'distinction' or other grade within the Pass category.

## Indicators of quality

The Faculty of English was awarded 5\* in the last Research Assessment Exercises. This is a new course, beginning in 2004. Approximately 8 and 12 students will read for the M.Phil in the first instance.

## Learning Support

All students are members of a College as well as the Department and have access to learning support from both College and University. Each student has a supervisor who gives advice on planning the student's courses and the dissertation in particular, and students are entitled to one supervision from seminar convenors (or others) on each of their Option A Course-Work seminars. Other members of the Department are also available to supervise in their area of specialisation or to assist with particular aspects of students' dissertation research. Documentation offering specifications and guidance in relation to each element of assessed work, and marking schemes, is provided to students. Progress is monitored through the discussion with each student of their Bibliography and project descriptions and draft sections of their dissertations by their supervisor and through submitted work. Both the Bibliography and the first Course-Work essays or essay (submitted in December) are returned with feedback at the beginning of Lent term, and similarly the second Course-Work essays or essay and the detailed project description (submitted in March) are returned with feedback at the beginning of Easter term. The Reading seminar in MT, covering issues relevant to methodology, becomes a seminar on developing project outlines in LT and a seminar in which students present their work to each other in ET. Additional seminars on IT and Library skills are provided in MT. The Dissertation viva provides students with the opportunity to discuss their dissertation with two qualified examiners, and to review their overall performance. The College Tutor for Graduates also plays a role in induction, support and guidance and many colleges appoint subject mentors for their graduate students. The Faculty's learning resources include a library which constitutes a useful working collection for M.Phil. students, and access to computer facilities.

## Evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning

The Faculty participates in the University's quality assurance and enhancement system:

1. **External Examining:** the M.Phil. in Criticism and Culture has an External Examiner who provides advice and submits an annual report which is considered by the Graduate Sub-Committee and the Degree Committee of the Faculty. Action in response to Examiners' reports includes, where appropriate, revisions or adjustments to the programme and its delivery.
2. **Course approval:** the Faculty is required to obtain the approval of the Board of Graduate Studies and the General Board's Education Committee before any significant changes to courses are made. The Criticism and Culture strand of the English Studies MPhil. was approved in October 2003 for October 2004. The GSC has already begun meeting and will meet in anticipation of its inauguration in July 2004 to review its teaching arrangements and goals.
3. **General Board Internal Review:** all the Faculty's activities, were reviewed by the University's General Board in 1996, although this predated the institution of the Criticism and Culture MPhil.

In addition, M.Phil. students complete end-of-term teaching evaluation questionnaires for all taught seminars and the Criticism and Culture Reading Seminar, as well as an end-of-year open questionnaire on the M.Phil. in general. The results will be analysed by the M.Phil. Convenor and presented for discussion to the Criticism and Culture Graduate Sub-Committee, which will either make changes to the teaching programme in light of student comments or make recommendations for substantive changes to the Degree Committee of the Faculty, and from there to the Board of Graduate Studies.

If difficulties arise the Faculty has a complaints procedure for graduate students to follow, which is set out in The Blue Book of Advice and Information for graduate students in English. One Criticism and Culture M.Phil. student is elected to the Graduate Consultative Committee, and represents the interests of M Phil students to the Degree Committee.

## **Employment**

Preparation for employment is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant skills outlined above. See the University policy of employment skills: ([www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/learning/employers.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/learning/employers.html)).

It is hoped that (as with other English Faculty MPhils) a significant proportion of M.Phil. students will go on to study for a Ph.D. at Cambridge or other universities. A necessary (but not sufficient) criterion for continuation to the Ph.D. at Cambridge is a strong performance in the examination overall, and a mark of 65 or above for the dissertation. (A strong performance is usually defined as an average mark of 65 or above across all the elements of the examination). The M.Phil. Dissertation viva includes discussion of the student's plans for continuation and initial research proposal.