

## MA Medieval Studies



Serious study of the Middle Ages must be interdisciplinary, and accordingly our programme allows you to gain interdisciplinary skills while studying a discipline-specific pathway at an advanced level, providing you with a solid grounding for your further studies or future career. We offer pathways in history, literature, Byzantine Studies and archaeology, and can offer additional expertise in art history, music and numismatics, all taught by scholars enjoying international recognition in their fields.

Our collective interests are uniquely wide ranging, covering the whole medieval period from c. 300 to c. 1500, and all the countries of western Europe, Scandinavia, the eastern Mediterranean, Central Asia and China, with thematic interests including religious cultures, socio-economic history, the Crusades, gender, manuscript studies, drama, regional literatures and history (West Midlands, Scotland, Spain, Iceland, Byzantium, Bactria, northern Eurasia), material culture, comparative history and the 'global Middle Ages'. Accordingly we can supervise a wide range of dissertation topics. We encourage students to take language options relevant to their interests, with offerings that include Latin, Greek, Old and Middle English, modern European languages, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. Our programme thus also provides a strong foundation for those who wish to go on to doctoral research.

**[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)**

### Course fact file

**Type of Course:** Taught

**Study Options:** Full time, part time

**Duration:** One year full-time; two years part-time

**Start date:** September

### Related courses

**[MRes Medieval History \(/postgraduate/courses/combined/history/medieval-history.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/combined/history/medieval-history.aspx)**

### Contact

Dr Arezou Azad

Email: [a.azad@bham.ac.uk](mailto:a.azad@bham.ac.uk) (<mailto:a.azad@bham.ac.uk>)  
<mailto:n.standen@bham.ac.uk>

**[School of History and Cultures \(/schools/historycultures/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/index.aspx)**

**[Department of History \(/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx\)](/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx)**

### Details

Students engage in advanced study of their chosen discipline through a core module in their field, taken alongside a multi- and interdisciplinary core module that brings together all the students on the programme for comparison of methods and a wide range of case studies. Research skills are taught in a dissertation-focused module, and students take three optional modules, usually including at least one language. In all teaching students are encouraged to apply class material to their own specific research interests and their dissertation.

The programme is made up of three elements:

- Three core modules (two interdisciplinary and one for your pathway)
- Three optional modules (usually including a language)
- A 15,000-word dissertation, supervised by a specialist in your chosen field

Full module descriptions available below.

### Why study this course

Postgraduate students across several schools run their own research network (EMREM), which organises regular seminars, training sessions, writing workshops and an annual postgraduate conference that has inspired similar ventures at other universities. Visiting postgraduate students have been inspired by the "highly organised, independent, go-getting atmosphere among students" and have been "hugely impressed by the EMREM postgraduate conference" and at the year-round programme of

"highly organised, professional, and well-attended" events.

## Modules

You'll study these core modules on all pathways:

- Approaches to Medieval Studies
- Research Skills for Medieval Studies

In addition, you will choose one pathway-specific core module:

### Medieval Archaeology pathway - Creating Europe: Complex Societies 1000 BC-AD 1000

This module provides an advanced overview of approaches to the archaeology of Europe, from the Mediterranean to Scandinavia, across a period extending from prehistory and the earliest historical times to the threshold of the Middle Ages.

### Medieval History pathway - Historical Methods

This module focuses primarily on the development of history writing since the Second World War. You will be introduced to some of the major schools of or tendencies in historical research in turn, in all of which medievalists have played a significant role: the Annales School, the English historians' response to Marxism, cultural history, the linguistic turn, gender, history of science and critical social theory (Geertz and Foucault).

### Byzantine Studies pathway - Methodologies in Byzantine Studies

This module provides an introduction to predominant research methodologies in Byzantine studies. You will be given introductory training in a variety of subject areas, such as historical writing, charters and documents, art history, numismatics, epigraphy and sigillography.

### Medieval Literature pathway - Resources and Methods for Medieval Literary Studies

This module introduces the key resources and methods used in working with original medieval literary sources. You will be introduced to the examination of medieval manuscript books and to the principles and practices of editing texts from manuscript.

You will also study three optional modules across the Autumn and Spring semesters. You may choose to study one of the core modules from the other pathways as one of your options, and you can choose from a range of other modules such as:

- [Across the divide: China and its Neighbours in Texts and Material Culture \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#across\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#across)
- [Any modern language \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#modernlanguage\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#modernlanguage)
- [Aspects of Byzantine History 2: Byzantine Court Ritual \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#aspects\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#aspects)
- [Beyond the Frontier: History and Culture in Late Medieval Iberia \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#beyond\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#beyond)
- [Byzantine Art and Architecture 1 and 2 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantineart\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantineart)
- [Byzantine Literature and History 1 and 2 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantine\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantine)
- [Byzantine Society I \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantinesociety\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantinesociety)
- [Byzantine Society II \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantinesociety2\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#byzantinesociety2)
- [Chaucer and his Sources \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#chaucer\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#chaucer)
- [Conquest, Colonisation and Identity: Eurasian Frontiers in Texts and Material Culture \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#conquest\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#conquest)
- [Crusade, Jihad and Cross-Cultural Encounters on the Medieval Iberian Frontier, c.1031–c.1212 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#crusade\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#crusade)
- [Empire and Identity \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#empireidentity\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#empireidentity)
- [Funerary Archaeology \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#funerary\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#funerary)
- [GIS and Spatial Analysis \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#gis\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#gis)
- [Graduate Linguistic Skills \(Beginner\) 1 and 2: Latin or Greek \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#graduate\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#graduate)
- [Graduate Linguistic Skills \(Advanced\) 1 and 2: Latin or Greek \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#graduate2\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#graduate2)
- [Late Roman and Byzantine Archaeology and Material Culture 1 and 2 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#laterroman1\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#laterroman1)
- [Landscape Archaeology \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#landscapearchaeology\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#landscapearchaeology)
- [Literature and Culture of the Medieval West Midlands \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#literature\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#literature)
- [Mastering Middle English \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#mastering\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#mastering)
- [Material Culture \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#medievalmanuscripts\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#medievalmanuscripts)
- [Medieval Manuscripts \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx)
- [Old English 1A and 1B \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx)
- [Old English 2A and 2B: Words, Wisdom and the Woman's Voice \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx)
- [Old English 3A and 3B: Reading Beowulf \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx)
- [Old Norse \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#norse\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#norse)
- [People and Places in the West Midlands, c. 1000-1500 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx)
- [Plays, Pageants and Spectacle: Drama before Shakespeare \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#plays\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#plays)
- [Popular Unrest in Later Medieval Europe \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#popularunrest\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#popularunrest)
- [Reading French, German, Italian, Russian or Spanish for Researchers \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#readingresearchers\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#readingresearchers)
- [Reading and Writing Scotland: Scottish Literature 1375-1513 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#scottishliterature\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#scottishliterature)
- [The Economies of the Late Roman, Byzantine and Frankish East \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#economies\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#economies)
- [The Fourth Crusade \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#fourthcrusade\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#fourthcrusade)
- [The Parish in Late Medieval England \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#parish\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#parish)
- [Vikings in the North Atlantic \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#vikings\)](/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#vikings)

- [Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium 1 and 2 \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx#gender\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

For full module descriptions, see our [Medieval Studies MA modules page \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/history/medieval-modules.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx). Please note: modules and courses are constantly updated and under review. As with most academic programmes, please remember that it is possible that a module may not be offered in any particular year. The University of Birmingham reserves the right to vary or withdraw any course or module.

## Fees and funding

### Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

## Entry requirements

An honours degree in a subject related to the chosen pathway, such as History, English, Archaeology or Theology, is required, normally upper second class level (2.1) or its equivalent for overseas applicants. Graduates without these qualifications (for example with a lower second class degree, or a degree in a different subject) are very welcome to apply and their application will be considered on its merits. Applicants may be asked to submit written work and/or attend an interview. For some pathways evidence of relevant linguistic ability may be required.

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

### International students

#### Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

#### English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)

## How to apply

### Before you make your application

You may wish to [register your interest with us \(https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate\)](https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

### Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CALo68.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CALo68.htm)

## Learning and teaching

Birmingham has an outstanding reputation for research and teaching in medieval studies, which it has maintained for well over fifty years. We have been rated highly in all three of the UK's Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) and our library is one of the leading research libraries in the country, with exceptionally good medieval holdings.

To support your studies, we have regular research seminars where visiting and Birmingham speakers present their research. The university's [Centre for the Study of the Middle Ages \(CeSMA\) \(/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx) acts as a focus for interdisciplinary research projects and events which feed into our teaching. In addition to this we have a large number of postgraduate students in medieval studies so you'll have a supportive and sociable environment for your studies.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

### Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the [Academic Writing Advisory Service \(AWAS\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the [English for International Students Unit \(EISU\) \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx).

## Related research

- [Centre for the Study of the Middle Ages \(/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx\)](/research/activity/cesma/index.aspx)

## Related staff

[Dr Philippa Semper \(/staff/profiles/english/semper-philippa.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/english/semper-philippa.aspx)

[Professor Wendy Scase \(/staff/profiles/english/scase-wendy.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/english/scase-wendy.aspx)

[Dr Chris Callow \(/staff/profiles/history/callow-chris.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/callow-chris.aspx)

[Dr Miriam Muller \(/staff/profiles/history/muller-miriam.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/muller-miriam.aspx)

[Dr Gareth Sears \(/staff/profiles/caha/sears-gareth.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/caha/sears-gareth.aspx)

[Professor Robert Swanson \(/staff/profiles/history/swanson-robert.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/swanson-robert.aspx)

[Professor Naomi Standen \(/staff/profiles/history/standen-naomi.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/standen-naomi.aspx)

[Dr William Purkis \(/staff/profiles/history/purkis-william.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/history/purkis-william.aspx)

[Dr Roger White \(/staff/profiles/ironbridge/white-roger.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/ironbridge/white-roger.aspx)

[Dr Elizabeth L'Estrange \(/staff/profiles/historyofart/lestrange-elizabeth.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/historyofart/lestrange-elizabeth.aspx)

[Professor Andrew Kirkman \(/staff/profiles/music/kirkman-andrew.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/music/kirkman-andrew.aspx)

[Dr David Griffith \(/staff/profiles/english/griffith-david.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/english/griffith-david.aspx)

[Dr Archie Dunn \(/staff/profiles/bomg/dunn-archie.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/dunn-archie.aspx)

[Professor Leslie Brubaker \(/staff/profiles/bomg/brubaker-leslie.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/brubaker-leslie.aspx)

[Dr Ruth Macrides \(/staff/profiles/bomg/macrides-ruth.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/macrides-ruth.aspx)

[Dr Rhoads Murphey \(/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/murphey-rhoads.aspx)

[Dr Aengus Ward \(/staff/profiles/hispanic/ward-aengus.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/hispanic/ward-aengus.aspx)

[Dr Henry Chapman \(/staff/profiles/caha/chapman-henry.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/caha/chapman-henry.aspx)

[Dr Eurydice Georganteli \(/staff/profiles/bomg/georganteli-eurydice.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/bomg/georganteli-eurydice.aspx)

## Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

Birmingham's History graduates develop a broad range of transferable skills that are highly valued by a range of employers. These skills include: familiarity with research methods; the ability to manage large quantities of information from diverse sources; the ability to organise information in a logical and coherent manner; the expertise to write clearly and concisely and to tight deadlines; critical and analytical ability; the capacity for argument, debate and speculation; and the ability to base conclusions on statistical research.

Over the past five years, over 92% of History postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Some of our History postgraduates go on to use their studies directly, for example in heritage, museum or archivist work. Others use their transferable skills in a range of occupations from finance to civil service to fundraising. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Alcester Heritage Network; HSBC; KPMG; Ministry of Defence; and the National Trust.



