

MPhil in African Studies



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IMPORTANT DATES IN THE MPhil IN AFRICAN STUDIES 2018-19

2019

Tue 8 Oct	<i>Michaelmas Term begins</i> Submit your confirmation of admission form to the MPhil Office Induction Day at Centre of African Studies, 9.30am, room S3, ARB
Thurs 10 Oct	Submit options course choice form to the MPhil Office at CAS. Deadline for applying to the MPhil Office for exemption from Swahili Basic 1
Mon 14 Oct	CAS Annual Reception
Mon 21 Oct	First CAS Research Seminar of Michaelmas term
Fri 25 Oct	Ensure you have met with your dissertation supervisor by this date
Mon 4 Nov	Submit your practice essay topic to the MPhil Office
Fri 6 Dec	<i>Michaelmas Term ends</i>

2020

Tues 14 Jan	<i>Lent Term begins</i> Deadline for submitting your practice essay to the MPhil Office by 12.00pm Examined core course essay questions are distributed to students.
Mon 20 Jan	First CAS Research Seminar of Lent term
Wed 29 Jan	Submit your dissertation plan and title to the MPhil Office

Thurs 30 Jan	Deadline for re-submitting your practice essay to your supervisor in case of a fail mark
Fri 28 Feb	Deadline for submitting your core course essay to the to the MPhil Office by 12.00pm
Fri 13 March	<i>Lent Term ends</i> Deadline for submitting option course essay to the MPhil office by 12.00pm (dependent upon option paper)
Tues 21 April	<i>Easter Term begins</i>
Wed 23 April	Dissertation workshop, room S3, ARB (TBC)
Wed 10 June	Deadline for submitting your dissertation to the MPhil Office by 12.00pm
Fri 12 June	<i>Easter Term ends</i>

2. MPhil ADMINISTRATION

a) The MPhil Office

Your main point of contact in the Centre of African Studies (CAS) is the MPhil Office. It can be found within CAS on the 3rd floor of the Alison Richard Building (ARB), which is located on the 'Sidgwick Site', an important cluster of University Faculty buildings in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The street address for the Centre is 7 West Road. The administrator of the MPhil is Victoria Jones, who can be reached by email at mphil@african.cam.ac.uk. The MPhil Office telephone number is 01223 334396 (or just 34396 if calling from a University network phone).

b) The Graduate Education Committee

The CAS Graduate Education Committee (GEC) is the body that oversees the running of the MPhil in African Studies, under the ultimate authority of the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Human, Social, and Political Science (HSPS). All members of the GEC have experience as supervisors and/or lecturers on the MPhil programme. In addition, early in Michaelmas term, MPhil students nominate a representative to attend and participate in the GEC meetings (unreserved business only), as required. The current Chair of the GEC and Academic Secretary of the MPhil in African Studies is Dr Adam Branch, an African Politics Fellow of Trinity Hall. Some GEC members have offices at CAS, including Dr Branch, who is also the Director of the Centre of African Studies.

c) The Academic Year and Residence Requirement

The academic year in Cambridge is divided into three terms -Michaelmas, Lent and Easter. Term dates for 2019-20 are as follows:

Tue 8 October 2019 - Fri 6 December 2019
Tue 14 January 2020 - Fri 13 March 2020
Tue 21 April 2020- Fri 13 June 2020

Please note the [residence requirement](#), which stipulates that most students on full-time graduate courses must live within the University's precincts for all three academic terms. MPhil in African Studies students are additionally expected to remain in Cambridge for about three weeks after submitting their dissertations, in case an oral examination (viva voce) is required in early July.

d) Queries? Whom to Contact, and When

Normally, you are expected to approach your dissertation supervisor about matters relating to your academic work at Cambridge. You should contact your supervisor to arrange a meeting at the start of the academic year. The MPhil Administrator and MPhil Course Director can also offer general advice on most aspects of the MPhil programme, and you can direct queries about your option course to the relevant lecturer/s. Questions about language training can initially be directed to the MPhil Course Director or, if appropriate, to [CULP](#). We welcome student feedback, and encourage you to let us know your views on the MPhil course via your student representative at any point in the academic year.

If you are interested in pursuing doctoral study in Cambridge, you are welcome to discuss your plans with your dissertation supervisor or the MPhil Course Director, and obtain advice about who to approach as a potential PhD supervisor. The Centre of African Studies does not currently offer a PhD programme, but it is certainly possible to pursue doctoral research on

Africa-related topics in other faculties and departments across the University, and you are encouraged to explore the [PhD opportunities](#) available.

Some administrative matters are dealt with formally, and students may be required to process requests by applying via their CamSIS self-service account (for example, [applying to defer submitting your dissertation](#)). Other matters, such as the approval of essay and dissertation titles, and requests for extensions, require approval by both the CAS Graduate Education Committee and the POLIS Degree Committee (please enquire via the MPhil Office for final submission dates for consideration of these items). Since these committees meet only once or twice at term, it is important that you deal with administrative issues in a timely manner. For specific guidance on sources of academic and pastoral support, please read below:

Dissertation Supervisor: Your supervisor's role is to oversee the preparation of your dissertation and to report on your academic progress. He or she also usually acts as your course advisor for the MPhil programme. If you wish to change your dissertation topic this can be permitted, but only if an appropriate supervisor is available and it is not too late in the academic year.

Your College: Every student on the MPhil course is also a member of a College. The College is a very important part of life at Cambridge. It allows you to mix with students and academics from many different disciplines; it helps you with accommodation, it provides pastoral support, and makes available additional study facilities (especially libraries and IT services). Colleges also offer their members subsidised meals, as well as sports and social facilities. Your College or Graduate Tutor can offer assistance most non-academic difficulties, whether emotional or practical (everything from accommodation to visas). If you are ill or experience other problems, which might affect the timely submission of your assessed work, you should immediately contact your Tutor, as well as the MPhil Office. Your Tutor and/or medical practitioner may need to write to the CAS Graduate Education Committee for special allowance to be given in such cases.

Code of Practice: The University's MPhil Code of Practice will be sent to you electronically and provided in hard copy in your welcome pack. **It is essential that students review the MPhil Code of Practice at the start of their study.** A signature page has been introduced to the booklet to help encourage this and you will be expected to sign this as part of your first meeting with the MPhil Course Director.

The Graduate Union: The Graduate Union (GU) is the University-wide representative body for graduate students at the University of Cambridge. Located at 17 Mill Lane, it offers a variety of services, including document binding and gown-hire, as well as a lounge, café, bar, and a shop. A computer and printing room is available too, which offers photocopying, scanning and laminating services. Should you require independent advice about a concern related to your studies in Cambridge, feel free to contact the [Student Advice Service](#), which is based at the GU. You will find further information about the GU on their [website](#).

Student Wellbeing: Your POLIS Welfare Contact is Cerys Thomas, who is also the MPP Administrator. You may approach her in total confidence with any concerns you have regarding mental health and/or wellbeing whilst studying in Cambridge by emailing talkaboutit@polis.cam.ac.uk. The role of the Welfare Contact is not to act as a counsellor, but to direct students to wellbeing and mental health resources within the University, and to facilitate communication where necessary. Your college is the primary source of your pastoral care and have a dedicated Welfare Officer; please check their website for details of the resources that they can provide.

Counselling Services: The University provides numerous points of contact in case you should experience any kind of difficulties. These include your College Tutor, your supervisor, and academic and administrative staff at CAS. However, there may be circumstances in which you prefer to consult someone independent of your daily environment. To meet this need, the University provides a Counselling Service, which is located at 2-3 Benet's Place, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1EL. The service is generally available during normal office hours and there may be a waiting period for an appointment, so it is often helpful to consult the self-help resources on their website. Their contact details are: Telephone: (01223) 332 865; Email: reception@counselling.cam.ac.uk; Website: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk.

Another service available is [Linkline](http://linkline.org), which is a confidential, anonymous listening support and information service run by students from 7pm to 7am every night during term-time. Linkline can be contacted by telephone (01223 744444), skype ([cambridge.linkline](https://www.skype.com/cambridge/linkline)), or email (email@linkline.org.uk). Be aware that Linkline is not available during the day or outside of term time. [Samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org) run a 24hr, 365 days-a-year service (not connected to the University); they can be contacted on 08457 90 90 90 or emailed at jo@samaritans.org.

3. THE DEGREE PROGRAMME

a) **The Core Course**

The Core Course is one of four key elements structuring the MPhil in African Studies programme. The other elements are the [Option Courses](#), the [Dissertation](#), and [Language Training](#).

Detailed reading list will be provided at the beginning of term.

Course convener: Adam Branch (arb209@cam.ac.uk)

Teaching:

Teaching consists of seminar discussion classes, held once or twice per week. Seminars will be led by Adam Branch and, often, one or two guest lecturers from different disciplines. Students are expected to do the **core reading** prior to each class, since it will provide the basis for discussion. The **further reading** is there for students who take a particular interest in a specific topic and wish to gain a broader understanding of the debates.

Assessment:

Students will submit one essay of 5,000 words (excluding references and bibliography) on 1 March 2019 by 12.00; this essay constitutes 100% of the final mark for the Core Course. The MPhil Office will provide a list of essay questions on 15 January 2018. Degree regulations require that students write their essays on one of these prescribed questions; students are not permitted to develop their own. Examples of past essay topics can be obtained from the MPhil Office. The mark for the core course counts for 20% of the final mark in the MPhil African Studies.

Access to Readings:

The key library for this course is the **Centre of African Studies Library**, where most core texts are available, some on overnight loan. Some books may be available at other libraries across the University, including College libraries, the University Library, and the SPS, Haddon, Marshall, Seeley, and Geography libraries. Consult the 'Cambridge Libraries' online portal for more information. Most of the journal articles listed are available online via the Cambridge Library's iDiscover online catalogue (idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk).

Monday Public Seminar Series:

The CAS Monday Seminar Series is the key venue for engaging with cutting-edge research in African Studies being done in Cambridge, the UK, and Africa. Attendance by MPhil students is mandatory and is to be treated as a formal part of the Course.

Related Topics

[MPhil Course Lecturers](#)

[Submitting Essays](#)

[Examination Guidelines](#)

b) Option Courses

Option courses explore a specific theme in Africanist scholarship or examine the African continent from the perspective of a particular academic discipline. Such courses are usually taught across Michaelmas and Lent terms and their teaching format and structure varies according to what lecturers deem appropriate. Normally, they are taught in seminar discussion groups for which readings are set in advance and preparation is essential. Classes can occasionally be supplemented by optional lectures, while option courses with larger class sizes may receive mostly lectures, in addition to a few seminar classes. This variation in teaching approach reflects the fact that many option courses are based in departments and faculties beyond the Centre of African Studies, giving you the opportunity to interact with students on different MPhil programmes.

You are asked to nominate your option course preferences no later than the Thursday after the MPhil induction day in October. Although we aim to place students in their first preference course, this cannot be guaranteed. If you wish, you may inform the [MPhil Office](#) of your option course preferences in advance of arriving in Cambridge.

The option course is generally assessed by a 5,000-word essay (including footnotes, excluding bibliography), either from a list of set questions or on a topic devised by you in consultation with your option course lecturer. In the case of the latter, the topic must be submitted to the MPhil Office for approval early in Lent term. Please note that the Archaeology of Africa option is assessed by two pieces of coursework, a 3,500 word essay and 1,500 word object report, to be submitted on separate dates in Lent and Easter term.

The option course assignment counts for 20% of the final MPhil mark.

c) Dissertation

The Dissertation is one of four key elements structuring the MPhil in African Studies programme. The other elements are the [Core Course](#), the [Option Courses](#), and [Language Training](#).

The dissertation offers students the opportunity to devise, conduct and write up their own research project of between 15,000 and 20,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography). Many students find this element of the MPhil course the most rewarding, as they enjoy the chance to work independently on a topic of great interest to them, with the benefit of expert supervision. Work on the dissertation is sustained throughout the academic year, and it is submitted at the end of Easter term. It counts for 60% of the final MPhil mark.

The supervisor's role is to help you clarify and develop your own ideas. They offer advice on refining your research topic, on appropriate academic literature to read, on research resources and techniques, and on writing-up the final dissertation. They should not impose their own interests upon you, nor should you expect to be 'spoon-fed'. Graduate students in Cambridge are expected to be able to think for themselves and to have the capacity and enthusiasm for organising their own research, while working mostly on their own initiative. The frequency of meetings between you and your supervisor is a matter for mutual agreement and will vary according to the stage of the dissertation work and your particular needs, but a rough guideline is around 8-10 hours of one-to-one supervision over the year. As a minimum, you should meet and agree a realistic work schedule with your supervisor at the start of each academic term, and then meet again to review progress at the end of term. Generally, the expectation is that you should initiate supervisions by requesting appointments, rather than waiting for your supervisor to contact you.

You should begin your dissertation reading and research as early as possible in the academic year. On the first day of Lent term, you must submit an essay on a topic related to your dissertation research. Its precise form will be agreed with your supervisor, but you should aim to introduce some of the key ideas and debates that you will explore in your dissertation. This essay is compulsory and a pass mark must be achieved, but the numerical result does not count in the final MPhil mark. You will be offered a supervision on your practice essay, enabling you to receive advice and constructive criticism on the academic content and writing style of your work, which will help you to improve the quality of material you submit for final assessment.

The practice essay also provides a useful body of work for preparing your dissertation proposal, which is submitted in week 3 of Lent term. The dissertation proposal is not formally assessed, but is considered for approval by the CAS Graduate Education Committee. It should be 3-4 pages long and must include a title, a short literature review, a set of research questions, and a statement on your research methodology. Once your dissertation title is approved, no change, however minimal, can be made without permission from the Academic Secretary, the CAS Graduate Education Committee, and the POLIS Degree Committee. Substantive changes in your dissertation topic are not usually permitted after examiners are appointed, which also occurs at the Lent term meeting of the CAS Graduate Education Committee. It is important that dissertations correspond to their titles and that those titles are as informative as possible.

Work on the dissertation continues through Lent and Easter terms, and you remain in regular consultation with your supervisor. Early in the Easter term, a dissertation workshop is held, which gives all students on the course an opportunity to discuss the progress of their work with academic staff and other graduate students. Your submission of the dissertation at the end of Easter term marks the formal [end of the MPhil course](#). Students are expected to remain in Cambridge until late June in case an oral examination (viva voce) is required.

d) Language Training

Language Training is one of four key elements structuring the MPhil in African Studies programme. The other elements are the [Core Course](#), the [Option Courses](#), and the [Dissertation](#).

All MPhil in African Studies students are enrolled for [Swahili Basic 1](#) at the University of Cambridge Language Centre, which is taught over 15 weeks during Michaelmas and Lent terms. You will receive one class (comprising two 50-minute lessons) per week, which you must supplement by an additional 2 hours per week of self-study. Swahili Basic 1 is a [Cambridge University Language Programmes](#) (CULP) course, which means that it is open to all members

of the University, both staff and students. You will find yourself learning with a diverse group of individuals, some of whom are likely to be PhD students interested in learning Swahili for their doctoral research. Upon completing the course you will receive a Certificate of Proficiency awarded by the Language Centre, which is recorded on your MPhil degree transcript.

Should you wish to further your Swahili language learning during Easter term, all students have the option of enrolling for Swahili Basic 2. This non-compulsory component is taught semi-intensively, with two classes (each of two 50-minute lessons) per week and a recommended 4 hours per week of self-study.

Language training is a formal component of the MPhil in African Studies examination regulations, but the Course Director can grant exemption from Swahili Basic 1 to students who present a convincing academic case (with the support of their dissertation supervisor) to learn another language. Such students may apply to study for a Certificate of Proficiency in another of the eleven CULP languages, and register for a Certificate of Attendance at the Language Centre. Please note that places on CULP courses other than CULP Swahili cannot be guaranteed, but if your exemption from CULP Swahili is approved, the Centre of African Studies will provide a bursary to cover your language course costs.

All students must be awarded either a Certificate of Proficiency or a Certificate of Attendance in language training to meet the assessment requirements of the MPhil in African Studies. However, language marks are not counted in the final degree result.

*If you wish to apply for exemption from Swahili Basic 1, you must submit your request by email to mphil@african.cam.ac.uk no later than the first Thursday of Michaelmas term. Your request should state the language you wish to learn instead of Swahili and briefly outline an academic rationale. Exemption is normally granted for academic reasons only, which will normally be related to your planned dissertation research. Additionally, fluent Swahili speakers may wish to consider whether the Basic 1 course meets their needs. **Further details can be found [here](#).***

4. FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH FUNDING

Please note that any MPhil student wishing to undertake fieldwork of more than 14 days duration will need to apply for permission to work away as soon as possible following the commencement of the course. MPhil students can claim up to £200 from the Centre of African Studies towards their dissertation research costs, including travel expenses. Claims should be made promptly, and should normally be submitted when you have spent the total amount that you wish to claim (maximum £200). It is essential that you submit receipts as proof of expenses incurred; without them, your claim will not be accepted. Thus be sure to retain receipts from any forms of public transport that you use when conducting your research work.

[Download an expenses claim form](#)

The [UAC Travel Fund](#) is also available, to award travel grants to Cambridge graduate students (not only MPhil in African Studies students) who wish to conduct fieldwork and research in Africa. Be aware that UAC travel grants generally only make a contribution to the expenses incurred, as funds are not sufficient to award full research grants. The deadline for submitting applications is early March.

In general, if you intend conducting fieldwork or research in Africa you will need to supplement your costs using your own private funds and/or by securing funding from other sources, such as from your College. A useful source of information is [Cambridge Funding Search](#), which is an

online directory of funds administered by the University of Cambridge. Be sure to search funding for 'Already on a course' and select the correct year.

Please note that if you travel to Africa as part of your dissertation research, it is only permissible for you to be away during the Christmas and/or Easter vacations, and you must complete your fieldwork by the beginning of Easter term at the latest. Any fieldwork of more than 14 days duration will require you to request permission to work away from Cambridge, which you will need to apply for via Camsis at least 6 weeks before you intend to travel. Please consult the MPhil Office for further details of the procedure.

You are also required to complete an ethical clearance form or, dependent upon the nature of your research, sign a statement that ethical clearance is not necessary. Online risk assessment training is mandatory prior to travel. You must also complete a risk assessment form and attend a pre-fieldwork interview with your supervisor. As both risk assessment and ethical clearance applications are sent to the POLIS Degree Committee and Research Committee for approval respectively, it is important that you promptly inform the MPhil Office of your intention to conduct fieldwork research by the deadlines stipulated by the Centre at the start of Michaelmas or Lent term and consult the following departmental webpage:

<http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/Research/Ethics>

5. RESEARCH SEMINARS AND SKILLS TRAINING

Another benefit being a graduate student at Cambridge is the wide variety of training opportunities available. These include hundreds of research seminars and graduate workshops, the chance to attend various undergraduate lecture series on an almost infinite range of topics (with the permission of the relevant course lecturer), and a huge range of training courses to help you develop your skills and expand your knowledge further.

MPhil students are expected to attend and participate in the Centre of African Studies Public Seminars held on Monday evenings. This offers you a vital social and intellectual forum to share ideas and learn from colleagues, both fellow students and academic staff. You are also encouraged to seek out other seminars, workshops and talks that fit with your research interests – ask your supervisor for advice on what might be suitable (see also the list below).

To find out more about the enormous range of events going on in Cambridge, scan departmental notice boards for interesting-looking programmes and posters, look up Faculty and Department websites for details of upcoming events, join mailing lists and twitter feeds, visit talks.cam and check out [What's On](#), which is the University's listing of events open to the public. The MPhil administrator will add you to mailing list of the Centre of African Studies.

It is also often useful to supplement your taught course seminar classes with a related undergraduate lecture series. There are Africa-related courses being taught in Faculties and Departments across the University - ask your MPhil lecturers to suggest a suitable lecture series for additional study. You can also find out information about many University lectures through the [online lecture list](#). As a matriculated student you are entitled to attend any lectures (but not classes) of any degree course. However, you can only attend lectures where there is room in the lecture theatre; students who are formally registered on the course obviously receive preference. Always check the details published by the Faculty or Department concerned and obtain the lecturer's permission before attending.

For training courses, visit the [Cambridge University Skills Portal](#) for career guidance, and an introduction to transferable skills for graduate students, as well as to opportunities to develop

your skills set. This website links to the [University of Cambridge Training Booking System](#), through which you can search for and book onto a huge variety of training courses run by participating University training providers. These include the [Social Sciences Research Methods Centre](#) (high quality training in quantitative and qualitative methods for graduate students) [Cambridge University Library](#), the [Language Centre](#), the [Researcher Development Programme](#) (targeted mostly at PhD students), and [IT training](#) run by the University Information Services.

Related Topics

[African Archaeology Group](#)
[Cambridge-Africa Programme](#)
[Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide](#)
[Centre for Governance & Human Rights](#)
[CRASSH](#)
[Political Ecology Group Seminar](#)
[Social Anthropology Student Association](#)
[Faculty of History Graduate Workshops](#)
[World Christianities Seminar](#)
[World History Seminar](#)

6. LIBRARY FACILITIES AND IT SERVICES

a) Library Facilities

One of the many advantages of being at Cambridge is the superb range of library resources available to students. There are over one hundred libraries in the university system, thus finding books or periodicals on a field of study is rarely a problem. To get started, and find out information about libraries and information sources across the University visit the [Cambridge Libraries](#) portal.

For MPhil students, a key resource is the [Centre of African Studies Library](#), which is housed within CAS and contains a stock of over 30,000 books and an excellent periodicals collection. Our library places a high priority on obtaining material published in Africa, and the current acquisitions policy also focuses on meeting the academic needs of the MPhil course. The library has a good collection of bibliographies on Africa and its collection also contains a large number of television programmes about Africa, along with African films, CD-ROMs and CDs, as well as a microfilm and microfiche collection. To search for stock specifically in the CAS Library, use the [iDiscover catalogue](#), and limit your search to African Studies Centre Library. To use electronic resources such as e-books, e-journals and citation databases, login to [iDiscover](#) using your Raven password before you search to retrieve relevant content that the University provides access to.

To search archival collections across the University, use [Janus](#). Other facilities in the library are a microfilm reader, a self-issue machine and an e-legal deposit terminal. Check the Library Twitter feed for regular updates about the library and Africa-related news: [@AfrStudiesLib](#). MPhil in African Studies students are granted access to CAS Library 05:00-00:00 (this includes over the weekend and periods when the Library is closed). The Library Manager is [Jenni Skinner](#) and the Library Assistant is [Alex Lindsay](#).

The [University Library](#) (UL) is another important library, and is one of the finest research libraries in the world, being entitled under legal deposit regulations to a copy of every book published in Great Britain and Ireland (including American books with a British imprint). A huge number of foreign books and periodicals are also acquired by purchase. From its stock of about 8,000,000 volumes and over 127,000 manuscripts and 860,000 microforms it is able to supply

the needs of most graduate students. The former library of the [Royal Commonwealth Society](#) is housed within the University Library, which holds rich Africana collections of published and manuscript materials, as well as an impressive photographic archive. Most of the UL's post-1850 book collection is on open access and the Library permits graduate students to borrow up to ten books at a time. As part of your CAS Library induction you will receive a tour of the University Library to help you find material relevant to your research. The Cambridge Libraries also run a wide range of [research skills sessions](#), which all students are encouraged to sign up for, as well as subject or collection specific [LibGuides](#) available for you to consult online.

Most of our students usually find themselves using other specialised Faculty and Departmental libraries as well, some of them conveniently located on the Sidgwick Site. The History Faculty's [Seeley Library](#) (incorporating Politics & International Relations), the [Marshall Library of Economics](#) (incorporating Development Studies), and the [Squire Law Library](#) are all minutes away from CAS. The [SPS Library](#) (incorporating Sociology & Land Economy) and the [Haddon Library](#) (Anthropology and Archaeology) can be found across the river.

b) IT Services

[Wireless internet](#) is available throughout the Alison Richard Building. The CAS Library has a [Managed Cluster Service](#) PC available for student use, and another PC for catalogue and internet searching, accessing e-journals and online databases.

Printing and Photocopying: Handouts for MPhil seminar presentations can be printed at the Centre of African Studies by prior arrangement (not at short notice), at the discretion of the administrator. Please contact the [MPhil Office](#) if you need assistance with this. For routine printing and copying, in addition to computing services offered by the University (see below) some Colleges also provide printing services for their own students.

[University Information Services](#) provides computing facilities and related services in support of research and teaching in the University of Cambridge. It makes available PCs, Apple Macs and scanners through its [Managed Cluster Service](#) and offers printing through [DS-Print](#) (subject to a charge). All graduate students are given an e-mail address (ending in @cam.ac.uk), which you are expected to use and check regularly. To find out more about the computing services offered by the University, visit [Introduction to computing in Cambridge](#) and read the [IT matters @ Cambridge Student Edition](#).

7. PLAGIARISM

MPhil in African Studies Plagiarism Guidelines

Plagiarism is defined by the University in its Statement on Plagiarism as 'submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity.' You can find the full statement at www.cam.ac.uk/plagiarism.

The definition embraces equally the presentation of an entire essay or thesis written by someone else and the inclusion in your work of text written by others but not properly identified as such, for example through improper use of quotation marks and citations. It also includes the use of footnotes and any other material (such as tables or graphs) obtained from secondary works that are not clearly cited as the source.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and treated as such by the University's ordinances. If you are in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, you may also ask your graduate supervisor or Director of Studies to talk you through the issue.

All students must attend any mandatory plagiarism training sessions as directed during the MPhil programme.

The Consequences of Plagiarism

A supervisor or examiner with concerns about potential plagiarism in work for formal assessment, whether or not the work has yet been submitted, will contact the Chair or Senior Examiner, who will liaise with the University Proctors. This will lead to an investigative meeting with the student. If the Proctor believes that there is a case to answer, s/he will then inform the University Advocate who can take the student before the University's Court of Discipline. The Court of Discipline has the power to deprive any student found guilty of plagiarism of membership of the University, and to strip them of any degrees awarded by it. A case may be made irrespective of the student's intent to deceive.

Use of originality checking software

The University subscribes to a service named 'Turnitin' that provides an electronic means of checking student work against a very large database of material from the internet, published sources and other student essays. This service also helps to protect the work submitted by students from future plagiarism and thereby maintains the integrity of any qualifications you are awarded by the University.

All work submitted as part of the formal assessment of graduate courses in the Department will be submitted to Turnitin. The originality report will then be used to inform judgements about whether or not plagiarism has occurred. The copyright of the material remains entirely with the author, and no personal data will be uploaded with the work.

8. SUBMITTING ESSAYS

Word Limit

The word limit for coursework essays is, unless otherwise specified, 5,000 words. This word limit includes all text except the bibliography; it means that the main text, all data in tables or figures, captions, titles and subtitles, the table of contents, the footnotes or endnotes, and all prefatory material at the start is counted. Statistical tables should be counted as 150 words per table. Maps, illustrations and other pictorial images count as 0 words. Graphs, if they are the only representation of the data being presented, are to be counted as 150 words. However, if graphs are used as an illustration of statistical data that is also presented elsewhere within the essay (as a table for instance), then the graphs count as 0 words.

Exceeding the Word Count

Students are required to submit a signed statement confirming the word count of their assessed essays. The MPhil administrator will verify the declared word count against the electronic copy if requested to do so by the examiners. As a general rule, any content that the examiners must read in order to assess students' work should be included in the main body of the essay and not in footnotes or in appendices. Although there is no minimum word length set for essays, students are advised that submissions substantially shorter than the maximum length allowed (a 20% shortfall is an indicative amount) might be at risk of failing to fulfil the standard of content and argument required.

An essay that is proven to exceed the stated word limit will not be accepted, but will be handed back to the student for further editing. Any delay in submission caused by the need to reduce the length of an essay will be subject to the standard penalty scale for late submissions.

Late Submission

Deadlines for submitted assessed essays must be strictly adhered to and are not negotiable – they are equivalent to examination dates. Both the hard copies and the electronic copy need to be received for the work to be considered as ‘submitted’. If you fail to submit your essays to the Centre of African Studies MPhil Office by the specified date and time on the advertised deadline, it is the same as failing to sit a scheduled examination. Students are advised to notify the MPhil Office immediately if they fall seriously ill or if they experience serious disruption to their studies. All requests to extend submission deadlines should be made to the MPhil Office as early as possible.

Students should also ensure that they allow enough time to print and present their work before the deadline. Problems with computers or printing facilities will not be accepted as reasons for late submission. You are therefore strongly advised to plan to complete your work a couple of days in advance of the deadline in order to avoid such problems, and to back up your work regularly.

An assessed essay submitted after the deadline and without prior approval for deferred submission (see below) will be penalised by a reduction of two marks for each day it is late. Work submitted later than one week after the deadline without an authorised extension, or not submitted at all, will receive a mark of 0.

Applying for Deferred Submission

The due dates for assessed essays are fixed deadlines equivalent to examination dates. Should you wish to apply for an extension, you must do so in writing to the MPhil administrator, stating your reason. Students with an SpLD diagnosis and supporting SSD will automatically be considered for extended deadlines, and should consult the MPhil administrator for further details.

Other reasons for requesting an extension would normally be either medical, in which case a statement from a College nurse or a GP must be provided, or personal, in which case a supporting letter from your College tutor and/or counsellor is needed. As explained above, assessed work submitted late without an authorised extension will be penalised. Deferral will normally only be granted for the *actual amount of time lost* through ill health or other difficulties.

Procedures for submitting assessed essays

Submit two hard copies of each essay by the advertised deadline, stapled or soft bound, along with an electronic version, to enable the word count to be independently verified. The electronic version should be in MS word format (not pdf) and sent via email to mphil@african.cam.ac.uk.

Essays must be typed on A4 paper, double-spaced, in a typeface of 11 or 12 point font. The pages should be numbered.

A cover sheet can be downloaded below, which you must complete and sign and submit loose-leaf with your essay.

Your name should not be written on the essay, but do record your USN on the first page.

For the Practice Essay, type the essay title approved by your dissertation supervisor on the first page of your essay, in addition to including it on the coversheet. For the Coursework Essays, type the prescribed (in the case of the core course) and the approved (in the case of the option course) essay question on the first page of your essay, in addition to providing it on the cover sheet. Do not adopt a different a different essay title as this causes confusion to the examiners and is also not permitted by the Department of POLIS Degree Committee.

The essay must include a bibliography of all (and only) works cited.

[Download a practice essay coversheet](#)

[Download a core course essay coversheet](#)

[Download an option course essay coversheet](#)

9. SUBMITTING THE DISSERTATION

Word Limit

The word limit for dissertations is 15-20,000 words. This word limit includes all text except the bibliography; it means that the main text, all data in tables or figures, captions, titles and subtitles, the table of contents, the footnotes or endnotes, and all prefatory material at the start is counted. Statistical tables should be counted as 150 words per table. Maps, illustrations and other pictorial images count as 0 words. Graphs, if they are the only representation of the data being presented, are to be counted as 150 words. However, if graphs are used as an illustration of statistical data that is also presented elsewhere within the essay (as a table for instance), then the graphs count as 0 words.

Exceeding the Word Count

Students are required to submit a signed statement confirming the word count of their dissertation. The MPhil administrator will verify the declared word count against the electronic copy if requested to do so by the examiners. As a general rule, any content that the examiners must read in order to assess students' work should be included in the main body of the dissertation and not in footnotes or in appendices.

An assessed dissertation that is proven to exceed the stated word limit will not be accepted, but will be handed back to the student for further editing. Any delay in submission caused by the need to reduce the length of a dissertation will be subject to the standard penalty scale for late submissions.

Late Submission

Please refer to the guidance above for essay submission.

Applying for Deferred Submission

Please refer to the guidance above for essay submission.

Additionally, you should be aware that if you require a deferral of your dissertation submission, it will likely prove impossible for your work to be examined within the tight deadlines of the June/July examination period. Specifically, your results may not be available in time to be presented to the final meeting of the POLIS Degree Committee in late June. In such cases, confirmation of your degree results will be delayed until early the next academic year (October). In serious cases such as this, students will be advised to [apply to extend the 'End of](#)

[Registration Date](#)'. This process is initiated via CamSIS and students will be requested to submit documentation to support their case, which is then referred to the CAS Graduate Committee, POLIS Degree Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies for consideration

The Dissertation Typescript

An MPhil dissertation should be a connected account of work written by the candidate. Candidates are responsible for the legibility of the dissertation and for ensuring that the correct version appears in the copies submitted for examination. One paragraph in the [Student Registry's guidance on the MPhil degree](#) is particularly important, and worth quoting in full:

"The form in which the thesis is presented, and the care with which it has been prepared and illustrated, are in themselves evidence of the candidate's capabilities, and will receive consideration as such. Candidates are strongly advised to check their thesis carefully, prior to submission, for typing errors, spelling mistakes and poor English. The thesis, apart from quotations and recognised technical formulae, must be written in English."

You should be aware that typing errors, spelling mistakes, inaccurate calculation, poor grammar, and convoluted syntax are not regarded as incidental. On the contrary, effective written expression is a core criterion for the assessment of dissertation.

The following notes give guidance on the preparation of a typescript, on bibliographies and citations. They are not intended to be exhaustive; nor are they compulsory. There are a number of acceptable conventions; the main principle is to be *consistent*. If you are in any doubt as to which conventions to employ, seek the advice of your dissertation supervisor.

Paper and Printing

Print your dissertation on A4 paper, via an MFP, laser printer or one of the better inkjet printers.

Margins

Leave margins of at least 1.5 inches (3.8cm) at the top, left and the foot, and 1 inch (2.5cm) at the right. The wider margin on the left allows space for binding.

Spacing

Everything in the main text should be double-spaced, except indented quotations and footnotes (at the foot of the page), which should be single-spaced.

Font

There is no prescribed typeface but it is strongly recommended to use simple classical typefaces (e.g. Times New Roman or Arial), 11pt or 12pt font; word processing software will select a smaller font for footnotes.

Headings

Do not use more than three levels of headings/subheadings within a chapter; the more kinds there are, the more difficult it will be for the reader to distinguish one grade from another.

Abbreviations

A list of the abbreviations used in the text and the footnotes should be placed at the beginning of the thesis.

Tables

Tables may be typed on separate sheets or be pasted in the text. Tables of more than four lines should be numbered and referred to in the text by number rather than 'as follows'. Check your tables carefully. Are they in the form that the reader will find most helpful? In case of doubt, consult your supervisor.

Quotations

Short quotations should be enclosed in single inverted commas (except for quotations within quotations which have double inverted commas), and run on with the main text in double-spacing. However, quotations extending to more than five lines of typescript should be distinguished from the rest of the text and do not need inverted commas (except for quotations within quotations). Start each such quotation on a fresh line and indent the whole quotation and type in single-spacing. Take particular care to transcribe quotations accurately. If a quotation includes an obvious error, do not correct it but indicate it by placing the Latin word 'sic' (meaning 'thus') in round brackets immediately after the error.

Internet Citations

Websites: cite author or webmaster (if known), date created or last updated (if known), title of text, heading of page, full url, and date last accessed; eg. Kornberg, N. (13 August 2013), 'Writing Windhoek', *Africa is a Country* <http://africasacountry.com/writing-windhoek/> Last accessed 2 November 2013.

Bibliographical References and Citations

The bibliography must include all material, primary and secondary, that has been cited or has substantially informed the dissertation; it should not include materials consulted that have not, in the end, been used. It should normally be divided into manuscript sources, printed sources, printed secondary works and unpublished dissertations.

We do not give precise instructions about citations in the thesis. The choice between footnotes and author-date or Harvard referencing is a pragmatic one, on which you should take advice from your supervisor, and may reflect the scholarly conventions of the discipline you are working in, particularly the extent to which your dissertation relies upon primary materials. We recommend that you consult one of the Style Guides below, and adopt one style to follow consistently. Since most Style Guides have been through numerous editions, it is always best to consult the most recent edition.

MHRA Style Guide: a Handbook for Authors, Editors, and Writers of Theses (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 3rd edition, 2013). This guide is available for download: <http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 8th edition, 2013). Excellent, and good value. This is a scaled down version of *The Chicago Manual* (see below).

R. M. Ritter, *The Oxford Guide to Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). This is a recent re-branding of *Hart's Rules* (1893 and subsequent editions), but a bit pricey for those not intending an academic career.

The Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, various editions). Very comprehensive, but also expensive.

Procedures for submitting the dissertation

Submit two bound copies of the dissertation by the advertised deadline, along with an electronic version, to enable the word count to be independently verified. The electronic version should be in MS word format (not pdf) and sent via email to mphil@african.cam.ac.uk.

The dissertation may be spiral bound or submitted in a plastic folder, but must be sufficiently secure as to be durable. If you wish to submit it with a more solid binding, there are good services run by the [University Reprographics Centre](#) (Old Schools) and the [Graduate Union](#) (17 Mill Lane).

You must include a title page (bound with the dissertation) showing the title of your dissertation, your name, your college, and the date of submission, as well as your supervisor's name. You must also include a declaration stating: "This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies" as well as a 'Statement of Length', which confirms the word count and states that your dissertation does not exceed the word limit.

There should be a further declaration in the Preface stating: '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'.

The dissertation must include a bibliography of all (and only) works cited.

The following documents should be handed in with the dissertation (but not be bound with it). You can download them below or collect hard copies from the MPhil office.

[Dissertation Coversheet](#) (one copy)

[Copyright/Right of Access form](#) (permission to place your dissertation in the CAS library, one signed copy)

10. STUDENTS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Centre of African Studies, Department of POLIS

For any concerns regarding the MPhil degree as a whole or about individual courses (except language teaching, see below), students should contact the MPhil in African Studies Course Director. Anonymous or more general feedback may also be passed to the student representative (elected early in Michaelmas Term). The student representative liaises with the Course Director or, if preferred, he/she can communicate students' concerns directly to the MPhil administrator who will pass them on to the Centre of African Studies Graduate Education Committee

In the unlikely event of serious concerns about your MPhil studies or dissertation supervision, please consult the University's [complaints procedure](#). The Responsible Officer for POLIS is Professor James Mayall, who can be contacted at jblm2@cam.ac.uk

Language teaching

Concerns about language teaching should follow the Cambridge University Language Programmes (CULP) complaints procedure. If preferred, concerns may be communicated to the MPhil administrator, from where they will be passed on to the Language Centre.

11. END OF MPhil COURSE

Calculating the Final MPhil Mark

- The core course essay is examined and a final mark is agreed.
- This is weighted at 20% of the MPhil mark.
- The option course essay is examined and a final mark is agreed.
- This is weighted at 20% of the MPhil mark.
- The dissertation is examined and a final mark is agreed.
- This is weighted at 60% of the MPhil mark.
- The weighted essay and dissertation marks are added together and rounded either up or down to produce the final mark.

The essays and the dissertation are marked by two examiners, who are formally appointed by the CAS Graduate Education Committee. Dissertations are not marked by the supervisor. If necessary, dissertations and essays can be referred to the External Examiner for a third mark. Essays and dissertations are marked on a numerical scale, with 60% or above being a pass. For full details on assessment procedures, consult the [Examination Guidelines](#).

There is no formal ending ceremony for the MPhil in African Studies other than the successful completion and submission of the dissertation. Successful students will be notified by the Board of Graduate Studies that they have met all their course requirements after the Department of POLIS Degree Committee meeting is held in late June, and must then arrange with their College to receive their MPhil degree, either in person or absentia, at a degree-graduating Congregation of the Regent House. **All information about the actual granting of degrees at a Congregation should be sought from the tutorial office of your College rather than from the MPhil Office at the Centre of African Studies.**

Final results cannot be released until after the Degree Committee meeting. The marks can thereafter be seen on your CamSIS self-service account. The MPhil Office will send dissertation examination reports to students by the end of July. You will need to apply for [Extended Self-Service](#) on CamSIS in order to access your marks, reports and transcripts. The Centre of African Studies does not offer a PhD programme, but there is no shortage of [PhD opportunities](#) for Africa-related research in the University of Cambridge. Should you require advice on your work prospects, the University offers an excellent [careers service](#), which you can continue to access after graduation.

The Cambridge [Alumni Relations Office](#) offers a variety of benefits for Cambridge graduates, including [Cantab](#), a free and prestigious email service designed specifically for University of Cambridge graduates.

12. GENERAL INFORMATION

Contact Details

Any specific questions concerning the MPhil in African Studies should be addressed in the first instance to:

MPhil Administrator

Victoria Jones
Centre of African Studies
Alison Richard Building
7 West Road
Cambridge CB3 9DT
Telephone: +44 1223 334396
Email: vj245@cam.ac.uk or mphil@african.cam.ac.uk

Student Registry, Academic Division

The Student Services Centre, New Museums Site, Cambridge, CB2 3PT.

Telephone: +44 (0)1223 766 302
Email: student.registry@admin.cam.ac.uk
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry>

Graduate Admissions Office, Academic Division

The Student Services Centre, New Museums Site, Cambridge, CB2 3PT.

Telephone: +44 (0) 1223 760 606
Email: Graduate.Admissions@admin.cam.ac.uk
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/gradadmissions/contact/>

Services for Disabled Students

Students with disabilities or impairments should contact the University in advance of their arrival, so that the staff can work together to develop appropriate support arrangements. Colleges can provide assessments of dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyspraxia. The University's Disability Resource Centre provides vital information, advice, equipment and assistance to disabled students and their supervisors. It is located at the Student Services Centre on Bene't Street; Website: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/disability/>, Telephone: (01223) 332301; E-mail: disability@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Dignity and Study at Cambridge

The University's core values encompass freedom of thought and expression, and freedom from discrimination. As a place of learning, teaching and research, the University provides an environment in which to exchange ideas, opinions and views. We are committed to maintaining a learning and working environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of our community are respected. We recognise that to work and study effectively, students need a climate of equal opportunity in which they are respected and valued for their contribution, irrespective of their sex, gender identity (including reassignment), marital, parental or partnership status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, sexuality, religion or belief, or age. The Centre of African Studies will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of any member of its community by another. If you experience difficulties of this kind, please contact your College

Tutor or the MPhil Course Director without delay. Guidance is also available on the Dignity@Study website or from the [Student Advice Service](#).

The University Centre and Cambridge Sports Centre

The University Centre, located at Granta Place (by the river, off Mill Lane), offers dining and leisure facilities, including a gym and a reading room. The University Centre is an especially useful haven for those unable to return to College for lunch. Computing facilities are also available. For more details see <http://www.unicen.cam.ac.uk/>. The University of Cambridge Sports Centre is located in West Cambridge, off Maddingley Road. To find out more, visit <http://www.sport.cam.ac.uk/>

ARB Reception and CAS Office

The ARB reception is manned from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, Telephone: (01223) 761 000. CAS and the CAS Library doors are open from 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday during University term, vacation hours may vary.

Building Access

You will be given out of hours access to the Centre and Library with your University Card. All entries with a card are logged in the building security system. Please do not bring unauthorised visitors into the ARB or CAS out of hours. Your out of hours access may be revoked should misuse occur.

Pigeon Holes

Every MPhil student has an allocated pigeonhole in the CAS meeting room. You can use it for storing papers and other items, but CAS does not take any responsibility for lost property, as the room is never locked. Please check your pigeonhole regularly as important MPhil information is occasionally delivered there.

Kitchen

There is a large kitchen on the third floor of the ARB (by the green sofas) that we share with the Centre of South Asian Studies. The Centre keeps the cupboards stocked with provisions for making tea and coffee (please let the MPhil Office know if any of these have run out). You can also store dry foods in those cupboards and there is a fridge for your use. Please keep the kitchen tidy and wash and put away crockery and cutlery after use, cleaning staff will not do your washing up or tidy up after you. Please do not leave food to go off in the kitchen.

Toilets

Toilets in the ARB are located on the ground, first, second and third floors. Accessible toilets are located on all floors. Single sex toilets, showers and changing facilities are available on the ground floor only.

University Security

For Fire Service, Ambulance or Police call 999

In case you need to call Security, use the following numbers:

Routine Calls: (01223) 331 818

Internal Emergency Calls: 101

External Emergency Calls: (01223) 767 444

E-mail: security@admin.cam.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/em/safety/security.html>

Fire Safety Procedures, Health and Safety and First Aid

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, students should leave CAS via the fire stairs in the African Studies Library and go to the Fire Evacuation Point at the back of the Alison Richard Building. If the alarm sounds, proceed quickly and quietly to that area. The main staircase in the Alison Richard Building is closed off in the event of a fire. Do not return to the building until the fire wardens advise that it is safe to do so. For advice on Health and Safety visit: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety/> for information. The ARB First Aider is: Jamie Brittain 351 212 (custodian).