

Royal Holloway, University of London

Course specification for a postgraduate award

MSc Gender Studies

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Given the increasing centrality of intersectional gender inequalities and identities in academic debates (both theoretical and empirical), and in 'real world' local, national and international contexts, this MSc course aims to provide students with a strong understanding of what gender is, and how it has been conceptualized, operationalized, applied and empirically studied. It explores how gender inequalities operate within power relations and power structures, and how they are reproduced through institutions, society, history, policy and technology. The course will cover how to understand, measure and analyse gender inequalities, in an intersectional fashion; how to interpret gendered impacts at interpersonal, local, national, regional, international and other spatial levels and over time; how gender intersects with other inequalities, notably race, sexuality and class, in political and societal structures and relationships and these mediate change and resistance; and how to take gender analysis from theory to practice. The course offers students mandatory modules in gender theory, methodology and methods, as well as practice, alongside a supervised dissertation. Students also take optional modules from Gender Studies and their subject-specific department.

The course is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). Students take taught modules over two terms, and work on a supervised final dissertation during the third term. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the course provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – Also referred to as 'course', this term refers to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies. 'Courses' were formerly known as 'programmes' at Royal Holloway.

Module – This refers to the credits you will study each year to complete your degree course. Postgraduate taught degrees at Royal Holloway comprise 180 credits. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title. 'Modules' were formerly known as 'course units' at Royal Holloway.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	April 2023	Location of study	Egham
Course award and title	MSc Gender Studies	Level of study	Postgraduate
Course code	3785	Year of entry	2025/26
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department/ School	Gender Institute Department of Politics and International Relations, School of Law and Social Sciences	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	Geography History Law and Criminology Politics, International Relations and Philosophy
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time Part time	Duration of the course	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two to five years (104 - 260 weeks) part-time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A	For queries on admissions:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/		

Section 3 – Degree course structure				
3.1 Mandatory module information				
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study				
Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (see section 6)
GS5100	Gender Theory	15	7	MNC
GS5200	Methods and Methodologies for Gender Studies	15	7	MC
GS5300	Practices of Gender/Gendered Research	15	7	MC
GS5500	Gender Studies Dissertation	60	7	MNC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module to successfully graduate with a particular degree title, or before you can proceed to the next year of your course where studying part-time. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them (see [Academic Regulations](#) on condonable fails). Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example; where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

| 3.2 Optional modules | | | | |
| In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. However, not all may be available every year. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example; where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection, please contact the department for further information. | | | | |

You must take 75 credits of optional modules in your degree. 15 credits will be taken in Gender Studies, choosing one module among GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year). The remaining 60 credits of optional modules will be taken in your pathway subject(s). See Section 4 below for an indicative list of modules that are likely to be available.

3.3 Optional module requirements

These are pathway specific and are outlined in section 4 – Progressing through each year of your degree course.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

This course is offered either full time (with a duration of one year), or part time (normally with a duration of two years). Part-time students will be expected to take the Gender Studies mandatory modules and Gender Studies optional module, plus one subject-specific optional module, in the first year of enrolment. You will take the remaining subject-specific optional modules and the Gender Studies Dissertation module in your second year. If you need to complete your degree part time over 3-5 years, you will need to agree with the course director the order in which the modules need to be taken.

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 to be awarded. The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who otherwise meet the requirements for award as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

Students will specify the pathway they wish to join when applying for the MSc Gender Studies. You will be registered on MSc Gender Studies and based on your choice of pathway and related optional modules, you will exit with a specific degree subtitle. The module requirements for each exit award are listed below. If you have related questions or are unclear about the impact of your pathway and options choices on your degree subtitle, you should consult the Director of the MSc Gender Studies at the earliest opportunity.

The MSc Gender Studies currently offers six pathways. Indicative optional modules offered by the Departments are listed below. Although Departments strive to keep changes to a minimum, not all modules may be offered every year, and new modules might be introduced based on staff expertise and interest.

MSc Gender Studies and Global Futures

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender, Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year) and 60 credits from the optional modules offered by the Department of Geography. Indicative modules offered by the Department of Geography include GG5012 Key Concepts in Justice, Development & Sustainability, GG5020 Advanced Methods for Social Science, GG5013 Global Futures, GG5021 Advanced Methods for Global Futures.

MSc Gender Studies and History

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender, Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year) and 60 credits from optional modules offered by the Department of History. Indicative modules offered by the Department of History might include: HS5132 Breaking Waves: Feminism in Britain, c. 1860-Present; HS5133 Fairy Tales: Narrating Queer Gender and Sexuality in the Twentieth Century; HS5209: Women, the Crusades and the Frontier Society of Medieval Christendom; HS5740 Gendering the Modern Islamic World, HS5780 New Imperial Histories: and HS5001: Gender, Justice and Emotion in Georgian Britain.

MSc Gender Studies, History and Socio-Legal Studies

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender, Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year), 30 credits from optional modules offered by the Department of History, and 30 credits from optional modules offered by Law and Criminology. Indicative modules offered by the Department of History would include: HS5132 Breaking Waves: Feminism in Britain, c. 1860-Present; HS5133 Fairy Tales: Narrating Queer Gender and Sexuality in the Twentieth Century; HS5209: Women, the Crusades and the Frontier Society of Medieval Christendom; HS5740 Gendering the Modern Islamic World, HS5780 New Imperial Histories: and HS5001: Gender, Justice and Emotion in Georgian Britain. Indicative modules offered by the Law and Criminology Department include: CR5028 Gender, Sexuality and Crime, CR5031 Interpersonal Violence and Harm, CR5038 Contemporary Debates and Sex Work, LL5001 Gender, Equality and Human Rights Law.

MSc Gender Studies and International Relations

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender, Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year) and 60 credits from International Relations themed optional modules offered by the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy (PIRP). Indicative modules offered by PIRP include PR5432 Analysing International Politics, PR5924 International Security, PR5416 Political Concepts, PR5966 Gender and Global Politics, PR5967 Gender and Nationalism in the Middle East and South Asia, PR5601 Advanced Quantitative Methods, PR5602 Advanced Qualitative Methods.

MSc Gender Studies and Philosophy

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender, Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year) and 60 credits from the Philosophy themed optional modules offered by the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy (PIRP). Indicative modules include PY5000 Advanced Topics in Philosophy, PY5003 Twentieth Century French Philosophy, PR5909 Contemporary Political Thinkers, PY5900 Race, Gender and Queer Philosophy.

MSc Gender Studies and Politics

You will choose 15 credits/one module from the three Gender Studies electives GS5401 Body and Embodiment, GS5402 Gender Power and Protest, GS5403 Gender and Technologies (any two will run in any one year) and 60 credits from Politics themed optional modules offered by the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy (PIRP). Indicative modules offered by PIRP include PR5445 Identity, Power and Radical Political Theory, PR5416 Political Concepts, PR5422 Media, Power and Public Affairs, PR5966 Gender and Global Politics, PR5601 Advanced Quantitative Methods, PR5602 Advanced Qualitative Methods.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course
<p>The aims of this course are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with a strong understanding of what gender is, how it has been conceptualised, operationalised, applied and empirically studied. • Enable students to grasp how gender inequality, power relations and power structures are (re)constituted within and across academic disciplines and in a wide variety of contexts (at international, regional, national and local levels), as well as institutionally, socially and politically, and across time and space. • Develop the subject-specific and generic skills and techniques that will facilitate progression to MPhil/PhD studies in gender studies or a related field.

Section 6 – Course learning outcomes	
<p>In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*))</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire advanced and systematic knowledge of theories, methods and research practices of gender studies and gender studies applied to the student’s chosen subject (K); 2. Develop a comprehensive interdisciplinary understanding of gender and its intersection with other social phenomena (K); 3. Apply knowledge, critical thinking, research and communication skills to identify key problems and obstacles to gender equality, also in relation to other forms of inequality(S); 4. Contribute to academic and policy debates on gender issues and gender inequalities through the formulation of original arguments and innovative solutions to problems (K); 5. Conduct academic and policy-oriented research on gender issues by deploying appropriate research methods (S)*; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Tackle questions of inclusivity, diversity and equality in the student’s chosen subject (S).* 7. Acquire knowledge and skills that will allow you to develop a specialism in your chosen pathway subject.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning in this course is closely informed by the expertise of academic staff affiliated with the Gender Institute. The Gender Institute was established in 2020 to support and amplify teaching and research on gender and sexuality at Royal Holloway. With affiliated staff from across the College, the Gender Institute gathers significant expertise on gender and sexuality, feminist and queer theory and history, gender in security studies and political economy, women’s history and gender, just to name a few. Students enrolled in the Gender Studies courses will have the opportunities to gain knowledge in core gender studies modules as well as subject-specific ones, drawing from the expertise of the Institute and relevant academic Departments. Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, coursework assignments, a supervised dissertation and guided independent study. Students will also benefit from the rich programme of events organised by the Gender Institute throughout the academic year. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework assignments and a dissertation. Details of the assessments for individual courses will be available from the [Module Catalogue](#).

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this degree course.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our [website](#).

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	7
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Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.

QAA Characteristics Statement (Master’s Degrees) – September 2015	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources
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Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.

Section 10 – Further information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online module catalogue. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

Section 11 – Intermediate exit awards (where available)

You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
PG Diploma	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 40 credits condonable (except for any course specific requirements).	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College