Department of History

The Personal Tutorial System...

For students on single honours BA History or BA Modern and Contemporary History, and for all joint honours students on BA History, Politics and International Relations, BA English and History, BA French and History, BA German and History, BA Music and History, BA History and Philosophy, BA Spanish and History, and BA Ancient and Medieval History.

Tutorials take place (normally) in Personal Tutors’ offices in set weeks at times to be confirmed by the Department...

...and supplementary Toolkit Study Skills lectures

For all students taking modules in the Department of History

Lectures take place in Weeks 1-4 of teaching in the Autumn Term on Thursdays @ 6.00-7.00 in the Boiler House Lecture Theatre
PART 1: PERSONAL TUTOR SYSTEM AND STUDY SKILLS—AN OVERVIEW

This document contains information about the Personal Tutor System for students enrolled on single honours BA History or BA Modern and Contemporary History, and for all joint honours students on BA History, Politics and International Relations, BA English and History, BA French and History, BA German and History, BA Music and History, BA History and Philosophy, BA Spanish and History and BA Ancient and Medieval History.

It also contains information about the supplementary Toolkit study skills lectures that we provide to all first year students taking modules in the Department of History.

All first year students enrolled in History, whether on single honours or joint honours programmes, have a Personal Tutor provided by this department.

In addition to the First Year Tutor and Deputy First Year Tutor, there is also a Joint Honours Tutor who can offer advice.

The Personal Tutor system and our supplementary study skills lectures have three core goals:

(1) To provide general academic and pastoral support to students within the department.
(2) To help first year undergraduate students develop the study skills necessary to make the most out of their programme of study in the History Department
(3) To help first year undergraduate students develop those practical and critical skills that prepare them for life after university

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Dr Weipin Tsai, the First Year Tutor, or Dr Hannah Platts, the Deputy First Year Tutor, or Dr Jason Brock, Joint Honours Tutor. For more general queries see Dr David Gwynn, the Department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies.

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PART 2: THE PERSONAL TUTOR SYSTEM

Our Personal Tutor System is designed to help first year students in particular make the transition to university-level study. Making this transition is not always easy: first year students are often unfamiliar with what we expect them to study and also how we expect them to study it. For this reason, you will meet with your personal tutor much more frequently during your first year than in your second and third years of study.

All students whether on single or joint honours programmes have a Personal Tutor within the History Department whom they can approach with queries or for advice.

Personal tutorials for first year students will take place in set weeks during the teaching calendar. Meetings will normally take place in your Personal Tutor’s office.

Your Personal Tutor is also your academic tutor for the two foundation half-units HS1002 History and Meanings and HS1005 Public History, for which there are regular fortnightly meetings over the course of the Autumn Term and Spring Term.

All teaching staff hold regular weekly Consultation and Feedback Office Hours. In addition, students are welcome to make an appointment to see their Personal Tutor at an alternative time to discuss issues that may be of concern.

The Department will remind you of the weeks when you will be meeting your personal tutors.

Attendance at personal tutorials is compulsory. Attendance at the supplementary study skills lectures is optional but strongly recommended.

SCHEDULE OF PERSONAL TUTOR MEETINGS

Week beginning 18 September 2017, Welcome Week

Meeting your Personal Tutor

This is a relatively informal introductory session for students to meet briefly with their Personal Tutor in small groups!

By the end of this meeting, you will have:
- Met your Personal Tutor and familiarised yourself with the organisation of the Personal Tutor System
- Understood how the system of tutorial groups for HS1002 and HS1005 works
- Accessed guidance on Gateway choices
- Discussed matters such as email etiquette and who to speak to if you need help
- Taken note of where you can find general help with study skills from the College’s Centre for the Development of Academic Skills or CeDAS
- Take note of your first tutorial for HS1002 (History and Meanings foundation half unit), and what preparation is needed.

Please take a look at the CeDAS resources for Academic Skills, especially the ‘Study Skills’ section:

**Week beginning 2 October 2017**

**Follow-up meeting with your Personal Tutor**

This session is the opportunity for students to meet with their personal tutor on a one-to-one basis.

You will be given details about the timing of this meeting by the Department.

**Week beginning 15 January 2018**

**‘Touching base’ one-to-one meeting with your Personal Tutor**

This session is an opportunity for students to meet with their personal tutor on a one-to-one basis and to discuss with your Personal Tutor how you are finding your programme, what has gone well and what has gone not so well, and how – after one term – you are coping with balancing the academic and social demands on your time.

You will be given details about the timing of this meeting by the Department.
Week beginning 5 March 2018

Second year course options: one-on-one meeting with your Personal Tutor

For this session, you will meet your tutor individually for 10 minutes to discuss your course options for your second year. You will need to prepare for this session by familiarising yourself with the course options for next year and thinking about which options you might wish to study.

By the end of this meeting, you will have:
• Discussed the course options available for next year
• Developed a clearer sense of what you might choose to study next year.

You will be given details about the timing of this meeting by the Department.

Week beginning 28 May 2018, penultimate week of year

End-of-year reflections: one-on-one meetings

For this session, you will meet your Personal Tutor individually for 10 minutes to discuss how your exams went and your reflections on the year overall.

By the end of this meeting, you will have:
• Reflected on the exams
• Reflected on the year
• discuss the challenges you have overcome
• Considered your plans for the summer
• Talked about your aspirations for next year.

You will be given details about the timing of this meeting by the Department.

REMEMBER – YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO GO AND SEE YOUR PERSONAL TUTOR EITHER IN THEIR CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK HOURS OR BY PRIOR APPOINTMENT!
PART 3: ‘TOOLKIT’ STUDY SKILLS LECTURES

This short series of four lectures is meant to complement your Foundation and Gateway tutorials and seminars.

There are four lectures in total, and they cover:

(1) Settling in: thinking, studying and doing History at university!
(2) Getting to know the Library: finding, selecting and evaluating sources
(3) Writing essays; referencing and avoiding plagiarism; submitting coursework
(4) Oral presentations: speaking in public; and avoiding death by PowerPoint.

All sessions will take place in the Boiler House Lecture Theatre on Thursdays at 6.00-7.00 pm.

There is also a Moodle page with information linked to these lectures.

There are no texts for the Toolkit Study lectures—like most things in life, you learn best how to be a good student by studying! However, you may find the following books useful, both of which are available in the library:


You are encouraged to browse the online resources provided by Royal Holloway’s Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS). These include Essential Academic Skills, open lectures on relevant topics, English for international students, and a range of online resources to help you with all aspects of academic study skills. Its website is: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/cedas/home.aspx
LECTURE 1: SETTLING IN: THINKING, STUDYING AND DOING HISTORY AT UNIVERSITY!

- Why Are You Here?
- Personal Tutor system
- Structure of the first year
- Essay submission timetable
- What is the reflective journal?

LECTURE 2: GETTING TO KNOW THE LIBRARY: FINDING, SELECTING AND EVALUATING SOURCES

This lecture introduces you to using the Library and gives you tips on doing this effectively and efficiently. The RHUL Library provides a wealth of advice and support for all students, particularly those new to the system: [https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/informationforstudents.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/informationforstudents.aspx)

Please also read through the Library Guide for New Students: [http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/NewStudents](http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/NewStudents)

Of particular interest to History students should be the subject-specific guide to the library resources for History: [http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/History](http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/History)

The Library also has a YouTube channel that provides a range of tutorials showing you how to use specific aspects of the library system: [https://www.youtube.com/user/LibraryRHUL](https://www.youtube.com/user/LibraryRHUL)

Lastly, please consult the CeDAS resource set, ‘Library and online search skills’: [https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/cedas/onlineresources/home.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/cedas/onlineresources/home.aspx)

Developing a search strategy: effective research requires a strategic approach! This lecture discusses why your search strategy should include the following stages:

- Defining your topic - clarify the meaning of the topic and/or particular words
- Identifying useful terms and keywords that define your research question. It may be necessary to set a scope and boundary to your topic (bearing in mind and resource constraints like time, support available; library resources etc)
- Selecting relevant information sources
- Applying effective search techniques i.e. constructing effective search terms
- Evaluating and modifying your research as necessary
- Selecting & saving your search strategies and results
- Locating copies of promising references

**LECTURE 3: WRITING ESSAYS; REFERENCING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM; SUBMITTING COURSEWORK**

This lecture focuses on how to approach academic writing. Coursework can be a daunting prospect, and so we look at how to break the process into manageable steps, including:

- How to understand and answer the question
- Planning and structuring your essay
- Writing your essay
- Benefits of reviewing your coursework before submission.
- Academic style and voice, especially in the context of History writing

This lecture also looks at how to avoid the (unforgivable) academic sin of plagiarism. We look at referencing and citation as core generic skills for historians.

Colleagues often have a figurative rant by e-mail at the time of the first essays being submitted, along the lines of "DON'T EVER USE WIKIPEDIA IN ANY SUBMITTED WORK". There are far, far better resources available via the College intranet such as:

- Cambridge Histories Online: http://histories.cambridge.org/uid=10557/browse
- JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch
- RHUL Library e-Resources: http://eresources.rhul.ac.uk/kb/Main_Page

Come to know and love these online reference tools and full-text databases. Royal Holloway has invested heavily in a wide range of on-line resources for historical study.

This lecture also explains the process of submitting essays. All students should know how to submit coursework! In this lecture you will be taken carefully through the nuts and bolts of submitting coursework through Turnitin and in hard copy.
LECTURE 4: ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SPEAKING IN PUBLIC; AND AVOIDING DEATH BY POWERPOINT

Speaking in public!

The ability to speak clearly and articulately in front of others is hugely empowering. (Look at how many politicians seem to get by with this talent!) It is also a skill that can help you get jobs.

At the same time, however, speaking in public is often nerve wracking, at least to begin with. Even academics get nervous before giving lectures!

In this lecture, we demystify the process of speaking in public settings and provide you with tools to approach this necessary task with confidence. If you are nervous about speaking in public, make sure you come along.

Please also consult the CeDAS resource set, ‘Presentation Skills’: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/cedas/onlineresources/home.aspx

Avoiding death by PowerPoint!

The lecture also focuses on the kinds of visual aids that can be used to ensure you give more effective presentations, in particular PowerPoint.

PowerPoint, and similar programmes, can help you give more effective presentations; but they can also kill presentations.

Once again, be prepared to participate and develop this all-important transferable skill!