

Postgraduate Online Learning Open Days 2025

An introduction to MSc in Ancient Worlds (Online Learning)

Dr Beatrijs de Groot

4:00pm (BST)



Introduction

Dr Beatrijs de Groot

Co-Programme Director of the MSc in Ancient Worlds (online learning)



Dr Louise Blanke

Co-Programme Director of the MSc in Ancient Worlds (online learning)



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What we'll cover

- Introduction to the School of History, Classics & Archaeology
- Programme information
- Application process
- Additional information
- Time for questions & answers





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Introduction to the School of History, Classics and Archaeology

Introduction to the School

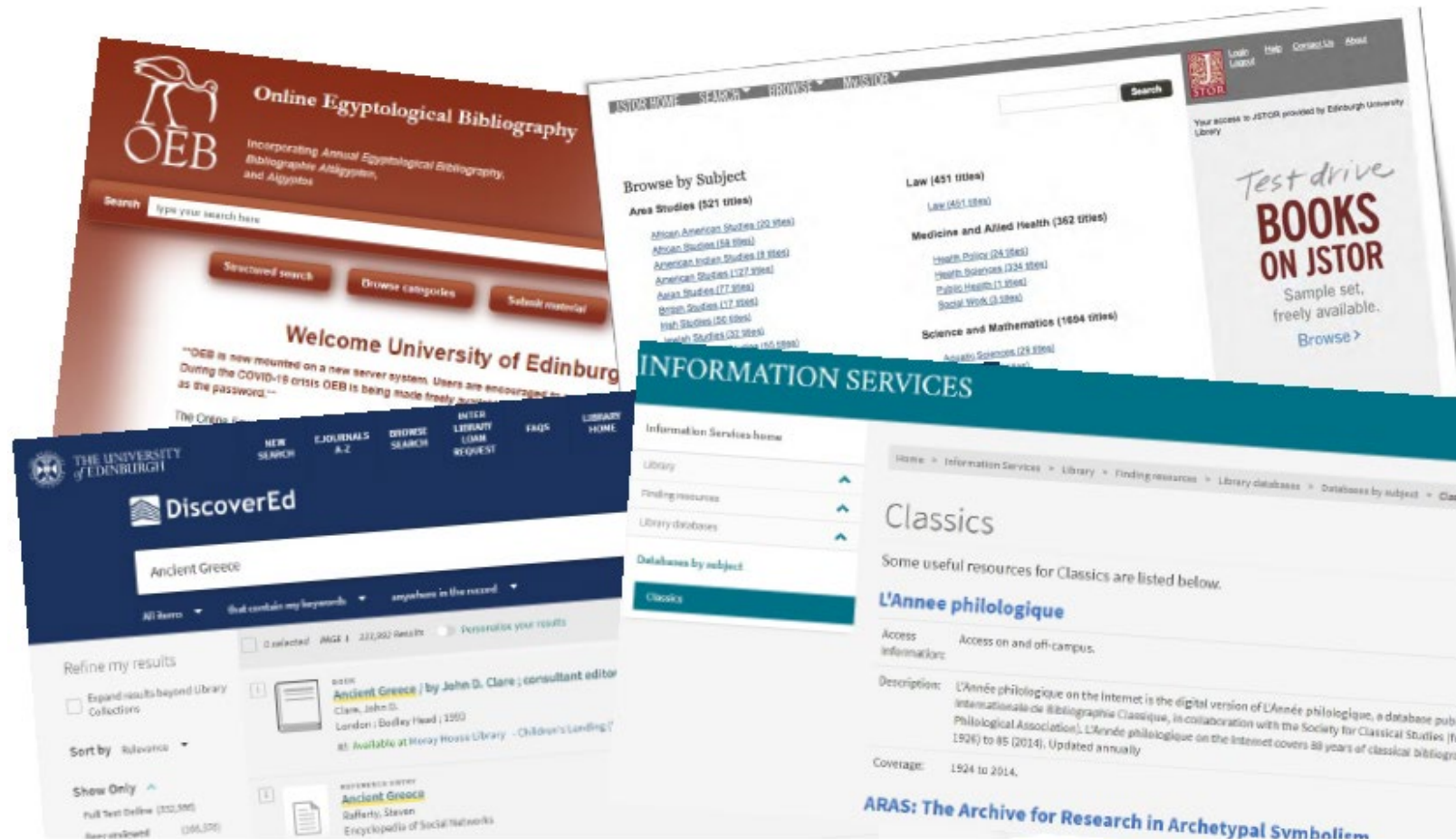
- 10th best university in the world for Arts & Humanities QS World University Rankings 2025.
- The online MSc in Ancient Worlds sits within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology.
- This unique online degree allows you to study Archaeology and/or Classics at a world-leading University from your own home.



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Source databases, eBooks, a wide range of academic journals



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Student Counselling, Disability Service, and Student Association



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Software

- Students have access to a range of software packages.
- The main software package used is Office 365.
 - Official staff and student email
 - Calendar
 - OneDrive file storage
 - Office Online apps (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Teams, etc.)
 - Skype for Business





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Programme Information

Programme structure



- 60 credits
- Two specialized option courses (20 credits each)
- The core skills-training course (20 credits)



- 120 credits
- Five specialized option courses (20 credits each)
- The core skills-training course (20 credits)



- 180 credits
- PG Diploma & 12-15,000 word dissertation (60 credits)



Core courses

- Research Skills for Archaeology and Classics

Run in each Semester I, before Christmas

This unit will prepare you for the research necessary to undertake your option course assignments and the final, primary source-based, dissertation.

Option courses

Choose five from a range of specialised option units.

Materials are provided online.



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Option courses running in 2025/26

Semester 1

- Ancient Egyptian Religion and the Afterlife
- Charlemagne and the End of Antiquity
- Studies in Early Jewish Literature
- The Jewish Diaspora in the Roman Empire

Semester 2

- Passion of the Christ: Texts and Reception
- Seafaring and Society in the Ancient Greek World
- Slavery in the Roman Empire
- The Archaeology of Technology: From Prehistory to the Present



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Sample of previous options courses

- Ancient Literature from a Comparative Perspective
- Debating Marriage between Antiquity and the Middle Ages
- Egypt and its neighbours during the New Kingdom(1550-1067 BCE)
- Etruscan Italy, 1000 – 300 BC
- Herod the Great and the End of Hellenism
- Homo migrans: The archaeology of migrations from prehistory to the present
- Popular Culture in the Roman World
- Prehistory of Egypt: major steps for humankind millennia before the pyramids
- Roman Sculpture
- Running the Roman Empire
- The Athenian Akropolis
- Women, Gender and the New Testament: Text and Theory

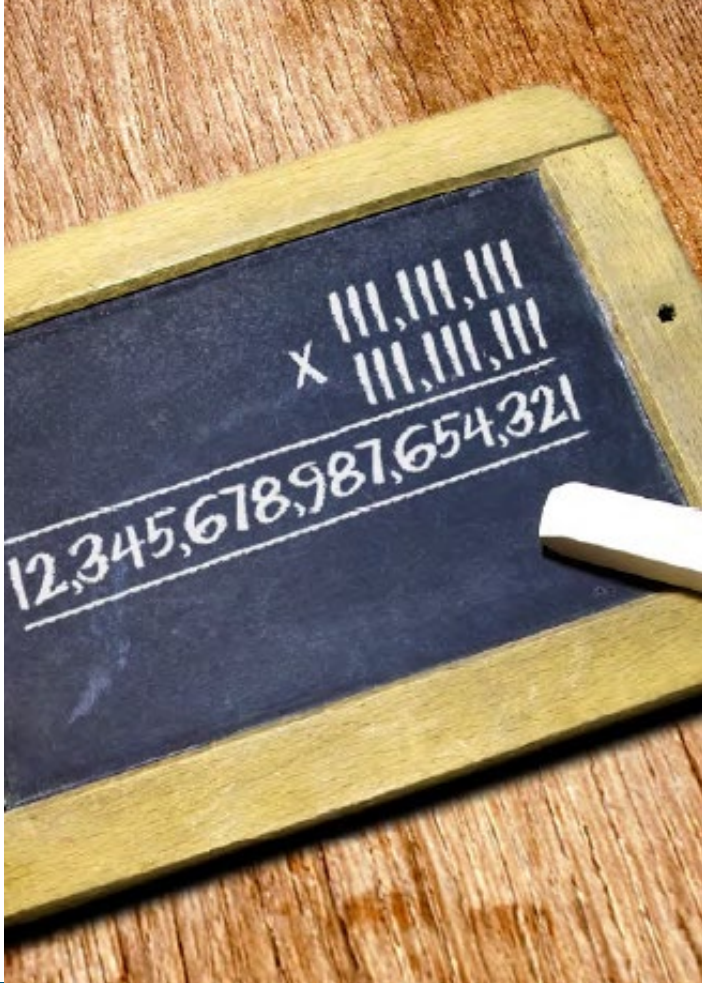
We hope to be able to run some of these courses again in the coming years.



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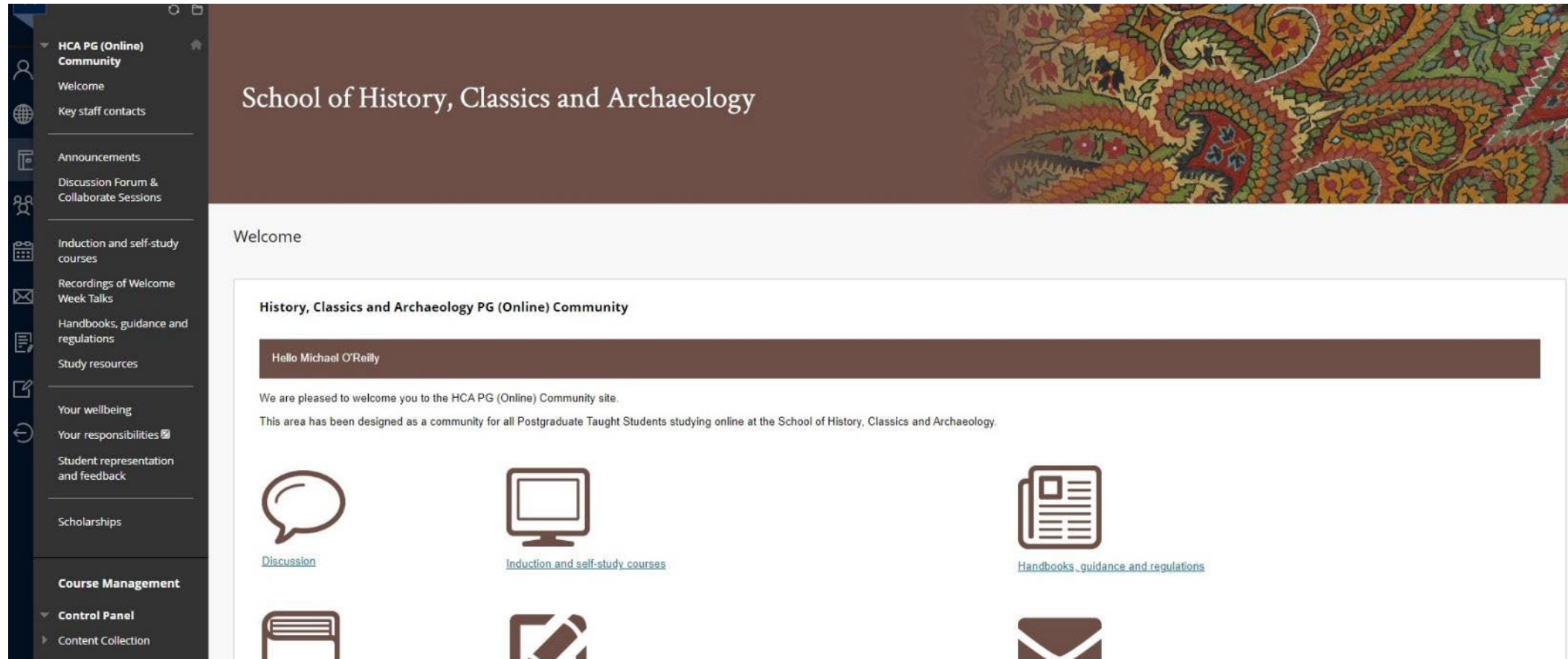
Teaching methods



- Teaching is delivered through the Learn Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), of which Blackboard Collaborate is an essential part – this is how synchronous [live] seminars will be taught.
- In addition, there are asynchronous seminars taught through a combination of discussion boards, group exercises, research diaries, and blog entries.
- Support is provided through dedicated drop-in office hours over Teams and email.



Our e-Learning platform



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Materials are written specifically for the programme



Course Introduction

Ancient Egypt in context – the importance of geography, the landscape and broader environment for understanding Egyptian religion and the afterlife.

Introduction to course aims, online courses, and an overview of the environment and broad chronological framework for ancient Egypt are essential for exploring the development and changes within Egyptian religion over time.

Skills

- Fine tuning an understanding of the methods and skills involved in academic research
- Developing the skills to examine and evaluate textual (in translation), pictorial and other archaeological sources
- Developing the ability to identify, define and analyse archaeological problems
- Gaining experience and enhanced ability to make a critical review of discussions, articles
- Being able to critique texts by scholars in light of the time and social circumstances of their writing
- Gaining the skills to extract key points from book chapters/articles
- Developing a knowledge of the subject area that takes in changes in its development over the past 150 years, and be aware of current themes
- Gaining a good understanding and appreciation of the importance of the ancient and environment within research
- Improving ability to conduct independent research using largely electronic sources, and investigate additional online sources

Geography, environment and climate

Although many maps of ancient Egypt place ancient sites on a modern map, the environment throughout the Pharaonic (and prehistoric) era was both different to that of modern Egypt, and changeable in antiquity. In particular, it is important to know that whereas today, the Nile bifurcates into only two branches that run through the Delta and empty into the Mediterranean Sea, in antiquity there were variably between 5-7 branches, each of which shifted its course over time. Likewise, the main Nile south of modern Cairo changed its course over time, and some sites that were located, originally, next to the river, are archaeologically quite remote today.

As we start to explore the pantheon of deities in the coming weeks, it will become apparent how integrated landscape and the natural environment was within religious symbolism. Key aspects of this include fertility, e.g. that brought by the annual Nile inundation, which spread fertile silts across the valley, so crucial for crop growth; a phenomenon that existed until the construction of the Aswan Dam and High Dam. The god Hapy is associated with fertility brought about by the Nile. One of the early gods is Geb, associated with the fertile earth, living under Nut, who is the goddess of the sky. Associations with the setting of the sun and the symbolism of place are seen in the hieroglyphic language, with the horizon showing the red sun sinking in a



View of the Giza Pyramids during the inundation (1924-1930). By Lehnert and Landrock, Cairo.

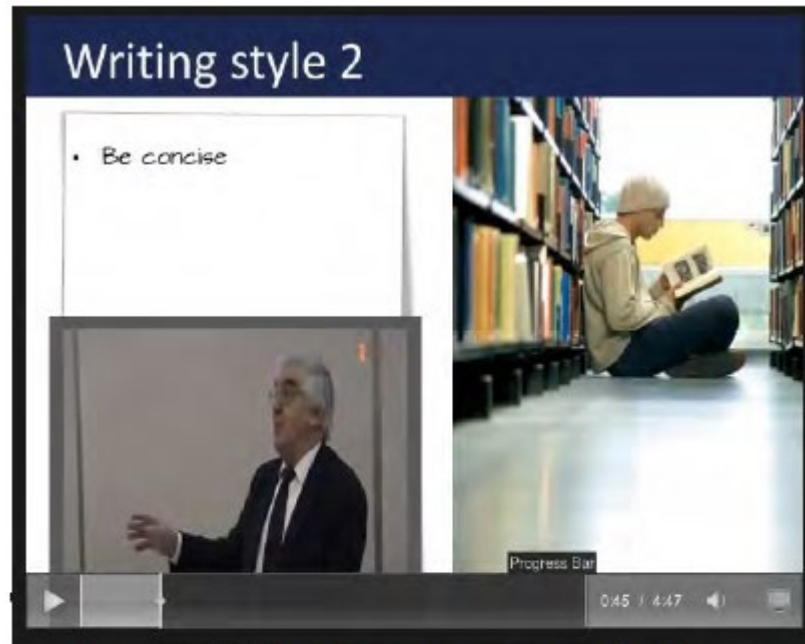
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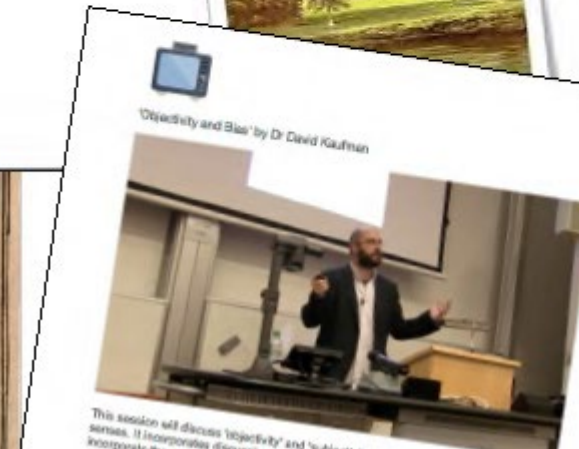
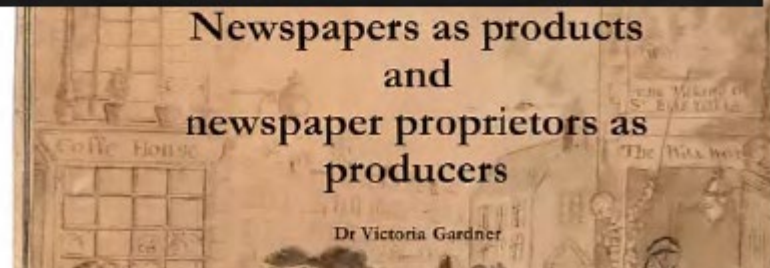
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Online materials include podcasts, screencasts, and videos of lectures



Tensions between critical history and memory

- Eric Hobsbawm: Many traditions which 'appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.'
- JH Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (1969): True history is basically destructive 'for by its very nature it dissolves those simple, structural generalizations by which our forefathers interpreted the purpose of life in historical terms'.



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Discussion forums enable frequent interaction with academics and fellow students

The screenshot shows a discussion forum on The University of Edinburgh's Learn platform. The forum is titled "Thread: First of all... Testing the toolkit". It shows a post by David Kaufman, a moderator, with a list of five points for discussion: 1. Origin myths, 2. Ideas of a people, 3. Ideas of place and territory, 4. Enemies and others, 5. Symbols and stories, 6. Visions of the future. Below the list, there is a prompt to "Get down short notes on the above points". A reply by a user named "David" is also visible, discussing the complexity of identifying a nation and the historical context of Ulster.

Live seminars using Blackboard Collaborate: audio, video, chat, shared whiteboard



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- Assessment and feedback are entirely online
- Meetings are over MS Teams, phone, or email

The screenshot shows a Turnitin interface for an article review. The top navigation bar includes 'Historical Research: Approaches 1...', 'Article / chapter Review - DUE 27-Feb-2...', 'Roadmap', and 'Paper 19 of 19'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Originality', 'GradeMark', and 'PeerMark'. The main title is 'Article Review: Gerald Strauss' 'The Dilemma of Popular History''. The Turnitin logo and a similarity score of '33%' are visible. The article text is displayed with several paragraphs highlighted in yellow. A 'General Comments' sidebar on the right contains a 'Voice Comment' section with a timer at '0:00 / 3:00' and a 'Text Comment' section with the following text: 'This is an excellent piece. Very well done. It manages to produce an insightful and compelling piece compressed into a short exercise. Virtually every sentence advances the argument in a meaningful way. The essay shows an ability to dissect scholarly work, pose important questions of it, scrutinise arguments, and construct a compelling analysis. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it.' A small pop-up window is visible over the article text, containing the text: 'Good. But you might have offered some insights into your 'take' on his article, and the critique the essay will assemble.' and an 'Associate a criterion' button.



Time commitment



Teaching is arranged in two 11 week blocks (from mid-September to early-December, and from early-January to early-April)

A full-time student is expected to study for 35 hours a week (60 credits), therefore we will expect that for each option or core course (20 credits each) you will spend between 12-15 hours a week reading, writing, and attending seminars.

This may change during the semester, as you may find that you will spend more time at the end of courses when assignments are due.

The course is flexible, so you can easily study at weekends/evenings as your other commitments allow.



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Application process

Application information

- Interested applicants need to submit an online application:
<https://edin.ac/msc-online-ancient-worlds>
- This involves completing an online form and uploading evidence of your previous academic qualifications.
 - These should be electronic (scanned hard copies will do)
 - One academic reference is required.
 - All applications that are incomplete by the deadline will be unsuccessful and late applications will not be considered. As such, we advise early application.
- Application deadline for September 2025: **8 July 2025**



Eligibility

- A UK 2:1 honours degree, a minimum US 3.25 GPA or other international equivalent, in a subject related to this programme.
- It is not necessary that your first degree is in Archaeology or Classics. However, some evidence of previous study in these subjects at honours or 'upper undergraduate' level is required.
- Relevant experience, or professional or other qualifications will also be considered.
- Entry requirements by country: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/postgraduate-entry>
- Cases can also be made for non-standard entry, please email Lindsay.Scott@ed.ac.uk for more details.



English language

- Find out about English Language requirements:

www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/your-application/entry-requirements



Fees

2025-26 Entry:

- 2 year part-time option: £8,550 each year
- Part-time intermittent (2-6 years): £1,900 for one course (20 credits), £5,700 for dissertation (60 credits)*

*This programme is invoiced at course level (ICL)



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Additional information

Student Support and Experience Team

- We are your first point of contact for advice and support once you begin your studies here
- We can provide support and guidance for students whose studies are affected by illness or other circumstances
- We can signpost students to the large range of more specialist university services such as:
 - Student Counselling
 - Student Disability and Learning Support Service
 - The Institute of Academic Development
 - The Advice Place
- Available by email, phone, in-person or online appointments



Links to additional student support services:

- Edinburgh Global:

<https://global.ed.ac.uk>

- Funding information:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate>

- University Library:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery>

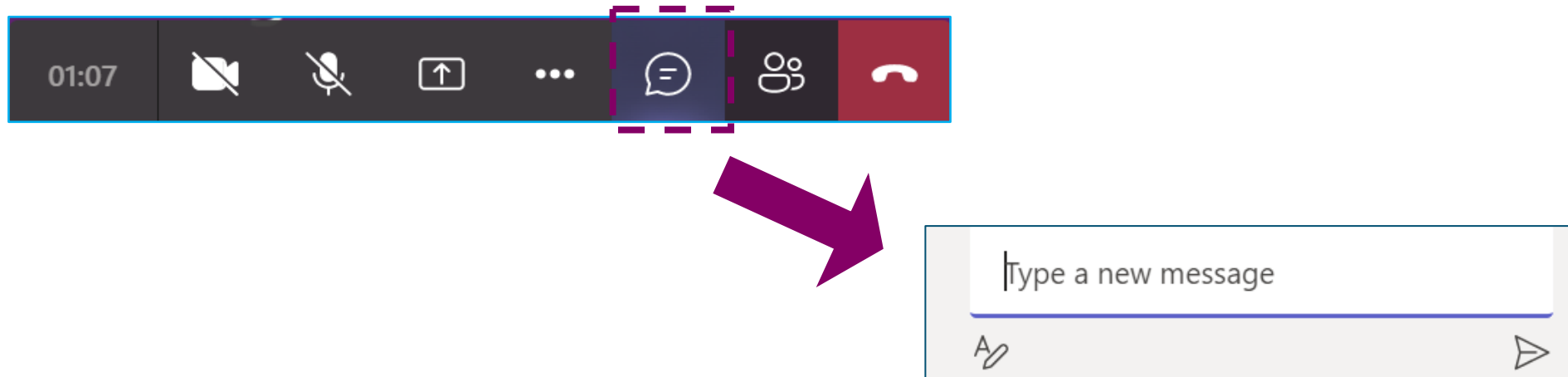
- IT and computing help:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/it-help>



Asking questions

- Type your question into the Chat Area



Contact details for follow-up questions

If you have any questions in the future, please email:

futurestudents@ed.ac.uk

Programme Directors:

- Archaeology – Dr Beatrijs de Groot - Beatrijs.de.Groot@ed.ac.uk
- Classics – Dr Louise Blanke - Louise.Blanke@ed.ac.uk



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Thank you

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