DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

COURSE OPTIONS

INFORMATION FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS
The information supplied in this document was correct at the time of going to press (August 2017). The Department of History reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, and to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of programmes of study. All courses listed may not be available each academic year.

Irrespective of degree programme, all students must take courses to the value of four units each year. However, the range of options and permitted substitutions varies depending on the degree programme. All courses may not be available each academic year.
YEAR 1 COURSES

There are two types of first-year courses on offer in the History Department: Foundation courses and Gateway courses. Foundation courses (all valued as half units) initiate students into unfamiliar skills, themes and methods including the use of information technology, whilst Gateway courses (valued as one unit each) introduce broad historical themes and unfamiliar periods and cultures.

Foundation Courses (Half Unit)

Term One

**HS1002  History and Meanings**

This foundation course explores how understandings, interpretations and the writing of history have evolved over the centuries, from Classical times through to the present day. ‘What is History?’ is a frequently-heard question, usually followed up by a series of supplementary enquiries: What is it for? How do we do it? Why do we do it? This course therefore builds upon current history-related debates to raise key issues about history, not just as an approach, but as a discipline. It promotes an understanding of the challenges of writing and reading history. It also encourages self-reflexivity - which means thinking consciously about what we do as historians.

**HS1007  Doing History I**

Where and how do historians ‘do’ history? Imagine the common response: in libraries, in county records offices, in institutional archives, in dusty and damp parish churches. In reality, history is everywhere, in everything, in the very fabric of our lives. There is nothing in human culture that does not have a history: even the most ephemeral of experiences – smell, emotion and the sounds of bells – have found their historians. One of the roles of historians is to make inert documents but also artefacts, landscapes and remnants of private lives (clothes, diaries, bones) talk to later generations. This foundation course gives you valuable insights into these practices and unveils the processes by which primary sources are turned into ‘history’. You are introduced to a range of primary material and are encouraged to reflect upon its potential for historical study and its limitations by engaging with specific examples of written, oral and visual sources, and by examining how similar evidence has been used by historians. This course also enables you to develop a number of key skills, important for your abilities as a historian. Learning how to use and interpret primary sources lays the foundations for the future research projects and dissertations that students undertake in their second and third years.
Term Two

HS1005  Public History

How do historians, politicians and communities make use of the past in the present, and what problems, opportunities and responsibilities does this entail? Public History investigates the practice and use of history in the modern world through a series of case studies and encourages students to think about their own role as consumers and producers of history. Lectures are delivered by different historians – drawn from Royal Holloway and beyond – who speak expertly about the intersection of their research with the public sphere. Outside lectures, students develop their ability to make informed judgments about public and academic manifestations of history in tutorials and through course assignment. Tutorial discussions (continuing in the tutorial groups established for HS1002 History and Meanings) focus on how to evaluate both historians' interpretations and the history presented through the media and in public and political spaces.

HS1008  Doing History II

See HS1007: Doing History I.

Terms One and Two

Gateway Courses (One Unit)

HS1105  Gods, Men and Power: An Introduction to the Ancient World, from Homer to Mohammed

This course looks at how power was exercised in the ancient Mediterranean world - in politics, in religion, and in culture. It covers a long and dramatically changing period, from early Greece (the time of the Homeric epics) to the rise of Christianity and then the rise of Islam. A variety of areas of life are investigated through both primary sources (in translation) and a selection of the latest secondary works.

HS1107  Republics, Kings and People: The Foundations of European Political Thought from Plato to Rousseau

This course investigates the origins of our ideas about human rights and duties, revolution and democracy, consent and liberty, etc. A number of key writings are studied: ranging from Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world to Macchiavelli, More, Hobbes, Locke and the Enlightenment in the transition from the early modern to the modern world. Analysis of the development of fundamental ideas about
politics and society through these examples sharpens the mind and throws light upon the present in the perspective of the past.

**HS1108  The Age of Discovery: Expansion, Invention and Globalisation in the Early Modern World**

The early modern period was an age of change. It has been seen by many as the beginning of modernity, for it witnessed the consolidation of both national monarchies and the central state, the split of Christianity with the emergence of the Reformation, the spread of Islam to the Balkans, European expansion into the ‘new world’, the introduction of print, and significant changes in patterns of consumption. This course assesses the impact that such processes made on the lives of ordinary early modern Europeans and on their ways of making sense of the changes in the world around them. This course also addresses continuities and changes in the domestic and private spheres of individuals’ lives - gender relations, patterns of family life, ideas about childhood and intimacy, attitudes to health and hygiene, birth and death. Throughout the emphasis is on the experience of ordinary people.

**HS1109  Conflict and Identity in Modern Europe, c.1770-2000**

This course highlights a range of major themes in (predominantly) European history from the French Revolution to the Fall of the Berlin Wall. In studying specific events and developments students are also introduced to more general concepts like revolution, constitutionalism, liberalism, nationalism, industrialisation, socialism, communism, fascism, parliamentary democracy and welfare state. Exposure to different historical methods and conflicting interpretations helps students to hone their own analytical skills.

**HS1113  From Mao to Mandela: Twentieth-Century Leaders of the non-Western World**

The course looks at the role of world leaders in the twentieth century with a view to understanding, based on their experiences and the problems that confronted them, the nature of politics in the non-western world. Not surprisingly, these individuals represented a range of political ideas on leadership, authority and charisma. But they had one common problem – how to handle the impact of the West on the country in which they operated – and so they were often closely linked with nationalist struggles. By necessity, many were also involved in revolutionary change and war, both of which, like western ideas, helped to shape them and the lives of their people. The course also guides students in research using the internet and electronic resources.
HS1116    Rome to Renaissance: An Introduction to the Middle Ages

The terms 'Middle Ages' and 'Medieval' are often used to evoke a dark and bigoted world, wracked by war, pestilence and superstition and oppressed by tyrannical kings and prelates. The image is not entirely false as all those things can be found in medieval history but it is by no means the full picture. The period from c.400 to c.1500 saw Western Europe transform itself from the poorer part of the retreating Roman Empire to a wealthy and dynamic society that was starting to explore the world far beyond its borders. This course explores some of the changes that took place along the way and answers some of the questions that you may always have wanted to ask: What was 'feudalism'? How were castles and Gothic cathedrals built? Why did the Pope become so powerful? What were the Crusades? And does any of this have any relevance whatsoever to the modern world?

Latin (Half Unit)

HS1111    Introductory Latin for Historians

This course takes students with little or no previous knowledge of Latin language up to approximately GCSE standard in one year. It is particularly recommended for students taking the Ancient and Medieval History degree or with a strong interest in the medieval part of the History degree. The classes are held weekly in terms one and two. Students can take Introductory Latin in their first or second year.

HS2111    Further Latin for Historians

This course takes students with GCSE level Latin up to Advanced Level knowledge of the language in one year. It may be taken either in the first year by students with the appropriate entry level knowledge of Latin, or in a subsequent year by students who have passed HS1111. The classes are held weekly in terms one and two. The objective of the course is to enable students to read Latin with reasonable fluency, with the help of dictionaries, particularly to assist students planning to take a Group 3 course in ancient or medieval history. Students can take Further Latin in their first or second year.