



INSTITUTE OF  
ENGLISH  
STUDIES

SCHOOL OF  
ADVANCED STUDY  
UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# MA or MRes in the History of the Book

[ies.sas.ac.uk](http://ies.sas.ac.uk)

# About the degree

The University of London's postgraduate degree in the History of the Book was inaugurated in 1995 and each year attracts a range of students from many countries. The University's location in the centre of London, with its unrivalled resources for all aspects of book history within easy reach, together with the expertise that exists in its many colleges and institutes, makes it an ideal place in which to carry out research of an interdisciplinary nature. The history of the book has developed rapidly over the last 40 years as its power to clarify problems in many other disciplines has become evident. Scholars have come to see the study of the book as an aid to understanding literary and other texts and, more recently, as a way of understanding broader social, cultural, and intellectual processes in history.

The history of the book is thus a subject that encompasses the history of literate culture as a whole. Its focus includes not only books, but also newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, and ephemera. Because the book did not begin with the invention of printing, the programme will also consider the manuscript book in all its forms from the pre-classical, classical, and medieval periods. The book is a material object. One way to study it, therefore, is to study its physical attributes. We can ask what form the book took in different periods, and how that form developed over time. Because it is a manufactured object, we can also investigate the processes by which it was made. By considering conditions of manufacture, we are led not only into discussion of the book as physical object, but also the social, economic, and cultural relations entailed in a book's production. The book is at the centre of a web of authors, suppliers, producers, distributors, and consumers.

We could investigate a similar network for the production of virtually any other manufactured object, but the book is different from these objects because it also has intellectual content. The book is, therefore, itself an actor in society, although one whose effects are varied, depending on circumstances of production, commerce, tastes, and politico-religious regulations. Over the past 40 years the subject has become a study of the interaction of the book and society, looking both at the effects society has had on the book, and at the way in which the book has influenced society.

This programme can also lead to the award of an MRes degree.

## Degree overview

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The programme aims to:

- Give students a broad understanding of book history from c. 3000 BCE to 2000 CE.
- Introduce students to the range of disciplines that make up the subject, including historical bibliography, palaeography, codicology, history of printing, bibliometrics, history of publishing, history of reading, and library history.
- Provide frequent opportunities to handle archaeological and historical objects relating to the subject.
- Give students the ability and confidence to deal with primary sources for book history (both manuscript and printed).

In addition, the MRes will:

- Provide selected students with a foundation of three appropriately specialized taught courses (60 points in all), which will equip them to undertake a more extensive programme of master's level research than that offered by the MA.
- Provide the opportunity for able students to write an extended dissertation (30,000 words) on a subject that requires treatment at a much greater length and depth than the usual MA topic.
- Offer students a degree programme that satisfies the needs of those who wish to undertake more extensive research or go on to do an MPhil or PhD.

## Structure

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The MA consists of a series of six taught courses (including two core courses) plus a dissertation of 15,000 words.

The MRes consists of a series of three taught courses and a 30,000 word dissertation.

Students may also choose courses from the London Rare Books School programme under the guidance of the Course Director and Course Tutor.



## Modules

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### Core modules

- The Medieval Book
- Printed Text in Britain and Elsewhere, 1450–2010
- Research Methodology

### Optional modules

- Digital Publishing and Book Studies
- The Book in the Ancient World
- Hand-Press Printing: A Practical Course
- An Introduction to Bibliography
- The Historical Reader: The Practice and Representation of Reading, 1400–1900
- The Printed Book in the East: China, India and Japan
- Western Book Structures

## London book trade internship

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Students have the option to substitute one of the modules with an internship at a London bookselling firm. The internships offer a key opportunity for students to experience life in a bookselling firm, to undertake projects for the company (everything from stocktaking to cataloguing to running a book stall at a fair), and to make connections in the book trade. In the past, students have been placed in Maggs Bros., Jarndyce Booksellers, Robert Frew Ltd., and Ash Rare Books.

## Teaching and supervision

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Teachers are recognised experts drawn from the Institute, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Lambeth Palace Library, and other institutions, at which some of the teaching takes place.

## Assessment

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The MA consists of a series of six taught modules (including two core courses) plus a dissertation of 15,000 words.

The MRes consists of a series of three taught modules and a 30,000 word dissertation. Each taught module will be examined by one 5000-word essay on a topic to be agreed with the tutor.

## Course summary

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### **Degree structure**

MA: six courses, including two mandatory core courses, plus a dissertation of up to 15,000 words. MRes: three courses and a 30,000 word dissertation.

### **Mode of study**

12 months full time | 24 months part time. Part-time students typically take four courses in the first year of study and two courses plus the dissertation in the second year.

### **Fees 2017–18**

Home and EU students: full time, £6,240 | part time £3,440

Overseas students: full-time, £14,465

## Careers

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Beyond the degree, previous students have gone on to careers in the rare book trade, academic librarianship, museum curatorship and publishing, as well as PhD study.

# London Rare Books School

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The London Rare Books School (LRBS) offers a range of individual postgraduate courses in book history and related subjects taught by distinguished international scholars. LRBS students can take a course for credit by submitting a pass-quality 5,000 word essay within two months of taking the course (charged at £150), allowing students to build up credits towards the MA/MRes.

## London Rare Books School Courses

- A History of Reading
- European Bookbinding
- History of Book Illustration
- History of Colour Printing
- History of the Book in India
- History of the Book in Scotland
- History of the British Book Trade
- Introduction to Bibliography
- Medieval Women and the Book
- The Modern Rare Book Trade
- Provenance in Books
- Scholarly Editing
- The Book in the Renaissance
- The Digital Book
- The Medieval Book
- The Printed Book in Europe, 1455-2010
- The Queer Book



## Learn more

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For details of entry requirements, tuition fees, funding opportunities, English language requirements, disability support, accommodation, and how to apply, please consult the School graduate study webpages. Detailed course descriptions and information about assessment are available on the Institute's graduate study webpages.

School graduate study webpages:

[www.sas.ac.uk/graduate-study](http://www.sas.ac.uk/graduate-study)

Institute graduate study webpages:

[www.ies.sas.ac.uk/study-training](http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/study-training)

The information in this leaflet is correct at the time of its production in January 2017 but the School of Advanced Study, University of London reserves the right to alter or withdraw courses and amend other details without prior notice.

The **Institute of English Studies** is an internationally renowned research centre specialising in the history of the book, manuscript and print studies, and textual scholarship. Our activities include providing postgraduate studies, hosting major collaborative research projects, providing essential research training in book history and palaeography, and facilitating scholarly communities in all areas of English studies.

The **School of Advanced Study** is the UK's national centre for the support and promotion of research in the humanities. Located at the heart of the University of London in Bloomsbury, the School provides an unrivalled scholarly community in which to pursue postgraduate study and research. Students learn from leading specialists in their fields, hone their research skills in highly regarded training programmes, expand their knowledge through an extensive calendar of events, and become part of a worldwide network of humanities scholars. Funding opportunities include AHRC-sponsored London Arts and Humanities Partnership studentships, SAS studentships, and a number of subject-specific bursaries and awards.

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