



MPHIL IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

2019-20

COURSE HANDBOOK

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Most of the material in this Handbook is also available on the Centre's website, www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk, which contains detailed information on modules, staff and events.

CALENDAR 2019-20

2019

8 October	Michaelmas Term Full Term begins
8-9 October	Induction Programme
16 October, 12 noon	Module choices to be submitted to the CLAS Administrator
21 November, 12 noon	First essay title submission deadline
6 December	Full Term ends
13 December, 12 noon	First essay submission deadline

2020

14 January	Lent Term Full Term begins
16 January	Ensure procedures for any fieldwork are completed (see p.25)
20 February, 12 noon	Second and third essay titles submission deadline
13 March	Full Term ends
20 March, 12 noon	Second and third essays submission deadline
23 March, 12 noon	Provisional dissertation title submission deadline
21 April	Easter Term Full Term begins
11 May, 12 noon	Final dissertation title submission deadline
10 June, 12 noon	Dissertation submission deadline
12 June	Full Term ends
22/23 June	Oral examinations (if required)

MPhil Latin American Studies by thesis only:

2019

29 November, 12 noon	Provisional thesis title submission deadline
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2020

10 January, 12 noon	Final thesis title submission deadline (part-time two-year course)
11 May, 12 noon	Final thesis title submission deadline (one-year course)
20 March, 12 noon	Thesis submission deadline (part-time two-year course)
10 June, 12 noon	Thesis submission deadline (one-year course)

MODULES AND CONVENORS, 2019-20

Michaelmas 2019

<i>Capitalism and Society in Latin America</i>	Pedro Mendes Loureiro
<i>Modernity and Subjectivity in Latin American Culture</i>	Joanna Page
<i>Perspectives on Race in Latin America</i>	Sarah Abel
<i>Power and Protest: Social Movements and the State in Latin America</i>	Grace Livingstone

Lent 2020

<i>Cinema and the Politics of Representation in Latin America</i>	Joanna Page
<i>Culture and Indigeneity in Latin America</i>	Beatriz Marín-Aguilera
<i>Development and Policy in Latin America</i>	Pedro Mendes Loureiro
<i>Interpretations of Latin America</i>	Pedro Mendes Loureiro
<i>Power and Conflict in Latin American Literature</i>	Rory O'Bryen

CLAS Induction Programme 2019

Colour key:

MPhil only events	PhD only Events	MPhil <i>and</i> PhD events
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Tuesday, 8 October

9.45 - 10.00	MPhil	Introduction to the Centre of Latin American Studies	Felipe Hernandez, Director of CLAS	CLAS Meeting Room 204 Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS), 2nd Floor, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, Cambridge
10.00 - 11.00	MPhil	Introduction to the MPhil in Latin American Studies	Joanna Page, MPhil Director, Pedro Mendes Loureiro, CLAS UTO and Chriselia de Vries, Administrator	CLAS Meeting Room 204 Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS)
11.00 - 11.30	MPhil	Coffee		CLAS Common Room
11.30 - 12.30	MPhil	Introduction to the Optional Modules for the MPhil course	MPhil Director and module convenors	CLAS Meeting Room 204
12.30 - 1.15	MPhil and PhD	Lunch		CLAS Common Room
1.15 - 2.30	MPhil	Free time		
1.15 - 2.00	PhD	Meeting for new PhD students (CLAS and Consortium students)	Felipe Hernandez, Director of CLAS and Pedro Mendes Loureiro, PhD Coordinator	Meeting Room 204, Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS), 2nd Floor, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, Cambridge
2.15 - 2:30	PhD	Introduction to Training and Development Programmes	Christian Gilliam, Researcher Development Facilitator	CLAS Meeting Room 204
2.30 - 4.00	MPhil and PhD	Tour of CLAS Library and University Library, guide to catalogues and online databases	Julie Coimbra, CLAS Librarian	Meeting point: CLAS Meeting Room 204
4.30 - 6.00	MPhil and PhD	Cambridge walking tour		Meeting point: Silver Street Bridge
6.00 -	MPhil and PhD	Informal pub gathering for all new students, with other CLAS students and staff		The Maypole 20A Portugal PI, Cambridge CB5 8AF

Wednesday, 9 October

9.30 -12.30, 1.15 - 2.45	MPhil	Short individual meetings with MPhil Director (to be timetabled on the first day of induction)	Joanna Page	CLAS Meeting Room 204
2.45 - 3.45	MPhil	Research Skills/Transition to Postgraduate Study (Reading for seminars – giving seminar papers – writing essays – approaching the dissertation)	Pedro Mendes Loureiro	CLAS Meeting Room 204
4.00	MPhil and PhD	Social Science Research Methods Centre (SSRMC) Induction session		Lady Mitchell Hall, Sidgwick Site

WORK SCHEDULE for the MPhil in Latin American Studies

Below is week-by-week outline of how students should ideally spread out their workload across the course in order to meet deadlines successfully. (This should be treated as a guide only)

Michaelmas Term Week 1	Prepare for Core Course seminar (starts week 1) and optional modules (start week 2)
Week 2	Prepare for Core Course and optional module seminars
Week 3	Prepare for Core Course and optional module seminars Sketch out preliminary ideas for dissertation ahead of first meeting with dissertation supervisor
Week 4	Prepare for Core Course and optional module seminars Meet with dissertation supervisor this week or next
Week 5	Prepare for Core Course and optional module seminars Begin the process of identifying a supervisor and a topic for the essay
Week 6	Prepare for Core Course and optional module seminars Identify a supervisor, work on essay title and agree a schedule for draft submission Begin research for essay 1
Week 7	Prepare for Core Course seminar Intensive research and writing for essay 1
Week 8	Prepare for Core Course seminar Produce draft of essay 1 and meet with supervisor to discuss
Week following end of term	Final editing of essay 1, ready for submission Start required procedures for any fieldwork during Easter term
Christmas vacation	Read ahead for Lent Term modules Reading for the dissertation
Lent Term Week 1	Prepare for optional module seminars
Week 2	Prepare for optional module seminars
Week 3	Prepare for optional module seminars
Week 4	Prepare for optional module seminars Begin the process of identifying supervisors and topics for the essays 2 & 3
Week 5	Prepare for optional module seminars Identify supervisors, work on essay 2 and 3 titles and agree a schedule for submitting drafts Latest point to begin research for essays 2 & 3
Week 6	Intensive research and writing for essays 2 & 3
Week 7	Intensive research and writing for essays 2 & 3 Produce draft of essay 2 and meet with supervisor to discuss it
Week 8	Intensive research and writing for essays 2 & 3 Produce draft of essay 3 and meet with supervisor to discuss it
Week following end of term	Final editing for essays 2 & 3, ready for submission
Easter vacation	Intensive reading for the dissertation Fieldwork if appropriate
Easter Term Week 1	Produce a plan of the dissertation and meet up with supervisor to discuss
Week 2-4	Write first draft of dissertation and meet up with supervisor for feedback
Remainder of Easter Term	Redrafting of dissertation and further meeting(s) with supervisor as appropriate

THE CENTRE

The Centre of Latin American Studies was created in 1965 as a meeting place for those from across the University with scholarly interests in Latin America, with a mission to encourage the study of Latin America throughout the University and to facilitate relations with the countries of the region. It provides a hub for researchers working across a wide range of disciplines, organizing and hosting a full programme of seminars, guest lectures, workshops, conferences and other events throughout the year. It runs a multi-disciplinary MPhil programme and provides a home for approximately 10-15 doctoral students working on Latin America from a variety of different disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) perspectives. It also welcomes visiting scholars and students, provides a base for the annual visiting Simón Bolívar Professor and manages a specialist library. It is able to consider applications for funding from students and staff for fieldwork in Latin America, and to help with the costs of running academic events on Latin America in the University.

Staff

The Centre draws on the teaching expertise of lecturers and research staff across the University and its colleges. There are five members of core academic and administrative staff: the Centre Director, Dr Felipe Hernández; the MPhil Director, Dr Joanna Page; PhD Director, Dr Pedro Mendes Loureiro; the Centre Administrator, Mrs Chriselia de Vries; and Librarian and Events Coordinator, Mrs Julie Coimbra, who is also Secretary to the Simón Bolívar Professor.

Staff contact details

Contact details are listed below for staff who are resident in CLAS (*) or module convenors teaching for CLAS in 2019-20 who are resident in other departments.

For a full list of CLAS teaching staff please see: <http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/staff/academic>.

Name	College/Dept/Role	Telephone	E-mail
Felipe Hernández *	CLAS Director / Department of Architecture		fh285@cam.ac.uk
Joanna Page	CLAS MPhil Director & Lecturer	(3)	jep29@cam.ac.uk
Pedro Mendes Loureiro*	CLAS PhD Director & Lecturer	(3)35394	Pml47@cam.ac.uk
Grace Livingstone	CLAS Teaching Associate		gj340@cam.ac.uk
Sarah Abel*	British Academy Fellow hosted by CLAS		Saa49@cam.ac.uk
Beatriz Marín-Aguilera	Dept. of Archaeology	(3)39293	bm499@cam.ac.uk
Rory O'Bryen	Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese	(3)31676	rro20@cam.ac.uk
Hank Gonzalez	Dept. of History		jhg36@cam.ac.uk
Chriselia de Vries *	CLAS Administrator	(3)35390	admin@latin-american.cam.ac.uk
Julie Coimbra *	CLAS Librarian and Publicist	(3)35398	jac46@cam.ac.uk

CLAS Administrator Office Hours

9.30 – 14:30, Monday - Thursday / 9:30 – 13:30, Friday

CLAS Library

The Centre's collection of over 15,000 volumes is primarily a teaching collection, reflecting the courses that have been offered in Latin American Studies over the past fifty years. It is housed in the Seeley Historical Library, ground floor of the History Faculty, Sidgwick Site (in the first six bookstacks on the right-hand side of the mezzanine). Please visit the library during your first week to introduce yourself and sign up for library induction. To borrow books from the library, you will need your University Card and, to use the library computers, a Desktop Services account and password. The CLAS Librarian, Mrs Julie Coimbra (jac46@cam.ac.uk) is happy to respond to requests for book purchases.

Opening hours:

During Term, Monday-Friday 9.00am-7.15pm, Saturday 9.00am-6.00pm, Sunday 1.00-6.00pm;
During Vacations, Monday-Friday 9.00-5.00pm.

Please consult the Seeley Historical Library website, <http://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/seeley-library>, for further information regarding photocopying and printing, temporary changes to opening hours, etc.

CLAS audiovisual collection

The Centre has a large collection of audiovisual material for students to borrow or watch in the Centre's meeting room, which may be booked if there are no meetings or seminars taking place. Please contact the Librarian (Julie Coimbra, jac46@cam.ac.uk) if you wish to borrow material and the Administrator (Chriselia de Vries, admin@latin-american.cam.ac.uk) if you wish to book the meeting room.

CLAS research seminars

You should regard attendance as part of your normal term-time routine.

Research seminars take place on most Mondays during term at 5.15pm and are followed by drinks. They offer an excellent opportunity to hear a wide range of current work on Latin American topics and meet staff and postgraduate students from across many faculties. These seminars are supplemented by a wide range of other talks, workshops and conferences on Latin America over the year, of which you will be informed over email.

Student representation

There is provision for one or two student representatives to sit on committees of the Centre. This position is usually filled by one or more of the Centre's PhD students, on behalf of the Centre's postgraduate community as a whole. Volunteers will be sought by email; if the seats are contested, an election may need to be organised.

STUDENT SAFETY

First aid

The Alison Richard Building first aider is Mr Jamie Brittain, contactable on (01223) (7)61000.

Fire evacuation procedure

The fire alarm is tested weekly every Tuesday morning before 9am. In the event of a fire practice or a genuine fire, the alarm will ring continuously. The Centre Administrator is the Fire Warden for CLAS and will give directions if present. If the Fire Warden is absent you must leave the building immediately, without stopping to collect any of your belongings. Leave via the fire exit directly opposite the Centre's seminar room and walk straight to the fire assembly point, the steps in front of the Raised Faculty Building. On arrival, report to one of the Fire Wardens. Do not re-enter the building until permission has been given.

Sexual and racial harassment policy

The Centre, the University and the Colleges operate a very strict sexual and racial harassment policy. If you experience any difficulties of this kind, contact your College Tutor and the Director of the Centre without delay.

ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL SUPPORT

MPhil Director

If you wish to discuss any aspect related to your academic performance or the teaching provided on the course, you should feel free to contact the MPhil Director at any point. It is best to email in the first instance, and to make arrangements for a face-to-face meeting if appropriate.

Dissertation supervisor

Your dissertation supervisor, will oversee the preparation of your dissertation and make reports on your academic progress. Your supervisor is often identified during the admissions process, but may be subject to change at the start of your course, particularly if your research interest has shifted. The MPhil Director will confirm or change the supervisor after discussing your ideas for a dissertation topic with you early on in the first term. You should make contact with your supervisor soon after this and arrange a meeting to discuss the practicalities of your research. A change in the topic of your dissertation is permitted *subject to the availability of an appropriate supervisor*, and you should discuss this in the first instance with the MPhil Director. Further information on dissertation supervision can be found later in this Handbook.

Essay supervisors

You will receive individual supervision for each of the essays you submit during the course. Your essay supervisors will be able to give you specific advice on your chosen topics.

Your College

Each student on the MPhil course is also a member of a College. Your College helps with accommodation, provides pastoral and other support if necessary and provides additional study, sports and social facilities. Most colleges provide printing facilities and IT support if required.

Your College Tutor

Your College Tutor/Graduate Tutor helps with all aspects of life in Cambridge. S/He will address any non-academic difficulty, emotional or practical (including accommodation issues, illness affecting your work, financial problems and visas). If you are ill or experience other problems, which may affect your performance or the timely submission of assessed work, you should immediately contact your Tutor, as well as the Centre. Your Tutor and/or medical practitioner may need to write to us for consideration to be given in such cases.

More details about the responsibilities of those involved in your study and your student responsibilities can be found in the Cambridge University [Code of Practice](#).

Counselling and personal support

The University provides numerous points of contact in case you should experience any kind of difficulty. These include your College Tutor and Centre staff. However, there may be circumstances in which you prefer to consult someone quite independent of your daily environment.

The **Counselling Service** is generally available during normal office hours, but special arrangements can be made:

2-3 Bene't Place, Lensfield Road

01223 (3)32865

counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

www.counselling.cam.ac.uk

The **Students' Unions' Advice Service** provides confidential, impartial and independent advice to all students at Cambridge, undergraduate and graduate from any College. The Advice Service can help students on a whole range of issues, from making friends to exams, from intermission to bullying, and from welfare concerns to finance. The advisers in the team are warm and welcoming, and you can discuss anything with them. Drop in, email or call Monday –Friday, 9am – 5pm, all year round: 01223 746999

advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk

www.studentadvice.cam.ac.uk

Linkline is a student-run organisation operating during term from 7pm to 8am, which offers confidential help and information: 01223 (7)44444. **The Samaritans** is a further possible source of support, not linked to the University: 01223 364455; national 08457 909090.

RELEVANT COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

The Graduate Education Committee

The Graduate Education Committee (GEC) is comprised of academic staff from the Centre of Latin American Studies and POLIS (Politics and International Studies), the wider Department within which the Centre sits. Its chief functions with regard to the MPhil course are to monitor the academic progress of all CLAS students, to appoint supervisors, to consider and approve extensions to submission deadlines for written work, and to appoint examiners and advisers for all assessments. The GEC meets once or twice per term.

The Degree Committee

With regard to the MPhil, the chief functions of the Degree Committee are to approve dissertation titles, to review and agree marks and recommendations sent to them by the Graduate Education Committee and the Centre's External Examiner, to award the MPhil degree and, in conjunction with the Student Registry, to consider appeals and complaints.

The Student Registry (Board of Graduate Studies)

The Registry is ultimately responsible for admissions, receives regular reports on the academic performance of all graduate students and grants leave to continue towards higher degrees. The offices of the Registry are at 4 Mill Lane. The Registry publishes on their website extremely useful and authoritative guides to all aspects of graduate life in Cambridge. Often, you are required to make formal application to the Registry (e.g. for leave to continue to the PhD), which then consults the Degree Committee. This and many other administrative tasks can be completed on-line via your CamSIS self-service account.

STUDY FACILITIES

As a student of the University you have access to many libraries in addition to the Latin American collection at the Seeley. At the start of the academic year, introductory tours and instructional classes are available libraries – look out for information at library entrances or on websites.

The University Library

The University Library contains one of the world's largest collections of books. It has the right to receive copies of every copyright publication in the UK, and also holds an excellent collection of material published abroad. It is a repository of official documents of the UK government and of many international organisations. It is unusual among libraries of this size for the fact that much of its collection is borrowable and on open shelves. It is without doubt the best browsing library in the UK. Your University Card will provide access to the library.

College and Faculty libraries

Although College libraries are not expected to provide materials for specialist MPhils, many have responded generously to past student requests to acquire relevant books and you may be pleasantly surprised. They provide a good working environment and standard reference works. Faculty libraries relevant to your subject will also be very useful – for example, the Marshall Library of Economics, the Social and Political Sciences Library, the Squire Law Library, and Modern and Medieval Languages and Social Anthropology libraries.

Library catalogues and electronic resources

You may consult the University's print and online collections using a single search engine, **iDiscover**: <http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/>. You can access many subscription-based information services free over the Internet, provided you are connected to the University network or supply your Raven password. See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/eresources/index.php> for a full list of e-resources. The Librarian will be happy to help if you need advice on searching for material.

IT resources

Your email address and Raven password (to access a number of IT services within the University) will be provided via your college. If you have difficulties, please consult your College IT Officer in College, or the University Information Services.

Inter-library loans and libraries beyond Cambridge

The University Library runs an inter-library loan system. There is a small fee and you should be aware that it may be several weeks before the requested book arrives. Hence, you should determine as soon as possible if you require inter-library loans for your dissertation. This is one reason why preliminary bibliographical work on the dissertation is encouraged in the Michaelmas Term. If you wish to use specialist libraries outside of Cambridge, to which access may be restricted, the Centre will be able to provide a letter of introduction.

OTHER USEFUL SERVICES

The Graduate Union

The Graduate Union (Ground Floor of 17 Mill Lane) offers a variety of services, including dissertation-binding and the loan of gowns.

The University Centre

The University Centre, located at Granta Place (by the river, off Mill Lane), offers dining and leisure facilities, including a reading room and a television lounge.

THE COURSE

The aims of the MPhil course

The MPhil in Latin American Studies is designed to meet the needs of three groups: those who have developed an interest in Latin America through study or work and wish to develop this for personal or professional reasons; those who intend to proceed to a doctorate, and possibly an academic career in the field; and those whose established work stands to benefit from resources not available to them elsewhere. The course seeks to provide participants with a critical understanding of Latin America in all its complexity, and of the means and methods that have been devised to study and understand it better. This is achieved through the three main elements of the course:

- a **core course**, highlighting key critical issues in Latin American studies and providing a forum for interdisciplinary debate and an introduction to contrasting disciplinary methods
- **optional modules** in a range of different fields and disciplines, of which each student selects two in Michaelmas and two in Lent, providing training in a specific discipline and/or experience of a range of disciplinary perspectives on particular theme or topic
- the opportunity to study a specific topic in depth, as preparation for the **dissertation**.

The dissertation is a substantial element of the MPhil, worth 50% of the total mark awarded for the year's work. The examination process and criteria for assessment of the dissertation are accordingly rather more stringent than on Masters' programmes at most other universities, where (in the UK) the dissertation typically represents only a quarter of the year's work. In particular, there is a requirement for originality, which must be met either by research using primary sources (documents, interviews, official publications, or the like) or by developing a distinctive approach to an existing debate or literature. This is consistent with the general aim of the dissertation, which is to develop advanced skills of research and expression.

By the end of the course, participants will have developed a critical view of the contribution made by the academic study of Latin America and of some of its specific disciplines to the arts, humanities and/or social sciences. They will have become familiar with some of the main themes of contemporary debate. In addition, they will have tested their ability to produce a piece of advanced scholarship in conformity with the scientific method, research techniques, standards of argument and accepted style of presentation of an academic discipline.

Course structure overview

Teaching

	Michaelmas Term	Lent Term
Core Course	7 seminars	5 seminars
Research Skills	2 sessions	1 session
2 Optional Modules	6 seminars each	6 seminars each

Written work to be submitted

	Written work	% of overall MPhil mark
Michaelmas Term	Essay 1	50% (weighted at 20% for each of the two essays with highest marks and 10% for the lowest marked essay)
Lent Term	Essay 2 Essay 3	
Easter Term	Dissertation	50%

Students write one essay over the course of the first term and two essays during the second term. Reading and preliminary work on the dissertation should begin during the first term and continue through the second term, but the majority of the writing-up should take place in the third term.

Teaching

The MPhil course is largely taught through seminars, supplemented with individual supervision for the essays and dissertation. Active participation in the seminars is vital to success on the course, and students should prepare well for each seminar (having read at least the required texts), and come ready to discuss ideas. Students will be asked to give short presentations once or twice each term for the optional modules, and these presentations will usually form the basis of an essay topic. Attendance at all seminars is regarded as compulsory, and will be monitored. Students should inform the relevant seminar leader and the MPhil Administrator of any unavoidable absences, e.g. for reasons of illness, in advance of the seminar. It is not usually acceptable to miss seminars for any other reason, except in the case of job interviews that cannot be rescheduled, family emergencies, or similar circumstances.

Other University lectures and seminars

Apart from the official programme of MPhil seminars, there may be other lectures of interest to MPhil students, as advertised in the University lecture timetable: <https://www.timetable.cam.ac.uk>. In addition, there are many special lectures and seminar presentations by Cambridge academics and eminent visitors throughout the University, which you will find advertised via College and Dept email lists, as well as in the University Newsletter, and on the University website. Most departments run regular research seminars (e.g. the American Archaeology Seminar, or the Hispanic Research Seminar) which are open to all. You will generally be informed of those of Latin American interest by Julie Coimbra via email. Students are free to attend any lectures and seminars as long as they do not clash with the MPhil programme or affect their preparation for the course.

Keeping term

Students must 'keep' the three Full University Terms (indicated on the calendar of events at page three of this Handbook) during their year at Cambridge and follow their College's regulations on signing in and out. This means that they are required to remain in Cambridge for a certain number of nights per term. **Failure to do so may disqualify a student from proceeding to the Degree of MPhil.** If you are in any difficulty about this, you should consult your College Tutor and the Student Registry. As the MPhil course is intensive, any absence during term will have a significant impact on your work. You are advised to speak immediately to the Director if a situation arises that may entail an absence of more than 2-3 days during any term. Permission will normally only be granted in the case of family emergencies or similar circumstances.

There is a different procedure in place if you need to apply for 'Leave to Work Away' (LTWA) from Cambridge, e.g. if you are carrying out fieldwork in Latin America (please see the Fieldwork section of this Handbook). Leave needs to be granted even for fieldwork that takes place during the vacation periods.

Part-time MPhil degree

The MPhil course may be taken on a part-time basis over two years. Students following the taught course take the Core Course and 2 optional module in the first year, and the a further 2 optional modules in the second year. They prepare their dissertation over the course of the two years. Please note that the part-time course is actually five terms rather than six, as the Long Vacation counts as a term, and dissertations are therefore due for submission at the end of the second term in the second year (around the end of March).

MPhil by Thesis Only

It is possible to take the MPhil by thesis only. Students choosing this option do not submit any course essays, only a single thesis of 30,000 words. This option is usually restricted to mature students or students who have already completed a Masters course and who are taking the MPhil in order to develop a specific piece of scholarship. If you are interested in this option, you should discuss it with the MPhil Director, ideally before the start of the course, but certainly within the first week or two of

the course. The MPhil Director will determine whether this would be a suitable route through the MPhil for you, and whether appropriate supervision can be provided.

Course feedback

The Centre takes pride in the high quality of its academic programmes and monitors the quality of its teaching carefully. Any problems that you encounter should be discussed either with your supervisor or the MPhil Director. Formal feedback is invited via questionnaire at the end of the course. This is considered carefully by the Centre's teaching staff and taken into account when planning course arrangements for the following year.

COURSE ASSESSMENT: KEY REQUIREMENTS

Essays

The Michaelmas Term (first term) essay should relate in some way to the topics studied in the seminars, either as part of the Core Course or for one of the optional modules. Each of the two Lent Term (second term) essays should relate to one or more of the topics studied for seminars in the optional modules or the Core Course, either that term or the previous term. Overall, of the three essays, one should relate to one of the optional modules taken, the second to another optional module, and the third may relate either to a third optional module, or to the Core Course.

Students may apply to the Director for a special exemption in order to write on a topic that is not covered in one of the seminars, as long as (i) it falls within the general field of the module in question, (ii) a suitable supervisor can be found, and (iii) students' participation in module seminars thus far demonstrates at least a satisfactory level of preparation.

You may plan your essays as part of an ongoing research enterprise, fitting in with your other essays and dissertation, if you wish, but you are also at liberty to write entirely self-sufficient pieces. In most cases, the essay will arise out of a presentation you give during one of the seminars, and this is a good opportunity to receive early feedback on your general approach.

Word count

Each of the three essays must be no more than 5,000 words long, including footnotes and inline citations, but excluding title, contents page, bibliography, appendices. Tables and graphs should be counted at 150 words per table. Where more than 5 tables are used they will be counted as 100 words each. The penalty for exceeding the word count is a deduction of 1 mark per 100 words over the limit (or part thereof).

Dissertation

Each candidate for the MPhil is required to submit an original dissertation on an approved topic, by the deadline given at the front of this Handbook.

Word count

The dissertation must be no more than 15,000 words long (30,000 words for the MPhil by Thesis Only), including footnotes and inline citations, but excluding title, contents page, bibliography and appendices. Tables and graphs should be counted at 150 words per table (where more than 5 tables are used, they will be counted as 100 words each). The penalty for exceeding the word count is a deduction of 1 mark per 100 words over the limit (or part thereof).

If the nature of your dissertation topic means that you are required to supply a large number of tables or graphs in order to support your argument, you may apply for permission for some of these to be excluded from the word count. You should do this by contacting the MPhil Director no later than one month before submission.

Approval of essay and dissertation titles

You should devise a suitable title in close consultation with your supervisor. You must inform the Administrator, via email, copying in your supervisor, of your agreed title by the date shown in the Calendar at the front of this Handbook. Please ensure that the title submitted is accurate. It will then be submitted for approval by the MPhil Director.

The provisional title for the dissertation must be agreed between candidate and supervisor. You and your Supervisor must also decide upon a final title by the deadline given in the Calendar. Dissertation titles will be reviewed by the Chair of the Centre's Graduate Education Committee and sent to the Faculty Degree Committee for formal approval. Occasionally the GEC Chair and/or the Degree Committee may insist on changes to a particular title, wherever possible consulting the student and supervisor concerned. **When finally submitted, each dissertation must bear the exact approved title (word for word), and candidates are therefore advised to take great care when drafting titles.**

SUPERVISION

Essay supervision

For each essay, you should identify a potential supervisor. The most appropriate supervisor will usually be the person who has taught the related topic on the seminar programme, and this should be the person you approach first. If students' interests are very unevenly spread in any year, module convenors or the MPhil Director may need to suggest different arrangements.

Supervision is usually limited to two meetings per essay. The first session, of around 30 minutes, should be used to discuss initial ideas, reading, and a rough plan. In the second session, of around an hour, your supervisor will go through your draft in detail with you and make suggestions for improvement. You should not expect to receive any supervision in the last week before the deadline unless specifically agreed in advance with your supervisor. Supervisors will not be able to give useful feedback so close to the deadline, as there will be insufficient time for you to make any major changes. In addition, many staff members will be unavailable at the end of term due to other commitments. You are strongly advised to agree a schedule with your supervisor for submitting your plan and essay draft well in advance, to ensure that he or she is able to provide comments in a timely fashion.

Dissertation supervision

Students will have submitted a dissertation proposal as part of the admissions process, and many will already have been assigned to an appropriate supervisor. Dissertation topics and supervisors will be confirmed early in Michaelmas Term. In some cases, further study may lead to a change of topic and even to a consequential change of supervisor.

Your relationship with your dissertation supervisor is a very important part of your time in Cambridge. Your supervisor will advise you in relation to your dissertation and engage you in a critical dialogue while you plan, research, draft and write. In addition, supervisors may also take an interest in other aspects of your academic work and your career plans, which may include continuation to the PhD. However, commitment to supervise an MPhil dissertation should not be assumed to imply commitment to supervise to doctoral level. Often, supervisors will be able to assist you in arranging meetings or interviews with individuals of interest, inform you about relevant conferences, etc.

You should have initiated contact with your dissertation supervisor by the end of the Michaelmas Term at the very latest, in order to clarify the topic of your dissertation, and to consider how it fits in with the rest of your work during the MPhil. The style of supervision will differ from one supervisor to another. However, you should meet with reasonable regularity. As a guideline, we suggest that you see your supervisor once in Michaelmas Term, once or twice in Lent Term, then two or three times in Easter

Term. It is up to you to make arrangements with your supervisor: you should not expect to be summoned by him or her.

You should start drafting material as soon as you are in a position to do so. Discuss early drafts, even though they may contain tentative arguments. Your supervisor will then be able to make suggestions at a stage when you can still adopt them. During term time supervisors should be able to give you detailed comments on a chapter within a week of submission. On no account wait until you have arrived at what you consider a near-final version of dissertation chapters or even the entire dissertation before showing your work to your supervisor. At that stage, it may be much more difficult to offer appropriate guidance, and insufficient time may remain for you to respond fully. For this reason, **supervisors are entitled to refuse to comment on a draft given to them less than 14 days before the submission date**. Supervisors are generally available during term, but research, conference commitments, other University business and holidays mean that they may be away from Cambridge from substantial periods during the vacations. It is therefore important to schedule meetings well in advance with regard for the diary commitments of both supervisor and supervisee.

If you are encountering difficulty in relation to your dissertation, be it illness, computer failure or writer's block, consult your supervisor and your College tutor immediately.

Most supervisors are conscientious and dedicated to their students. However, if you are unable to make contact with your supervisor, or if s/he is persistently unable to read your work or to offer you guidance, you should contact the MPhil Director or, when this is inappropriate, the Secretary of the Degree Committee. He or she can discuss the matter with your supervisor, or may propose a change of supervisor. It is once again vital that you let us know about such problems before it is too late to take corrective action. You may also consult appropriate people in your College, such as your Graduate Tutor, or student representatives in your college or the University Student Union.

PRESENTATION OF WRITTEN WORK

It is important that work submitted for formal examination is presented in a professional manner, complying with all the conventions of academic scholarship.

Referencing

Your work should adhere to a recognised citation system. Consult your supervisor on which system(s) would be most appropriate for the field in which you are writing, and make sure that you follow the guide carefully to avoid inconsistencies. Using 'author-date' versions of these systems will take up less of the overall word count.

You are strongly advised to limit footnotes to bibliographical or factual references, and to reserve substantive arguments for the main text. The bibliography should be ordered alphabetically by author, and should contain only those works referenced in the main text, although other texts may be added if the bibliography is split into two sections, 'Works Cited' and 'Other Works Consulted'. Programmes such as Endnote or Zotero (free to download) make referencing very easy.

The style guide of your chosen referencing system should also contain information on how to reference material that is not in a traditional text format, e.g. blogs or interviews. All statistical data should be accompanied by a source, and if the data are used in depth, by a comment on the reliability of the source.

Language

The essays and the dissertation should be written in English. Quotations or transcribed interviews in Spanish or Portuguese should be left in the original language. If translations into English are required (in the case that examiners are appointed who are not fluent in Spanish or Portuguese, as relevant),

students will be notified three weeks before the submission deadline. If this is the case, translations should be placed in a footnote and will not be included in the total word count. Citations in other languages (e.g. from theoretical or critical texts in French, German, etc., or interviews conducted in indigenous languages in Latin America) should be translated into English, with the original version retained alongside the translation if the precise mode of enunciation is important.

Layout

Print your work on one side of A4 paper, using a laser printer or a good quality inkjet printer. Leave **margins** of at least 2.5cm on all sides. Everything in the main text should be **double-spaced**, except indented quotations and footnotes, which should be single-spaced. There is no prescribed **font** but it is strongly recommended that the candidate should use simple classical typefaces (Times Roman, Cambria, etc.). **Accents and non-Roman characters** should be rendered accurately, and most word-processing programmes now contain easy shortcuts to produce the most common ones.

Do not use more than three kinds of **headings** within a chapter; the more kinds there are, the more difficult it will be for the reader to distinguish one grade from another. A **list of the abbreviations** used in the text and the footnotes should be placed at the beginning of the dissertation, after the preface. Do check your **tables** carefully. Are they in the form that the reader will find most helpful? Will the reader be able to compare one set of values with another? Are all units, percentages and totals identified? Do the totals tally with the individual values? Are the sources given in the same form for each table? In case of doubt, consult your supervisor. Remember that tables in the dissertation word count at 150 words per table (where more than 5 tables are used, they will be counted as 100 words each).

Short **quotations** should be enclosed in inverted commas, and run on with the main text in double-spacing. Quotations extending to more than two or three lines of typescript ought to 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 (approx. 1cm from left and right margins). 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 square brackets immediately after the error.

Written style

Your coursework should be written in clear, idiomatic English. If you are not a native English speaker (and even if you are!) you should pay particular attention to this and perhaps ask a non-specialist friend or even a professional thesis editor/proof-reader to read through your thesis before submission. Make sure that you make full use of the resources available to you to check grammar, spelling and punctuation, and to improve your written style. You will have access to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and many other reference works via the @cam domain or your Raven password. An online thesaurus can also be extremely helpful. Use the grammar and spelling checker built into your word-processing programme. This may have to be ignored when it frowns on the kinds of complex compound sentences that are sometimes required to convey difficult ideas. But it should at least make you think twice and consider whether you can make your writing easier for the reader to follow.

Common errors to avoid when writing

- confusion between words that sound the same (or similar) but mean different things. Common examples include it's (= it is) and its (= belonging to it), tenet and tenant, apprise and appraise, and mitigate and militate
- inversion of the given and family names of authors in footnotes (inversion *is* used in bibliographical entries to achieve alphabetical order)
- plural subject with singular verb and the reverse
- inconsistent or non-standard use of capital letters, and of the italicization of foreign words
- overlong and convoluted sentences
- sentences without main verbs

- poor paragraphing (unrelated topics in a single paragraph; failure to identify the topic of a paragraph clearly at the outset, failure to link paragraphs clearly to those that precede and follow)
- poor signposting (i.e. lack of guidance to the reader about the general structure of the argument, the order in which topics are to be discussed, etc.)
- ill-considered, excessive, intrusive, or redundant use of the first person (I/we; in my opinion, etc.)
- lazy note-taking (failing to express ideas prompted by your reading in your own words straight away; failing to distinguish between your own notes and passages transcribed from the text for possible use as quotations)
- use of contractions (don't, isn't, etc.)

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Two hard copies of each essay and the dissertation must be submitted along with an electronic version in Word or a compatible word-processing programme (NOT a PDF file), submitted by the relevant deadline. The hard copies should be soft-bound, e.g. with comb binding (a staple is sufficient for the essays, as long as the pages are firmly held together). You must submit your hard copy by the deadline in person. **You may not post it, fax it, e-mail it, or give it to anyone else to deliver on your behalf.**

The title page of your work should state:

- your approved essay/dissertation title
- your name
- your College
- your supervisor
- your word count
- the date of submission

For the dissertation also include:

- the following phrase: 'This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy' and the following statement: '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 copyright statement (© your name, year of submission)

You should leave plenty of time to print and bind your work ahead of the submission deadline. Please remember that computers crash, files become corrupted or lost, printers may break down or run out of toner when the shops are closed, and there can be congestion as several students in the same college seek to print work for the same deadline. *On no account will computer or printer failure, failure of any other equipment, or the loss of data, be accepted as an excuse for missing the deadline for submission.* Always make regular backups of your computer files, as well as hard copy print-outs.

Work submitted for assessment cannot be returned to you, even after the end of the MPhil course. It is your responsibility to keep a copy if you wish to do so.

Deferral of submission

Leave to defer submission is only granted in exceptional circumstances. An application should be made to the Student Registry via your CamSIS self-service account, but students should first make sure that they have sought the approval of the MPhil Director and that their College tutor and dissertation supervisor and the Director of the Centre are aware that they are seeking an extension.

Penalties for exceeding the stipulated word count

The penalty for exceeding the word count is a deduction of 1 mark per 100 words over the limit (or part thereof). Working to a fixed word count is an excellent discipline and any cutting you need to do will generally result in a more concise and precise piece of work.

Penalties for the late submission of work

- Up to 2 hours late – 1 mark deducted
- Up to 3 hours late – 2 marks deducted
- More than 3 hours late but within 24 hours of the deadline – 3 marks deducted

A further 3 marks will be subtracted for each further 24-hour period after the deadline.

Penalties for late submission of the hard copy may be reduced if candidates have submitted an (identical) electronic copy of their work in advance of the deadline.

ASSESSMENT

Marking and feedback

Each piece of work you will submit will be marked independently by two Examiners, who will then agree a joint mark and submit a report (a joint report in the case of each essay, and individual reports for the dissertation). The mark will be moderated where appropriate by the External Examiner. The marking schemes used for assessment can be found in this Handbook. Students will be informed individually of the mark awarded for each piece of written work, once the examination process has been completed. These marks remain provisional until the final examination board at the end of the academic year. Marks are absolutely confidential: no student is entitled to know or discuss any other student's mark. Written feedback for the Michaelmas essay will be provided around the third week of Lent Term and around the third week of the Easter Term for the two Lent essays. Dissertation reports will be sent out along with the final confirmed course mark in early July. Students are also encouraged to seek specific advice and guidance from module convenors and seminar leaders at any point during the course.

Oral examinations

An oral examination must take place if the dissertation is in danger of failing or if the Examiners and External Examiner cannot agree on a recommendation. An oral examination must be held in any case where a candidate who, because of a borderline or failing performance in the compulsory essay examinations, needs to achieve a High Pass in the dissertation examination in order to qualify for award of the MPhil degree under the compensation rule outlined below.

You are reminded not to make firm travel arrangements that will make it difficult or expensive for you to return should a viva be required. The Centre will give candidates as much notice as possible if they are to be called for a viva examination, but you should be aware that, in some cases, this may be as little as two or three days. The period during which you may be called for a viva is given on the Calendar at the front of this Handbook.

Compensation

In accordance with the Memorandum to Examiners issued by the Student Registry as qualified by the special regulations for the MPhil Latin American Studies, a candidate must pass each part of the examination separately in order to be awarded the degree, except that a borderline fail (Redeemable Performance) in the taught element (the essays) may be compensated by a High Pass in the dissertation, and vice versa.

Review procedure in connection with the examination of registered Graduate Students

The University provides for a review procedure in cases of complaint about the outcome of an examination for MPhil degrees. A candidate or the representative of a candidate may, within the three months following receipt of the result of an examination, make representations in the form of a written complaint to the Secretary of the Student Registry. The following are the **only** grounds which the regulations entertain for the justification of a complaint:

- a) that there existed material circumstances relating directly to the examination (excluding circumstances relating to the candidate's course of research or course of study) of which the Examiners were not aware;
- b) that procedural irregularities occurred in the conduct of the examination, which were of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the Examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred;
- c) that there is demonstrable evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment in the examination process.

Full details of the procedures that follow from such a complaint are set out in the 'Memorandum to Students' issued by the Student Registry, and a copy of the 'Regulations for the Review of the Results of Examinations for Postgraduate Qualifications' may be obtained upon request from the Secretary of the Registry. Details on the Student complaint procedure can be found here:

<https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

ADVICE ON RESEARCH AND WRITING

Scholarly research and critical analysis

The pieces of written work you submit as part of your MPhil course will be assessed as examples of postgraduate writing; as such we expect them to combine scholarly research and critical analysis. If you are intending that the MPhil act as a preparation for doctoral research, the dissertation in particular will need to show strong evidence of research potential. According to the criteria set out by the Student Registry, Examiners will need to be satisfied that 'the dissertation is clearly written, that it takes account of previously published work on the subject, and that it represents a contribution to learning'.

'Scholarly research' means work showing detailed knowledge and careful analysis, whether it be of social, historical, or economic phenomena, or of primary texts. It is not sufficient, for example, merely to 'tell the story' of a set of historical circumstances, or to paraphrase a theory (however difficult): you must also *interpret* and analyse events/social systems/texts and apply existing theories to them. Research requires awareness of the relevant published literature (existing academic research in the field, surveys, critical studies, theoretical approaches), and an ability to assess, assimilate, and master such material. It is not good practice either to paraphrase the work of only one or two researchers, or in contrast to 'drop' dozens of names. When drawing on other scholars' work, this should be properly acknowledged.

'Critical analysis' means that the work should develop an argument (as the term 'dissertation' itself suggests). This may be more or less polemical, but should in any case be a lucid, coherent, and carefully substantiated exposition of a critical viewpoint in its own right. It is not acceptable to produce a mass of uninterpreted or 'descriptive' data, an unstructured meditation, or an unexplained critique, nor to string together a series of disconnected facts and comments.

Work in this field often concerns issues of great political importance and situations of poverty or suffering. In academic writing, however, expressions of disapproval or proposals about how to remedy these ills should not be given excessive space. What counts is your clear analysis of the issues at hand.

An essay or dissertation is subject to all the normal requirements of publishable academic writing: relevance, clarity and accuracy. It is important to plan ahead and submit for approval a title that corresponds with the argument you intend to make, since work which is irrelevant or digressive will be penalized. The text should be a single, comprehensible, persuasive, cumulative demonstration, not a series of disconnected insights. Quality of argument and careful substantiation are at least as important as flash of insight. The organisation of the argument of the essay or dissertation is of crucial importance in giving cogency and credibility to your research and critical position.

Written work for a multidisciplinary area studies degree

The MPhil in Latin American Studies is a multidisciplinary area studies degree. Area Studies starts from the assumption that the study of a range of different phenomena – economic, political, social, literary, artistic, historical, geographical, etc. – mutually illuminates the processes that may be seen to be characteristic of a particular region. The course is flexible enough to allow you to pursue your interests within a single discipline if you choose to do so, but it is structured in such a way that will encourage you to understand that discipline within a much broader context. It will also expose you to new areas of study or methodologies that you may wish to engage with in your own work over the year, quite possibly leading to forays across disciplinary boundaries.

As you approach your written work for the course, you should bear in mind the following:

- The importance of **context** in an area studies degree. Texts, case studies, and data of all kinds should be placed within relevant historical, cultural, socioeconomic or other contexts. How and to what extent such contextualization takes place will differ according to the particular topic being studied, but it should be considered an important element in work for an area studies course.
- Your discussions of **theory** should not occlude the object of your study. You will be encouraged, where relevant, to explore, debate or indicate the limitations of relevant theoretical or conceptual frameworks that have been used, or could fruitfully be used, to elucidate your chosen material. Indeed, a reflexive and critical exploration of such frameworks is often characteristic of good work at Masters level. An appropriate balance should, however, be struck between such conceptual approaches and the object of study, which should not become lost under the weight of theory in your work.
- You will be expected to show an awareness of the **disciplinary context** of the ideas and frameworks you discuss: the traditions from which they have emerged. You may well be given credit for bringing together concepts from different fields, if the result sheds new light on your object of study, or uncovers unexpected links between different theories, for example. But you should also demonstrate an understanding of how these ideas are anchored in particular disciplines or approaches, even if (and especially if) you intend to 'borrow' them for other purposes.

Identifying and defining a topic

Choosing a research project demands care and thought, and you should start this process well in advance of the date for submission of titles, and in consultation with a supervisor. Initially, think through those areas you have been studying and identify those you found most interesting or exciting. Having identified an area of interest, you may find it useful to start by conducting some online searches, including of databases and e-journals to which the University Library holds a subscription. This should be supplemented by trips to the University Library to obtain books and articles only available in print. Your aim at this point is to get a feel for what has already been written and what the major concerns are in that area. Your work should be original in its focus and/or findings, but you must also take account of previously written secondary literature and refer to (some of) it in your essays/dissertation.

While doing background research **it is essential that you keep in contact with your supervisor** to discuss your project and the progress of your research. S/he will be able to give you further advice and direct your reading.

Bibliography

Start a bibliography from **Day One** of your research, ideally using a programme such as Zotero (freeware) or Endnote, which will save time in the long run. **Always record full bibliographical details of any books/articles you are consulting, as you will need them later for footnotes and bibliography. Note the author, title, editor, publisher, date of publication, page range, and page number of each quotation.** It is a very good idea to include the library class mark with each entry, as this too will save time and effort later on if you wish to check or reread something.

Noting citations

It is particularly important that the notes you take should make a very clear distinction between quotations and paraphrase, and that any passages transcribed for future use as quotations be accurately copied. Care in this matter will ensure that you avoid unintentional plagiarism. You must take care to note the ultimate source when noting any material quoted by another author so as to be able to produce a transparent footnote without returning to the library. Keeping careful records throughout the year can save much heartache in the final days of submission.

Drafts, comments and editing

MPhil candidates, especially those who lack experience of writing an undergraduate dissertation, often underestimate both the time required to react to and make best use of the comments offered by supervisors on their drafts, and the gains in clarity of thought and effectiveness of argument that can come from thorough revision and careful rewriting. It is misleading to think of research and writing as being two separate activities. You should avoid the idea of doing 'research' for three months and then 'writing up' in the last few weeks. The only sure test of an argument, or of a chapter structure, is to set it out in a draft. That way both you and your supervisor can judge the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, often devising better research strategies and generating fresh questions. This reinforces the advice that it is wise to start writing drafts as early as possible; you can, after all, supplement your research at a later date if evidence or argument proves deficient.

Additionally, drafts are an important part of the exercise of keeping within the word limit as you develop a better sense of the space you need to budget for each section. At this stage, the task of writing 15,000 words for the dissertation may seem daunting; in practice, your problem is more likely to be deciding what needs to be left out. The task of cutting several thousand excess words cannot be left to the very end. Hurried editing can easily result in poor scholarship, and even failure, by destroying the transparency of referencing or incorporating inset quotations into the main text as unacknowledged, albeit referenced, quotations.

Planning your research and writing

Two common problems are encountered by students in planning the year's work, which may lead to underperformance. You are strongly urged to consider how you will avoid these pitfalls!

- You will need to find a way to undertake crucial initial research for the dissertation while working towards the essay deadlines during the first two terms. If you leave too much to the final term, you will not have enough time to plan and write effectively. In particular, any fieldwork for the dissertation undertaken during the Easter Vacation will need to be carefully planned in advance.
- Cambridge terms are short and intense. The vacations are not holidays, but periods during which the lack of classes makes it easier to study without interruption and freedom of residence makes it easier to use libraries and archives elsewhere, carry out interviews, or seek out a secluded workplace. Students on the MPhil should expect to study full-time between the start of the academic year and the June dissertation deadline, taking no more than two or three weeks' holiday in this period (always out of term time). There is a temptation

to relax after the December deadline for written work and some students are then slow to pick up the pace of work again promptly in the New Year, at some risk to the quality of the dissertation.

You should find the suggested work schedule included in this Handbook very useful when planning ahead – sticking to it should ensure that deadlines are met without panic and that work progresses smoothly on the essays and the dissertation throughout the year.

PLAGIARISM

At the most elementary level, work is original provided it is written by the candidate without any unacknowledged quotation from, close paraphrasing of, or excessive reliance on the work of other authors; and the candidate has not already submitted the work for any other degree. Each candidate must sign a declaration when submitting work that the piece is his or her own. In addition, careful referencing is required to provide transparency and to make it possible to identify the sources and evidence on which work has been based. This will help Examiners to form a judgment about the independence of the essay/dissertation from its sources.

Excessive dependence on the work of others will be penalised by Examiners, at their discretion. Extensive summaries of the writings of others, especially if they distort the structure of your own argument or result in discontinuities in the argument, will generally result in an adverse judgment by Examiners, and perhaps failure (even where footnotes and full bibliographical references are provided). Plagiarism is a different and more serious matter, consisting in the presentation of the work of others as though it were your own. This includes submitting work written by someone else and using text written by others within your work which is not properly identified through use of quotation marks *and* references (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.

You must also ensure that your work is not substantially the same as any that you have previously submitted, or, are concurrently submitting for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution.

According to University regulations, *'The use of unfair means in examinations is treated with the utmost seriousness by the University. Any suspicion that a candidate may have cheated in an examination room or used improper means, including plagiarism, in an essay or project work will be reported to the Senior Proctor. The Senior Proctor may advise that the evidence should be referred to the University Advocate with a view to the case being brought before the Court of Discipline in accordance with provisions of Statute B, VI (Discipline and the University Courts). The powers of Court of Discipline extend to depriving a student of membership of the University'*. The procedures were revised in July 2011 and now state that a student may be found guilty of an act of plagiarism **irrespective of intent to deceive**, and be subject to the deprivation of a degree.

The possibility of plagiarism should be particularly kept in mind when writing the dissertation. You will be expected to have a solid grasp of existing publications relevant to the dissertation topic, but the work that you submit must be your own, and the contribution of others fully acknowledged. It is crucially important to maintain a clear distinction between your own ideas and views derived from the published literature or presented by others in seminars. If you present ideas drawn from the work of others as your own, you will risk being penalised by the Examiners, as well as being disciplined by the University.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood the University's Statement on Plagiarism available at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/.

Like many Centres and Departments, the Centre of Latin American Studies uses Turnitin UK to screen all student work. Screened work will be reviewed by the Academic Integrity Officer to determine whether further action may be necessary. Use of Turnitin UK complies with UK Copyright and Data Protection Laws. Submission to Turnitin does not affect your ownership of the work; the copyright and intellectual property of all work remains with the original owner (normally the student, with the exception of some sponsored research projects). No personal or sensitive data will be transmitted. Work screened by Turnitin UK will be retained in the Turnitin database for comparison with future submissions; if matches are identified, the full text is not accessible to other institutions, only the matching text. You may request that your work is removed from the Turnitin UK database at the conclusion of the examination process, but this must be done separately for each piece of submitted work. Retaining your work on the database will help to ensure that your work remains protected from future attempts to plagiarise it, will help maintain the integrity of the University's qualifications, and will maximise the effectiveness of the software. Full details about Turnitin UK and your rights and responsibilities can be found on the University's website: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/

SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE SKILLS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

At the beginning of the year, all students should, with the help of the MPhil Director and their dissertation supervisor, identify any areas in which they could benefit from additional support and training. These include writing skills (especially, but not only, for non-native speakers of English), training in specific research methodologies, and help with Spanish and/or Portuguese for fieldwork purposes. Students should read information on the following websites carefully to gain a good understanding of the support available.

- **Research methods and frameworks seminars**
<http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/mphil/modules/core/research-methods-and-frameworks>
These seminars are provided for CLAS MPhil students alongside the Core Course and optional modules and should be regarded as compulsory for those students working in relevant fields.
- **The Social Sciences Research Methods Centre**
<http://www.ssrnc.group.cam.ac.uk>
The SSRMC provides a full programme of modules which are designed to equip students with vital methodological skills needed for work in the social sciences, including qualitative interviews, statistical analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic practice. If you think any of these may be relevant to you, you should attend the compulsory induction session at 4.00pm on Wednesday 4 October (see the Induction Programme).
- **Written English language support**
<https://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/adtis/adtis-index.html>
The Language Centre offers a wide range of workshops, supervisions and online modules for non-native speakers of English who need to work on their writing for essays and the dissertation. Your college may be able to help with any course costs involved, but these are often very reasonable.
- **Spanish classes at the Language Centre**
<https://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/culp/specialists/culp-ar-spanish.html>
A range of modules are offered to suit different levels of competence. Those who already have A'level or degree-level Spanish may be particularly interested in the 'Advanced Plus through Film and Literature' module. You should register online by following the relevant links.

- **Brazilian Portuguese classes**

<http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate/brazilian-portuguese-teaching>

Classes are arranged by the Language Centre and taught in the Centre of Latin American Studies, at beginner and intermediate levels, by a CLAS teaching associate, Dr Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação. They are free for all CLAS students, with the cost being covered by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Follow the link to register.

FIELDWORK

Cambridge library facilities and internet access mean that many MPhil dissertation topics can be researched without leaving Cambridge. However, a dissertation topic could be enriched by fieldwork trips to consult archives, access material unavailable in the UK, or conduct interviews. MPhil students are encouraged, if relevant, to undertake a short period of fieldwork in Latin America as part of their preparation for the dissertation.

All students who intend to undertake fieldwork must complete the procedures below by **Thursday, 16 January 2020**.

- 1) Complete a Risk Assessment form:
<http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/graduate-student-resources/mphil-risk-assessment>.
Further guidance on risk assessment and safeguarding can be found on the [University's Safeguarding work away page](#).
- 2) Apply for 'Leave to Work Away' via the online CamSIS self-service account. Guidance is available here:
 - <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/work-away-cambridge>.
 - <https://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/graduate-student-resources>
- 3) Complete an Ethics Approval form:
<http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/graduate-student-resources/ethical-approval-for-mphil-research>.
- 4) Inform the Centre Administrator via email of the planned dates and location of fieldwork
- 5) Request login details and complete the POLIS online fieldwork safety training course.
- 6) Request from the Centre Administrator a stamped letter of introduction in Spanish or Portuguese for use to gain access to libraries or archives. (This request should be made at least two weeks before the planned trip.)

Failure to submit the appropriate documentation and complete procedures by the deadline above may well result in approval being denied. The details provided in these forms will be checked by the Graduate Education Committee and the Research Committee of the Department. If concerns are raised about any aspect of your proposed fieldwork, you and your supervisor will be contacted and asked to provide additional assurances, to put more robust systems in place to ensure your safety, or to adapt your plans.

Those intending to use **social science methods** for their fieldwork must participate in the fieldwork methods session run by Dr Pedro Mendes Loureiro, as well as other relevant seminars in research methods training as recommended by their supervisor or the MPhil Director. Proper training is

particularly important for interview-based research. If students are unable to attend these seminars for any reason, they must satisfy the Director that they are properly prepared, by attending an equivalent seminar in another department or by taking courses in the Social Sciences Research Methods Centre (SSRMC).

Research and fieldwork expenses

College funds

Many colleges allow applications for funding to cover research expenses. You are required to apply for these funds in order to be considered for Centre funding.

Simón Bolívar Fund

The Centre may be able to provide modest financial support for fieldwork trips to Latin America via the Simón Bolívar Fund. Please note that in order to qualify you must also submit funding applications for to your college. For more details see:

<http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/current>

ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH

You should read carefully the University's policy on research ethics:

<https://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/Research/university-policy-on-ethics-research>

and note that your fieldwork plans will need to be approved in advance by the POLIS Research Committee if there are research ethics implications.

You will be required to submit an ethics approval form and a consent form for any fieldwork you wish to conduct towards your thesis. Please read very carefully the information available on this site: <http://www.polis.cam.ac.uk/graduate-student-resources/ethical-approval-for-mphil-research>, as it gives the deadlines for applying for approval, and clear advice on which forms to use, depending on whether your research involves sensitive data, interviewing people, etc.

If your thesis topic has no ethical implications whatsoever (i.e. you are not doing interviews or collecting non-public data from people) you must still fill in the relevant form to explain why the research is exempt from ethics approval. Your supervisor and the MPhil Director will be able to give you advice if you are not sure how to proceed.

LEAVE TO WORK AWAY CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

1. Students who are conducting fieldwork in locations with an Amber Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning are required to check in weekly with the MPhil Administrator. However, students who are nationals of the country they are conducting fieldwork in, and who have either family or friends in that country, will not be required to check in.
2. Students are expected to return to Cambridge if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning for a location changes to Red (advise against all travel).
3. Students who fail to check in will be contacted by the MPhil Administrator, and if they still fail to respond, the MPhil Administrator will communicate with the first emergency contact.
4. If the emergency contact has had no contact with the student, the MPhil Administrator will alert the student's supervisor, MPhil Director, Department Administrator, the University's Insurance Section and the relevant embassies.

You are advised to sign up for FCO updates via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/email-signup>.

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

If you intend to conducting interviews as part of your research towards the dissertation, you should make sure that you devise a questionnaire in good time for your supervisor to check it beforehand; as well as the session on fieldwork in Latin America offered by CLAS, it may also be very useful for you to participate in training sessions on interviewing practices, such as the module on qualitative interviews taught by the Social Sciences Research Methods Centre (see <https://www.ssrcmc.group.cam.ac.uk>).

Interviewee consent and confidential sources

Confidential sources, either documentation or interview material, play an important role in research into contemporary topics for which documentation is otherwise unavailable. Confidentiality is a cornerstone of social research: all data collected must maintain the anonymity of the source, unless explicit permission is given otherwise. The notable exception is where a source cannot reasonably expect to be made anonymous, as in the case of interviews with experts, dignitaries or public figures. The following are general guidelines to ensure good practice in this sensitive area and, in particular, to ensure that use of interview material can be reconciled with scholarly expectations for verification. For particular concerns you should consult an expert in your methodology, or undertake training in your chosen research method.

It is your responsibility to establish with the interviewee on what basis the interview is to be conducted. Can identity be directly revealed? Can the interviewee's general official status be revealed? Can the person be quoted directly or is the information for 'background' only? If the person is to be quoted, there is need for great accuracy of transcription from tapes or any other medium. The date and place of the interview should be carefully noted. It is conventional practice in the social sciences for interviewees to be made non-identifiable and given a number or pseudonym. Only that data, stripped of identifiers, should be kept in the event of external questions about reliability and replicability. Protecting research subjects is a key component of carrying out ethical and consensual research.

How anonymity matters varies widely depending on the type of research being carried out. For example, research with victims of police violence will necessarily carry a different set of concerns from research with public figures responsible for creating or managing policing policies. In the former we would expect that all interviewees are made anonymous, while in the latter it would be reasonable for most or all to be identifiable. These kinds of research will necessarily differ from cultural critique, which may rely on the identities, reputation or status of interviewees to assert or advance a finding, and where the attribution of other sources lends credibility to the few who remain anonymous. For documentation, similar guidelines apply. Where the document is not public, and the user would not expect it to be public, identities of research informants in documents must be made anonymous, unless permission has been given otherwise. This is a tightrope of academic work – balancing rigorous and verifiable research findings with the safety, confidentiality and permission of those who provided the data.

You should also bear in mind the importance of the scholarly use of data, for the purpose of argument and publication. For an argument, it is always good to have more than one source. 'Triangulated' data, where multiple sources point to the same answer or finding, is good data. This does not mean that sources need be identified: that is a matter of the kind of research being carried out. Some fields may expect a limited use of unattributed sources, while others will expect that you have a commitment to keep research informants safe. In general, the following practices should be adopted:

- At a minimum, you must obtain consent to interview, and keep a record of the date and place of the interview. These should be footnoted when used in writing. Repeated references to the same confidential source should be identified. Heavy reliance on a small number of sources, identifiable or not, does not typically strengthen an argument.

- The status of public-facing individuals (e.g diplomat, serving officer, etc.) can be identified unless requested otherwise. All others should be anonymized, unless explicit permission is given otherwise.

If the above are not possible, and if, in the context of the thesis as a whole, doubts are likely to arise about the credibility of the interview material, the candidate should consult their supervisor and/or provide access to the relevant research data. Data would be held in secure conditions in the Centre, but could be used to satisfy the Examiners of the *bona fides* of the material.

MARKING SCHEMES FOR THE MPhil IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

General notes

All written work is marked independently by two assessors before a final mark is agreed, and may additionally be marked and/or moderated by the External Examiner, who will confirm borderline marks and adjudicate in the case of a significant discrepancy between markers.

Coursework (the three essays combined) cannot compensate for failure in the dissertation (and vice versa), although a High Pass in one component may compensate in cases of borderline failure ('redeemable performance') in the other.

The total mark awarded for the degree is reached by taking an average of the dissertation mark and the mark for the rest of the coursework combined (three essays). The essays are weighted at 20% for each for the two highest marks, and 10% for the lowest mark. Officially, the MPhil degree is awarded in two categories only, Pass and Distinction. To gain a Pass, candidates need to achieve an overall weighted mark of 60 or higher. To gain a Distinction, candidates need an overall weighted mark of at least 75. Final marks are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Please see the relevant sections of the MPhil Handbook for advice on penalties for late submission or exceeding the word limit.

Marking scheme for the essays

75+: Distinction

70+: High Pass

60+: Pass

Below 60: Fail

(Marginal fail/'redeemable performance': 58, 59)

Distinction

Tackles a topic not widely covered in the literature or approaches a topic covered in the literature from a new angle; shows an excellent grasp of a wide range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly fashion; shows superior understanding of relevant theoretical and methodological issues; provides a well-argued and referenced answer, with indications of insight and/or originality.

High Pass

Shows a firm grasp of a good range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly fashion; provides a clear, well-organized answer, showing understanding of relevant theoretical and methodological issues.

Pass

Shows knowledge of a good range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly manner; provides a clear, well organized answer but has some theoretical and/or methodological weaknesses. Marks at the upper end of the range will have more minor and less serious weaknesses: those at the lower end will have more substantial weaknesses.

Fail

Shows an inadequate grasp of sources or utilizes sources in a casual manner; fails to provide a coherent answer; shows inadequate understanding of theory and/or methods.

Marking scheme for the dissertation

75+: Distinction

70+: High Pass

60+: Pass

Below 60: Fail

(Marginal fail/'redeemable performance': 58, 59)

Distinction

Tackles a problem not well covered in the literature or approaches a topic from a new angle; shows an excellent grasp of a wide range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly fashion; shows a superior understanding of relevant theoretical issues or shows ingenuity in applying a particular method to an empirical problem; presents a well-argued dissertation which integrates theory, methods and data and shows insight and/or originality.

High Pass

Tackles a problem from a new angle; shows a firm grasp of a wide range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly manner; shows a good understanding of relevant theoretical issues; applies chosen research method(s) in a sound manner; presents a clear and well-argued dissertation which integrates theory, methods and data and demonstrates some insight.

Pass

Shows an adequate grasp of a wide range of sources and utilizes them in a scholarly manner; shows an adequate understanding of theoretical issues; applies chosen research methods in a sound manner; presents a clear and well-argued dissertation which adequately integrates theory, methods and data. Marks at the upper end of the range will have more minor and less serious weaknesses: those at the lower end will have more substantial weaknesses.

Marginal Fail

A dissertation which shows insufficient evidence of competence in conducting a scholarly investigation of a clearly defined empirical problem and does not reach the standards of achievement in several of the aspects defined under criteria for a Pass, but which exhibits sufficient signs of knowledge to be redeemed by other work of a much higher standard.

Fail

A dissertation which shows insufficient evidence of competence in conducting a scholarly investigation of a clearly defined empirical problem and does not reach the standards of achievement in several of the aspects defined under criteria for a Pass.

[Examination data retention policy](#)