



MA

International Slavery Studies

Study mode

Full-time

Part-time

Duration

12 months

24 months

Apply by: **11 September 2026**

Starts on: **28 September 2026**

About this course

Join a programme that places you at the forefront of investigations into the histories, legacies and commemorations of human enslavement and unfree labour. This MA combines historical perspectives with global insights into modern manifestations of slavery, forced labour and human trafficking.

Introduction

Exploring the history of unfree labour and examining modern slavery, this MA reflects a growing interest in the histories and afterlives of transatlantic slavery.

The programme connects the local and the global. We'll reflect, for example, on Liverpool's role as the former 'capital of the slave trade' and review slave and unfree labour across different time periods and geographical locations.

We'll challenge you to analyse historical forms of slavery and critique modern responses to human trafficking. Evaluating the legacies of slavery in contemporary society, you'll apply critical and literary theories to different representations of slavery. Links with resistance, protest and activism will also be considered.

You'll benefit from our unique relationship with the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. Working with the Museum's staff, you'll study the commemoration and memorialisation of

slavery. An optional project-based placement provides further opportunity to gain practical experience with a museum, archive or charity.

Membership of the University's [Centre for the Study of International Slavery](#) will enable you to access a variety of seminars and conferences. You'll meet international speakers at these events, attend talks and discuss cutting-edge research into historical and contemporary manifestations of slavery.

What you'll learn

- Advanced knowledge and understanding of slavery and unfree labour, both historically and in the modern world
- Key methodologies and practices in international slavery research
- A range of chronological, geographical and cultural contexts for enslavement, forced labour and human trafficking
- The histories and afterlives of transatlantic slavery, including the role of the city of Liverpool
- The challenges of modern slavery as a subject of academic study
- Connections between slavery and activism, resistance and protest, as well as migration and human rights
- How slavery is represented in films, images, novels and other media
- Record-keeping structures, traditions and practices around the world
- How to think independently, critically and creatively when working with complex material.

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Course content

Discover what you'll learn, what you'll study, and how you'll be taught and assessed.

Modern Slavery pathway

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
MODERN SLAVERY, FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS (POLI521)	15
POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS (POLI530)	15
STUDYING SLAVERY: THEMES AND CONCEPTS (HLAC520)	30
INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY DISSERTATION PROPOSAL (HLAC500)	15
ANTICOLONIAL LEGACIES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (POLI516)	30
INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY DISSERTATION (HLAC599)	60

Optional modules	Credits
INTERNATIONAL RECORD KEEPING (HIST561)	15
STUDYING SLAVERY IN PRACTICE: PROJECT-BASED WORK PLACEMENT (HLAC521)	15

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Historical Slavery pathway

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
STUDYING SLAVERY: THEMES AND CONCEPTS (HLAC520)	30
HOW WE STUDY THE PAST (HIST507)	30
INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY DISSERTATION PROPOSAL (HLAC500)	15
TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY: HISTORIES AND AFTERLIVES (HIST530)	30

Optional modules	Credits
STUDYING SLAVERY IN PRACTICE: PROJECT-BASED WORK PLACEMENT (HLAC521)	15
INTERNATIONAL RECORD KEEPING (HIST561)	15
REPRESENTING SLAVERY (MODL515)	15

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Final project

On both pathways, your dissertation will be completed over the summer.

Modules

Compulsory modules

Credits

INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY DISSERTATION (HLAC599)

60

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Teaching and assessment

How you'll learn

Teaching takes place in small-group seminars and workshops, as well as one-to-one tutorials. The emphasis is on collaboration between students and staff.

External partners contribute directly to the programme and the MA offers extracurricular opportunities to engage with slavery and unfree labour in different contexts. This includes an optional project-based work placement where you would typically spend one day a week in a relevant public history, policy-focused or practice-based institution. This could be a museum, archive or charity.

How you're assessed

You'll be assessed through a series of research-based activities that will encourage you to reflect on the place of slavery and unfree labour in a range of historical and contemporary contexts.

This includes a combination of essays, case studies, presentations, self-reflective journal, policy paper and heritage brief, as well as a dissertation.

Liverpool Hallmarks

We have a distinctive approach to education, the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, which focuses on research-connected teaching, active learning, and authentic assessment to ensure our students graduate as digitally fluent and confident global citizens.

The Liverpool Curriculum framework sets out our distinctive approach to education. Our teaching staff support our students to develop academic knowledge, skills, and understanding alongside our **graduate attributes**:

- Digital fluency
- Confidence

- Global citizenship

Our curriculum is characterised by the three **Liverpool Hallmarks**:

- Research-connected teaching
- Active learning
- Authentic assessment

All this is underpinned by our core value of **inclusivity** and commitment to providing a curriculum that is accessible to all students.

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Careers and employability

Developing your skills in communication, collaborative working, critical thinking and research are key features of the programme.

We'll immerse you in public-facing thinking and activity on a regional, national and international basis. You'll graduate able to demonstrate organisational skills, teamwork, time management, personal initiative and responsibility to potential employers.

After graduating, engaging with the Centre for the Study of International Slavery's external partners, across the Liverpool and Merseyside region and beyond, could provide opportunities for you to collaborate on original research that provides new insights.

This MA delivers ideal training if you are seeking an academic career in the field of slavery and unfree labour. It also provides a solid foundation for broader careers in education, the cultural sector and third sector industries.

Potential opportunities include:

- Research positions, for example in central or local government, journalism, police, leisure and heritage, business, public affairs, and politics.
- Public education and custodianship, for example museums, schools and galleries.
- Consultancies and activist positions, for example in national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, charities, and community-based and grassroots organisations focused on slavery, human trafficking, and human rights. This includes Anti-Slavery International and various bodies of the United Nations.

You may also decide to continue your studies to PhD level. Your research could focus on the study of slavery, dependence and subordination, or explore particular historical, political and social dimensions of these subjects.

Career support from day one to graduation and beyond

Career planning

From education to employment

Networking events

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Fees and funding

Your tuition fees, funding your studies, and other costs to consider.

Tuition fees

UK fees (applies to Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland)

Full-time place, per year - £12,500

Part-time place, per year - £6,250

International fees

Full-time place, per year - £28,000

Part-time place, per year - £14,000

Tuition fees are for the academic year 2026/27.

Tuition fees cover the cost of your teaching and assessment, operating facilities such as libraries, IT equipment, and access to academic and personal support.

- You can pay your tuition fees in instalments.
- All or part of your tuition fees can be funded by external sponsorship.
- International applicants who accept an offer of a place will need to pay a tuition fee deposit.

If you're a UK national, or have settled status in the UK, you may be eligible to apply for a Postgraduate Loan worth up to £12,167 to help with course fees and living costs. **Learn more about paying for your studies**.

Additional costs

We understand that budgeting for your time at university is important, and we want to make sure you understand any course-related costs that are not covered by your tuition fee. This could include buying a laptop, books, or stationery.

Find out more about the additional study costs that may apply to this course.

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Entry requirements

The qualifications and exam results you'll need to apply for this course.

Postgraduate entry requirements

We accept a 2:2 honours degree from a UK university, or an equivalent academic qualification from a similar non-UK institution. This degree should be in History (or a closely related subject).

A personal statement, which clearly demonstrates an interest in the programme and an understanding of its context, is also required.

An interview may form part of the selection process. If you're invited to interview, you'll be requested to submit a sample of your historical analysis, between 1,500 and 2,500 words in English, for discussion. Please note, being invited to interview does not guarantee the offer of a place.

International qualifications

[Select your country or region to view specific entry requirements.](#)

If you hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent, but don't meet the entry requirements for a master's degree at Liverpool, a pre-master's, delivered by our partner, [University of Liverpool International College](#), can help you gain a place. Although there's no direct pre-master's route to this MA, completing a pre-master's pathway can guarantee you a place on many other postgraduate courses which may interest you.

English language requirements

You'll need to demonstrate competence in the use of English language, unless you're from a [majority English speaking country](#).

We accept a variety of [international language tests](#) and [country-specific qualifications](#).

International applicants who do not meet the minimum required standard of English language can complete one of our [Pre-Sessional English courses](#) to achieve the required level.

IELTS

6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0

TOEFL iBT

If you took a TOEFL test on or before 20 January 2026, you'll need 88 overall, with minimum scores of listening 19, writing 19, reading 19 and speaking 20. If you took a TOEFL test from 21 January 2026 onwards, when a new scoring system was introduced, you'll need 4.5 overall, with 4 or above in all components. TOEFL Home Edition not accepted.

Duolingo English Test

125 overall, with writing not less than 125, speaking and reading not less than 115, and listening not below 110. For academic year 2025/26 only, we will also accept the production, literacy, comprehension and conversation score set: 120 overall, with no component below 105.

Pearson PTE Academic

61 overall, with no component below 59

LanguageCert Academic

70 overall, with no skill below 65

PSI Skills for English

B2 Pass with Merit in all bands

INDIA Standard XII

National Curriculum (CBSE/ISC) - 75% and above in English. Accepted State Boards - 80% and above in English.

WAEC

C6 or above

Pre-sessional English

Do you need to complete a Pre-sessional English course to meet the English language requirements for this course?

The length of Pre-sessional English course you'll need to take depends on your current level of English language ability.

Pre-sessional English in detail

If you don't meet our English language requirements, we can use your most recent IELTS score, or [the equivalent score in selected other English language tests](#), to determine the length of Pre-sessional English course you require.

Use the table below to check the course length you're likely to require for your current English language ability and see whether the course is available on campus or online.

Your most recent IELTS score	Pre-sessional English course length	On campus or online
6.0 overall, with writing at 6.0 and no component below 5.5	6 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with writing at 5.5 and no component below 5.0	10 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with no more than one component at 5.0	12 weeks	Online
5.5 overall, with no component below 5.0	20 weeks	On campus
5.0 overall, with no more than one component at 4.5	30 weeks	On campus

Your most recent IELTS score	Pre-sessional English course length	On campus or online
4.5 overall, with no more than one component at 4.0	40 weeks	On campus

If you've completed an alternative English language test to IELTS, we may be able to use this to assess your English language ability and determine the Pre-sessional English course length you require.

Please see our guide to [Pre-sessional English entry requirements](#) for IELTS 6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0, for further details.

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