DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN GENDER STUDIES SOAS

The Centre for Gender Studies welcomes applications from MPhil/PhD students wishing to undertake research in all areas of Gender Studies. The Centre places its emphasis on the acquisition of critical theoretical skills and in-depth regional, linguistic and cultural knowledge of gender studies with specific reference to Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Our current research students work on an exceptionally wide range of topics, both theoretical and empirical, supervised according to the expertise of a wide range of academic staff across the School.

A research degree in gender studies normally takes three years, or up to a maximum of four years should extensive periods of fieldwork be required. Part-time registration is also possible. Research is guided throughout by a research committee of three staff members, consisting of one primary supervisor. Depending on the nature of the research and joint supervision is sometimes recommended, under the direction of two supervisors.

In the first year, students prepare for research by following an MPhil training programme. There are certain required courses, the other elements being agreed between the student, the Postgraduate Tutor (Rachel Harrison) and your supervisor(s). The aim of the training programme is to provide a thorough grounding in theory, methods, regional, cultural, linguistic and any special disciplinary expertise that may be required for the research. The training seminar is a weekly course of seminar-classes specially for first year research students.

MPhil/PhD students are in addition expected to attend regularly the Centre’s weekly seminar series, and are further encouraged to attend the MA Gender Studies core course in Gender Theory and the Study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East convened and taught by Dr Nadje Al-Ali.

Optional elements may consist of specialist disciplinary, language or regional culture courses, attendance of which can be agreed between the student and the supervisory committee.

In May of the first year, students submit a Core Chapter (of about 10,000 words), outlining proposed research questions, empirical background and the theoretical framework proposed. This is assessed by the student’s research committee, based on an oral presentation also open to other members of the Centre for Gender Studies. On successful completion of the Core Chapter, students are formally upgraded to PhD and proceed to the research phase, which conventionally lasts up to a year. Students are not normally permitted to undertake fieldwork until the upgrade process has been completed.

The second year is normally spent engaged in research. This may be by any combination of fieldwork and research in libraries and archives as agreed between the student and the supervisor(s).

The third year is devoted to writing up research for the PhD thesis. During this time, students will normally give a presentation to the Postgraduate Research Seminar, comprising a small number of staff members with special expertise in the topic and other research students. In the course of year three students will present draft chapters to the supervisor(s) for comment, before writing the final draft for examination. The thesis – normally 80,000 words in length - will be examined by two leading authorities on gender studies, one internal to the University and the other a scholar from outside the University of London.

Students studying part time take the MPhil training seminar in the first year and and write the Core Chapter in the second year. The length of time for field or other research, and writing up, is adjusted accordingly.

Degrees are awarded by the University of London.
The Centre for Gender Studies SOAS promotes the study of gender in relation to Asia, Africa and the Middle East at the School. It is housed in and administered by the Faculty of Languages and Cultures, although its dedication to interdisciplinary study links its intellectual endeavours to all three Faculties in the School and to each of its individual Departments.

Membership of the Centre is open to all academic staff and students at SOAS as well as to individuals based in other higher education institutions in and beyond the UK with an academic interest in the field of gender studies.

The primary objective of this interdisciplinary Centre is to promote research and teaching in the field of Gender Studies with particular reference to Asia, Africa and the Middle East. As part of this remit the Centre provides a forum in which staff and students within SOAS, together with scholars from other institutions, can collaborate in the field of research and teaching in Gender Studies. The Centre’s aim is to contribute to theoretical, methodological and pedagogical debates within the study of Gender in the context of the Asian, African and Middle Eastern Studies.

The Centre for Gender Studies is co-chaired by Dr Nadje Al-Ali, Dr Rachel Harrison and Dr Amina Yaqin

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