

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE & CELTIC

**MPhil in
Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic
Course Handbook**

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Members of the ASNC Department

The following members of staff teach the MPhil course in Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic:

Dr Richard Dance (St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, CB2 1RL): Old English language and literature; Germanic philology. rwd21@cam.ac.uk

Dr Fiona Edmonds (Clare College, Cambridge, CB2 1TL): Brittonic and Gaelic history. fle20@cam.ac.uk [*on leave* Michaelmas and Lent Terms 2011-12]

Professor Simon Keynes (Trinity College, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ): Anglo-Saxon history. sdk13@cam.ac.uk

Dr Rosalind Love (Robinson College, Cambridge, CB3 9AN): Insular Latin literature; also Old English literature. rcl10@cam.ac.uk [*on leave* Easter Term 2012]

Dr Máire Ní Mhaonaigh (St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP): medieval Irish language and literature; medieval Welsh language and literature; Celtic philology. mnm21@cam.ac.uk [*on leave* Lent Term 2012].

Dr Judy Quinn (Newnham College, Cambridge, CB3 9DF): Old Norse language and literature; Old English literature. jeq20@cam.ac.uk [*on leave* Lent Term 2012]

Dr Elizabeth Ashman Rowe (Dept of ASNC): Scandinavian history. ea312@cam.ac.uk

Dr Paul Russell (Dept of ASNC): medieval Welsh language and literature; medieval Irish language and literature; Celtic philology. pr270@cam.ac.uk
[Head of Department]

The Departmental Secretary is Mrs Jayne Riley; asnc@hermes.cam.ac.uk. The ASNC office is in the English Faculty, room SR32; telephone: 01223-335079.

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Introduction

The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic (known as ASNC) is dedicated to the study of the history, languages, literatures and material culture of the different peoples of the British Isles, Brittany and Scandinavia in the earlier Middle Ages; the MPhil provides a one-year course of study in the scholarly methods and disciplines relevant to those subjects. The course allows candidates the possibility of achieving an understanding of early Insular culture as a whole, while at the same time specialising in aspects of particular interest, whether historical, palaeographical, literary or linguistic (including the languages Insular Latin, Old English, Old Norse, Old Saxon, Medieval Welsh, Medieval Irish, Middle Breton and Middle Cornish).

Teaching for the course consists of individual supervision, seminars and classes. Each graduate student has an allocated supervisor who is responsible for planning the research and courses to be followed during the MPhil year; other senior members of the Department are also available for consultation. Instruction is given in scholarly methods and bibliographical searching (including the use of IT resources), as well as in the particular fields of the candidate's interests.

Flexibility, and the possibility of tailoring supervision and instruction to individual needs, are the Department's priorities. The University Library's extensive collections of manuscripts and printed books provide a rich background for research, augmented by many special holdings in College libraries. In addition to following the seminars and classes specified for the course, candidates for the MPhil also have the opportunity of attending the Department's lectures, seminars and classes relevant to their individual interests.

The Convenor of the MPhil in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is Dr Rosalind Love who can be contacted by email (rcl10@cam.ac.uk), telephone (01223-767316), or via the departmental office mailboxes. During Easter Term 2012, while Dr Love is on leave, the MPhil will be convened by Dr Judy Quinn (jeq20@cam.ac.uk; tel. 01223 767317).

The formal structure of the MPhil course

The assessment of the MPhil comprises the following elements:

Review of scholarship essay	10%	due end of Michaelmas term
Written exercise	15%	examined end of Lent term
Second written exercise/essay	15%	examined end of Lent term
Take-home essay on seminar texts	10%	due beginning of Easter term
Dissertation	50%	due end of Easter term

All elements are submitted anonymously (a candidate number will be assigned to each MPhil at the start of the year) and assessed by two examiners; the whole course is moderated by an External Examiner. In order to pass the MPhil, candidates must achieve an overall mark of 60; it is a pass/fail degree but a mark over 75 is considered as distinction-level. A candidate whose failure in

one of the elements (review of scholarship, written exercises, or essay) is marginal may be allowed to go on to submit a dissertation if the Department's Graduate Sub-Committee considers it possible that that candidate will pass on aggregate. Such a candidate will be obliged to attend a viva at the end of the year, which will be on the topic of their dissertation. If failure in exercises or essays is more than marginal, or if there is failure in more than one element, candidates will not normally be allowed to continue with the course.

Those MPhil candidates who wish to go on to a Cambridge PhD will be required to achieve an overall mark of 70% or more, including a mark of not less than 70% on the dissertation. They will also be obliged to attend a viva at the end of the MPhil year, after they have submitted their dissertation. Procedures to be followed by MPhil students wishing to apply to continue to a Cambridge PhD are set out on the relevant section of the Board of Graduate Studies website:

(www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/prospec/apply/continuation/).

The components of the MPhil: Review of Scholarship

You will meet your appointed supervisors in the first week of Michaelmas term to confirm the topic for the dissertation which will form the main component of the MPhil, and to plan the stages of your research and drafting. The first assessed item of course-work, the Review of Scholarship essay, submitted at the end of the first term, is aimed at laying the groundwork for that dissertation. The essay should not exceed 5,000 words in length (including footnotes but excluding bibliography) and will demonstrate your familiarity with the scholarship in the area of your dissertation topic and will situate your own projected research in relation to existing knowledge and debates. Although the structure of a review essay and its relationship to the content of the projected dissertation will vary greatly according to topic, the review should be thought of as primarily an assessment of the published material in your field rather than a detailed account of your own fresh ideas about the topic, which you will naturally want to save up for the dissertation. In order to encourage the habit of producing good quality writing well before the deadline, you will be required to give your supervisor a draft of your review essay two weeks before it is formally due.

This Michaelmas term exercise also serves to alert MPhils to the Department's expectation of a high standard of accuracy in referencing and of clarity of expression in the work of its graduates, and essays will be assessed on this as well as on their content and structure. You are required to choose and follow one of three possible style-guides for the referencing in this first piece of work: either ASNC's own style-sheet (available from the website), the style-guide of the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA), or the style-guide of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Having chosen your style, the skill lies in carrying it out consistently and applying its principles with common-sense throughout the essay.

Since it is thus in every regard preparatory to the final dissertation, the review essay is the one piece of course-work for which you will receive detailed written feedback from the examiners as soon as it has been assessed.

The components of the MPhil: Written Exercises

30% of the ASNC MPhil mark derives from assessment of the two core scholarly skills which you have chosen to pursue, tested by means of written exercises. These exercises take the form of two-hour examinations sat at the end of the Lent term (March). They are designed to focus and assess students' acquisition of or improvement in a language or other subject taught within the Department, after two terms' study, and can be beginner-, intermediate- or advanced-level, according to need. At the first meeting with your supervisors at the start of the year, you should identify specific areas of study for your two written exercises. The teaching in languages, palaeography and historical subjects is provided through the classes and lectures provided for Parts I and II of the Undergraduate Tripos, listed below (see the current undergraduates' section of the ASNC website for more detailed descriptions of each course). All teaching commences at the start of full Michaelmas term, usually the first or second week in October, and you are expected to attend and prepare work for all classes in your two chosen subjects for the sixteen weeks of both Michaelmas and Lent terms.

Under exceptional circumstances and only after consultation both with you supervisor and the MPhil convenor, you may apply to sit only one examination and instead of the second examination to submit (at the end of Lent term) an essay of not more than 4,000 words on an approved subject within ASNC. It should be noted, however, that two written exercises is the norm. A preliminary indication of the two subjects in which you wish to do written exercises is required in Michaelmas term, with confirmation in Lent term.

Taught courses available to MPhil students

MPhil students may attend all the Department's undergraduate courses of formal lectures, classes and seminars. Since these include courses at first-, second-, and third-year levels, you can either improve upon knowledge and skills already acquired during your undergraduate courses or acquire a new area of expertise which will be useful to your future studies.

ASNC Tripos Part I

The Department offers courses in the following areas each year:

1. England before the Conquest.
2. Scandinavian history of the Viking Age.
3. The Brittonic-speaking peoples from the fourth century to the twelfth.
4. The Gaelic-speaking peoples from the fourth century to the twelfth.
5. Old English language and literature.
6. Old Norse language and literature.
7. Medieval Welsh language and literature.
8. Medieval Irish language and literature.
9. Insular Latin language and literature.
10. Palaeography and codicology.

These courses are general introductions and assume no prior knowledge. All classes, and a few lectures, are specified as being for first- or second-year undergraduates, but most lectures run on a two-year cycle and are for both. First-year undergraduates are assessed through a mixture of summer exams and Lent-Term Preliminary Assessment Tests (PATs), and it is the latter that

form the beginner-level MPhil written exercises; intermediate-level written exercises are commensurate with what is required of second-year undergraduates in their Part I exams.

ASNC Tripos Part II

Part II is the third and final year of the undergraduate course and involves a range of papers which in some way or another take further the knowledge and skills acquired in the corresponding Part I courses. The teaching is generally by seminars and classes, and some lectures, in all cases the students will be expected to give brief oral presentations in class reporting on the results of their own reading. Advanced-level MPhil written exercises are at a standard equivalent to the exams taken by Part II undergraduates.

1. A subject in Anglo-Saxon history (*currently* The Anglo-Saxon Chancery).
2. A subject in Scandinavian history of the Viking Age (*currently* The Coming of Christianity).
3. A subject in the history of the Celtic-speaking world (*currently* Sea-Kings and the Celtic-speaking world, c. 1014-1164).
4. A subject in ASNC History (*currently* Law and Lawlessness).
5. A subject in Old English literature (*currently* Beowulf).
6. Advanced Medieval Scandinavian language and literature.
7. Advanced Medieval Welsh language and literature.
8. Advanced Medieval Irish language and literature.
9. A subject in Insular Latin literature (*currently* Writing Women).
10. Germanic philology.
11. Celtic philology.
12. Textual criticism.

The components of the MPhil: the text seminar

In addition to classes and lectures in the subjects which you have chosen for your written exercises, you are required to attend the weekly MPhil seminar in Michaelmas and Lent terms. After initial sessions on scholarly methods and IT resources in the first weeks, the seminar will become a reading-group, for which you will be required to read (in translation) and discuss a sequence of prescribed texts. These texts are a selection of key Latin and vernacular texts chosen from all the fields within ASNC, preceded by a group of earlier works which provide the intellectual background to the medieval world. These seminars are compulsory and you are expected to have read the assigned texts and to come prepared to participate in discussion. A booklet with a basic bibliography for each text and some suggested points of discussion will be provided. The seminars are convened by various members of the Department and it is thus you, the MPhils, who provide the continuity from week to week, making connections and comparisons between the texts you encounter.

Assessment of this part of the course takes the form of a take-home essay not exceeding 3,000 words, on a topic chosen from a list made available for collection from the departmental secretary (and by email) from noon on the first Thursday of Easter full term. Essays are then due for submission the following Monday. The topics are broad and intended to encourage comparative discussion, and candidates are required to write about at least three of the texts read during the year's seminars (including at least one from each term).

The components of the MPhil: the dissertation

The main component of the MPhil course is a dissertation of between 10,000 and 15,000 words in length (including tables, footnotes and appendices, but excluding bibliography), written in accordance with an approved style-sheet on a subject within the field of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic. The dissertation accounts for 50% of the final mark for the course and you are expected to be working on it throughout the year, alongside the other elements of the course. You will be required to give a preliminary indication of your dissertation topic at the beginning of the year, and to confirm the topic and the title of the dissertation during Lent term (thereafter substantial changes to the title may be made only after consultation with the MPhil Convenor). During the Easter term, all MPhils give a 20-minute presentation on their dissertation topic to the weekly MPhil Research Forum, attended by all students and the MPhil convenor, and occasionally other teaching staff. You will be required to hand in a full draft of your dissertation to your supervisors three weeks before the formal deadline in order to allow time for feedback and revision.

Notes on submitting your dissertation

As is the case for all MPhil written work, for the dissertation you are free to choose between the ASNC style-sheet, the MHRA style-guide, or that of the MLA. You must indicate which style you are following and ensure that you are consistent in your referencing and punctuation; in particulars not documented in the style-guide which you have chosen (since no such guide can possibly cover every eventuality) you should try to develop a consistent practice, footnoting if necessary the reasons for your decisions. Remember, too, to number the pages of your dissertation and to proof-read it carefully before submission.

You are required to submit THREE soft-bound copies of your completed dissertation, printed out on A4 paper with the text double-spaced or one-and-a-half spaced at 12 pt. Double-sided print-out is acceptable, but take care to leave sufficient margins to accommodate the soft-binding (spiral-binding is the most efficient method). Please note that the third copy of the dissertation is for the External Examiner, and is a particular requirement of the ASNC MPhil. You are NOT required to submit an abstract with your dissertation, but you must include with each copy, on a separate page, the following two declarations:

I declare that this submission is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and duly acknowledged in the text and bibliography. The style I have followed is that of the ASNC Dept / MHRA / MLA [*stating whichever is appropriate*].

I declare that the word count for this submission, including quotations and footnotes, but excluding the bibliography is xxxxx words.

Below is a specimen title-page for a dissertation, as guidance for what should be included:

University of Cambridge
Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic

**The Kingdom of the East Angles
and
the Mercian Yolk**

Candidate number 12

A dissertation submitted in part-fulfilment of the regulations
for the degree of Master of Philosophy 2012

Please do NOT put your name or college, or the name of your supervisor, on the title page, using only the candidate number issued to you at the start of the academic year. Beware, also, of using automated headers or footers that include your name or initials, in the dissertation itself. When submitting the dissertation you must also hand in one copy of a completed **certificate of submission** which will be sent to you by the Degree Committee (but which can also be downloaded from the MPhil section of the ASNC website). The certificate is a requirement of the Board of Graduate Studies, but will be separated from your completed dissertation before it is handed to your examiners, in order to maintain anonymity.

At the same time as submitting hard copies of your dissertation by the specified deadline, you are also required to submit an electronic version, as single word-processed file (and not a pdf). The electronic file, required in the event of queries about word-count or possible plagiarism, should be sent as a clearly-labelled email attachment (or delivered on disk or memory stick) to the ASNC Departmental Secretary (and NOT to the Secretary of the Degree Committee) on the same day that you submit. The file will be held by her alone, until the examination process has been completed, when it will be deleted.

Work that does not comply with these stipulations will be penalised. False declarations of length will attract severe penalties, as will any work identified as containing plagiarised content. Late submission of the dissertation will not be accepted without prior authorisation from the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies of the Faculty of English (who should be contacted via the Degree Committee office). Authorisation will be granted only in cases of grave cause, and should be sought through your College Tutor rather than your MPhil supervisor.

The MPhil examination process

Like the other elements of the course, the dissertation is assessed independently by two examiners, who also discuss the final agreed mark for the dissertation with the External examiner, who has a moderating role. The External examiner can also be asked to adjudicate in cases where two examiners cannot reach agreement over a mark for earlier pieces of course-work, and before the final Examiners' meeting, the External looks over all the year's submitted work. Accordingly, although you will be informed of the mark for each element as it is assessed during the year, those marks should be regarded as provisional until the External Examiner has seen the full mark sheet.

The examination of the MPhil may include a *viva voce* examination on the dissertation, which is compulsory for those who have been accepted to continue to PhD at Cambridge, and for any candidate with a marginal fail mark in one item of course-work; a viva for other candidates is at the discretion of the examiners. You will be advised of timetabling for the vivas in the Easter term, but it is important that you do not arrange to depart from Cambridge until the examination process is completed and it is certain that you will not be required to attend a viva.

The vivas will be followed by a final examiners' meeting, after which the marks for the course will be accepted first by the ASNC Graduate Sub-committee, then the Degree Committee of the Faculty of the English, and finally by the Board of Graduate Studies, which will then issue formal written confirmation of the degree; the Decree Committee also sends a breakdown of course-work marks and the examiners' reports on the dissertation (usually in the second week of July). You will only formally have gained the MPhil degree once you have attended a graduation ceremony in the University Senate House. Such ceremonies, so-called Congregations of the Regent House, occur every few months: there is always a Congregation in mid-July and examining is usually complete in time for successful MPhils to graduate then if they wish, either in person or in absentia (graduation is organised through your College rather than by the Department).

Feedback on the MPhil

ASNC uses a system of Teaching Evaluation Questionnaires (TEQs) for all the undergraduate course it offers, and these are given out in the seventh week of Michaelmas and Lent Terms, so that you will have a chance to give feedback on that part of the Department's teaching. In addition, evaluation of the MPhil text-seminar is sought at the end of Lent Term (by means of a TEQ), and you will be asked to provide written feedback on the course in general and on the supervision you have received at the end of the year. At the final MPhil examiners' meeting, the MPhil convenor reports on all the feedback received.

Life as a graduate in ASNC

Undergraduate students

The Department normally has about 80 undergraduates at any one time, spread across the various colleges of the University; these provide the mainstay of the Department's lively social life, and there is frequent interaction between the

undergraduates, graduates and senior members, on an informal as well as a formal basis. The students organise an email list for news and discussions of interest to ASNaCs, and there is a regular rendezvous at a local pub on Friday evenings. There is also a student-run ASNC Society (for details of its officers see www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/currentstudents/asnc-soc.htm) which graduates are welcome to join, and which organises weekly lunches and social events.

Graduate students in the Department

At any one time there may be up to 30 research students in the Department doing research for an MPhil or a PhD degree on a subject which falls within the scope of the Department's interests. PhD students are often involved in teaching, whether lecturing, giving classes, or supervising. Research students contribute significantly to the intellectual and social life of the Department, and MPhil students are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities to participate in ASNC activities during their year of study at Cambridge. One MPhil student is elected each year to be a representative on the Department's Graduate Joint Academic Committee, which meets once a term, and is another means by which MPhils may provide feedback on the course.

Departmental Seminars

Students taking the MPhil course are expected to attend the Department's Graduate Seminar, which is held on Monday afternoons during Michaelmas and Lent terms, and consists of a mix of guest lectures by distinguished scholars visiting Cambridge, and papers by ASNC's doctoral students. In Easter term, the Department holds a weekly Graduate Symposium at which all graduate students are invited to give short presentations, grouped into panels which devise their own theme for the session, appoint a chair and respondents. MPhil students are expected to attend these as well, and may offer papers or act as respondents if they wish (but are not obliged to do so). The Department also holds two annual named guest-lectures, given by renowned scholars in the various fields encompassed by ASNC, and held on the last Thursday of Michaelmas and Lent Full Terms (the Quiggin and H.M. Chadwick lectures respectively).

Other lecture courses

In addition to the courses which you have chosen for your written exercises, you are welcome at any other undergraduate lecture-courses within ASNC. All members of the University are also entitled to attend the extensive range of lectures available in Faculties other than their own, for example Classics, Archaeology & Anthropology, English, History, and Modern & Medieval Languages. For information about these, you are advised to consult the University lecture list for published in *The Reporter* and available online (www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/).

General guidance on life in Cambridge

The Faculty of English produces a booklet known as the Green Book, which offers a wide variety of useful advice aimed specifically at the students enrolled on the various MPhil courses that run within the Faculty, including ASNC. A link to the booklet can be found on the MPhil area of the ASNC website. Please be aware, however, that the section on how to submit your dissertation in that booklet does NOT supersede the information supplied in this handbook.