



Lorne Thyssen DPhil Scholarship in Imperial History

Further Particulars

The *idea* of empire has always been contentious and is currently in the crosshairs of the culture war. For some, all vestiges of empire must be torn down. For others, empire stands as a byword for certain values and identities that act as anchors in an ever-changing world. Both these views are simplistic and unhelpful and do little to advance the frontiers of human knowledge.

The distinguished Oxford historian of empire Professor John Darwin has written that 'empire was the default mode of political organization throughout most of history'. From Ancient Rome to the Persian, Holy Roman, Ottoman, Russian, Mughal and Han Empires, the study of empire is vital to a deep understanding of history. Robert Tombs suggests we 'accept responsibility; both for repairing and concentrating for the failings of past generations, and for preserving and handing on their achievements'.

To understand the past and inform the present and future, we need to revive and refashion the study of empire, providing new energy to the exploration of these structures – not least as they continue to shape our world today. How did empires begin? What shaped them, and what were their internal dynamics? What maintained them? How and why did they end? For many post-colonial countries, were the promises of independence met? How are they relevant in the present day?

This award is generously funded by Baron Lorne Thyssen, who notes:

'I am delighted to offer this full scholarship at Wolfson College, an institution which is peerless as a centre for post-graduate research and excellence. The successful candidate will show a keen interest in the history of one or more empires and what that means for us today. They will possess a deep enthusiasm and will recognize the need to approach this subject with a historian's clear-eyed professionalism.'

I wish the successful applicant all my heartfelt wishes for success.'

Degree type and subject

The Lorne Thyssen DPhil Scholarship in Imperial History is available for applicants who are applying to undertake a DPhil in History, with the successful applicant to be working on Imperial History. The successful applicant will be working on a topic relating to the history of empire(s) in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Australasia, and the Americas between 1450 and 1914.

Value of award

Course Fees and a grant for living costs for full-time students up to the UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend (£19,237 in 2024-25) for the duration of fee liability; part time students will receive a proportional study support grant. Previous Oxford students are advised to check their fee liability on the [University's Fees and Funding](#) pages for any applicable adjustments to fee liability resulting from prior study.

How to apply

All applicants should apply to the University of Oxford under the standard procedures for graduate degrees for 2025-26, by the January deadline for their eligible programme of study.

Applicants must also complete a short external application process as follows:

- Provide a covering letter which explains their research aspirations and how these align with the particulars of the scholarship, and send this to academic.registrar@wolfson.ox.ac.uk by the relevant January deadline.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of both academic merit and potential. If there are two or more candidates of equal academic merit, priority will be given to the candidate who has listed Wolfson as their first-choice college on their University application form. The Scholar will become a member of Wolfson College for the duration of their studies.