Programme specification 2012/2013

School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the baseline information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme title</th>
<th>MA Chinese Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final award</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate awards</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of attendance</td>
<td>Full-time (1 year) or part-time (2 or 3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCAS code</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional body accreditation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date specification created/updated</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why study at SOAS?</th>
<th>SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is special about this programme?</td>
<td>The programme offers an extremely wide range of China-specific courses, including language tuition from ab-initio to highly advanced levels. The wide choice of courses aims at students to specialise in one discipline (Major + dissertation) and, at the same time, build a solid and wide basis for research on China, contemporary, modern or pre-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The emphasis of the programme is on interdisciplinary study, and students are required to select their three courses from more than one discipline.

Who would it suit?

The MA Chinese Studies provides an exceptional opportunity to take advantage of the wide range of disciplinary approaches to the study of Chinese societies available at SOAS. The main emphasis is on modern and contemporary China, although it is also possible to study aspects of pre-Modern China. In addition to the courses on offer, students develop their own particular area of specialisation by writing a dissertation in their Major discipline. It is thus suitable for any profession that requires a solid understanding of China. The programme may also serve as a channel to a research degree (MPhil or PhD).

Programme structure

Students take three taught courses (one Major, two Minor) and write a 10,000 word dissertation. The dissertation is linked to the Major and supervised by the teacher of the Major subject. The Minors must be from a different discipline to that of the Major. Both Minors can be in the same discipline.

Assessment summary

Details of the regulation of assessment are course specific and made available to students at registration, through MA handbooks and course handbooks.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for a postgraduate taught degree and these can be viewed at http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/howtoapply/

No additional requirements specific to the MA Chinese Studies programme which can be taken with or without knowledge of a Chinese language. Acceptance to some of the Major course option is conditional to good knowledge in the discipline, normally an undergraduate degree in the discipline of the chosen Major course option.

PROGRAMME AIMS

What will this programme give the student an opportunity to achieve?

- The programme aims at academic training in one chosen academic discipline
with China as specified regional specialisation.

- The programme aims at equipping students with an advanced level of understanding of disciplinary academic topics and issues regarding China.
- The programme aims at equipping students with the critical and analytical skills that enable them to conduct research on China on a solid methodological and disciplinary basis.

## PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

What will the student learn?

### Knowledge

- How to assess data and evidence critically from manuscripts and digital sources, solve problems of conflicting sources and conflicting interpretations, locate materials, use research sources (particularly research library catalogues) and other relevant traditional sources.
- To obtain a theoretical grounding in one of the several disciplines offered as part of degree: Anthropology, art & archaeology, economics, history, law, literature, media, music, politics or religion & philosophy.
- To obtain an empirical grounding of the disciplines cited above as they relate specifically to the study of China.
- To develop a critical understanding of other disciplines – in their theoretical and empirical dimensions – through Minor courses.
- To acquire/develop skills in Chinese language at any of these levels: Basic 1 (absolute beginner), Basic 2 (beginner), Intermediate or Advanced.

### Intellectual (thinking) skills

- Critical evaluation of source material: students should become precise and cautious in their assessment of evidence, and to understand through practice what documents can and cannot tell us.
- Critical evaluation of previous scholarship: students should question interpretations, however authoritative, and reassess evidence for themselves.
- Critical attitude toward euro-centristic approaches: Students will acquire a sensitivity to non-euro-centric perspectives on a range of intellectual problems in the Anthropology, art & archaeology, economics, history, law, literature, media, music, politics or religion & philosophy of China.

### Subject-based practical skills

- Subject-specific skills will be in line with the requirements in the academic discipline in which students do their Major and the dissertation.
- Practical skills include 1) Communicate effectively in writing, 2) Retrieve, sift and select information from a variety of sources, 3) Present seminar papers, 4) Listen critically to, and discuss, ideas introduced during seminars, and 5) Practice research techniques in a variety of specialized research libraries and institutes.

### Transferable skills

- Write good essays and dissertations.
- Structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing.
- Understand unconventional ideas.
• Study a variety of written and digital materials, in libraries and research institutes of a kind they will not have used as undergraduates.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

Students take and successfully complete a total of three taught courses and one dissertation in the discipline of the Major.

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of taught postgraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes. Details can be found at http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file60379.pdf

Programme structure diagram

Students take three taught courses (one Major, two Minor) and write a 10,000 word dissertation. The dissertation is linked to the Major and supervised by the teacher of the Major subject. The Minors must be from a different discipline to that of the Major. Both Minors can be in the same discipline.

All language courses are subject to a placement test which takes place during the first week of every academic year; language courses cannot be taken as the Major.

Students taking the course part-time over 2 years tend to take 2 units in their first year and the remaining unit and the dissertation in their second year. Students taking the course part-time over 3 years tend to take one course unit per year.

Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Course option 1 from list below</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td></td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>Course option 3 from list below</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
<td>linked to the Major course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

Courses available for each year are announced, together with the course descriptions, on the SOAS website:
http://www.soas.ac.uk/cia/degrees/machinstudies/

• Special Course in Chinese I (PG)
• Special Course in Chinese II (PG)
• Special Course in Chinese III (PG)
• Special Course in Chinese IV (PG)
• Reading Classical and Literary Chinese (PG)
• Advanced Chinese for Business and Management (half-unit)
• Elementary Spoken Hokkien (Minnanyu, Taiwanese) (PG)
• Culture and Society of China
• Art and Archaeology of the Silk Road
• Ceramics in Chinese Culture: 10th-18th Centuries (half-unit) (Minor only)
• Topics in Chinese Art and Archaeology (half-unit)
• Ancient Chinese Civilisation (half-unit)
• Practical Translation: Chinese to English (half-unit, term 1) (Minor only)
• Practical Translation: English into Chinese (half-unit, term 2) (Minor only)
• Modern Documentary Texts (Minor only)
• Modern Film From Taiwan and the Chinese Diaspora (half-unit, term 2)
• Modern Chinese Film and Theatre (half-unit, term 1)
• Japanese Transnational Cinema: From Kurosawa to Asia Extreme and Studio Ghibli (half-unit, term 1)
• Japanese Post-War Film Genres and the Avant-garde (half-unit, term 2)
• Critical Introduction to East Asian Development (half-unit, term 1)
• Economic Problems and Policies in Modern China
• Government and Politics of Taiwan (half-unit)
• Society and Culture in Taiwan (half-unit, term 1)
• Taiwan's Politics and Cross-Strait Relations (1 unit)
• Economic Development of Modern Taiwan (half-unit, term 2)
• Economic Dynamics of the Asia-Pacific Region
• Modern Chinese Law and Human Rights
• Chinese Commercial Law
• Foundations of Chinese Law
• Pop and Politics in East Asia (half-unit, term 1)
• Musical Traditions of East Asia (half-unit, term 2)
• State and Society in the Chinese Political Process
• China and International Politics
• International Politics of East Asia
• History of Religion in Imperial China
• East Asian Buddhist Thought (half-unit)
• Chinese Buddhism in the Pre-modern Period
• The Great Tradition of Taoism (half-unit, term 1)
• Chinese Religious Texts: A Reading Seminar (half-unit, term 2)
• Locating China I: China and Other World Views Before 'Westernisation' (half-unit)
• Locating China II: Missionaries and Misfits in the British Construction of China (half-unit)
• Knowledge and Power In Early Modern China (half-unit, term 1)
• Nationhood and Competing Identities in Modern China (half-unit, term 2)
• Modern Chinese Literature
• Modern Chinese Literature in Translation
• Traditional Chinese Language and Literature
TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

Knowledge
- Acquisition of 2.1 through seminars and classes. Students are required to attend all classes, study extensively on their own and prepare for presentation non-assessed work regularly.
- Acquisition of 2.2 through active participation in the seminars/lectures of the student’s Major, through select readings.
- Acquisition of 2.3 through attendance at lectures, guided reading in English language sources, research for seminar presentations and class room discussion.
- Acquisition of 2.4 through selection of two optional Minor courses.
- Acquisition of 2.5 through optional language courses.
- Assessment is through unseen examinations, long essays, coursework and a dissertation.

Intellectual (thinking) skills
- Acquisition of 1 and 2 is fostered in all courses offered in the Programme, in that all courses will introduce information that will need to be assessed critically and will demonstrate how conflicting interpretations arise from the same information.
- Acquisition of 3 is fostered through classroom discussion of readings and the critical review of students’ written work.
- Assessment is through unseen examinations, coursework, long essays and a dissertation.

Subject-based practical skills
- Acquisition of 1 through the writing of long essays and dissertations.
- Acquisition of 2 through class participation in lectures
- Acquisition of 3 through regular seminar presentations.
- Acquisition of 4 through seminar discussion.
- Acquisition of 5 through the setting of clear deadlines for the submission of written work.
- Assessment is by unseen examination, dissertation, long essays and coursework.

Transferable skills
- Acquisition of 1 through long essays, coursework and dissertation.
- Acquisition of 2 and 3 through seminar presentations, lecture-based discussions and essays.
- Acquisition of 4 through 1) provision of detailed reading lists, which include, where appropriate, reference to on-line materials, and 2) compulsory reading assignments which familiarize students with secondary sources related to the Major subject;
- Acquisition of 5 through regular (non-assessed) student presentations and class room discussion.
Assessment is through unseen examinations, dissertation, long essays and coursework.

REFERENCE POINTS
What has been the basis for the design of this programme?
- School learning and teaching strategy
- Staff research
- QAA framework for higher education qualifications

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT
SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School’s Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at [http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:
- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students’ Union) where many relevant issues are discussed.

FURTHER INFORMATION
- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/);
- [Postgraduate Handbook](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/);
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/);
- [UCAS website](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/);
- [QAA website](http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/).