

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for a postgraduate award
MA in Public History (2422)

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 polices can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

This Masters course has been specially devised to provide an advanced level study of the theories and practical skills that underpin the discipline of history. It does so through a mandatory core module, studied by all students, which examines key concepts, theories and methodologies. Additionally, students take a mandatory skills core module which pursues these conceptual questions further in relation to the practical applications of historical research (e.g. media and museums). There are three further mandatory modules that explore theories and practices underpinning public history, as well as relevant skills. The Masters course is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part-time study (260 weeks). Teaching takes place during the day over two terms from September to March. The Final Project is submitted in September. On successful completion of the course a student should have an understanding of the area of the MA at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. 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	November 2023	Location of study	Egham Campus and Central London Campus
Course award and title	MA in History	Level of study	Postgraduate
Course code	2338	Year of entry	2024/25
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department/ School	History, School of Humanities	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
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)
HS5450	History Past and Present: Definitions, Concepts and Approaches	20	7	MC
HS5455	Studying and Communicating the Past (Skills Module)	20	7	MC
HS5460	Pathways to the Past: Public History in Theory and Practice	40	7	MC
HS5461	Communicating History: Radio, Podcasts and Social Media	20	7	MC
HS5462	'Nothing about us without us': The Power of Oral History	20	7	MC
HS5463	Final Project	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

N/A

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](#).

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order 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 [College's Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#) (Section 15: Consideration and classification of candidates for the award) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

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.

Full-time MA students will complete the equivalent of 120 credits worth of taught modules in the first two terms and complete their Final Project in the summer months for submission in early September. Part-time students will normally complete modules to the value of 60 credits in the first year of study, and further modules to the value of 60 credits and the Final Project in the second year of study. The brief outline of the course is shown in 3.1 above; however you can obtain further details from the Course Handbook and the Director of the MA in Public History.

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of the course are to:

- provide advanced study of Public History from one or more perspectives and time periods;
- examine critically current knowledge, and the essential concepts and theories that inform the study of Public History;
- provide the opportunity for advanced study of specialised topics within Public History that involve the critical assessment of primary source material and secondary literature;
- examine critically current techniques of enquiry and research in the chosen specialism(s) within Public History;
- provide applied training in the methodologies and techniques needed for research leading to MPhil/PhD in History and related fields;
- foster the ability to learn independently, whether for further research, for career enhancement or for personal intellectual development;
- develop the written and oral presentation skills needed for effective communication of research findings at postgraduate level.

Section 6 – Course learning outcomes

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 (*)*)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An advanced knowledge and critical understanding of the major concepts and theories that inform the subject (K); 2. The various explanations and theories for changes and continuities in history (K); 3. The underlying social, cultural, economic, religious, ideological and political changes occurring during the periods studied (K); 4. The location and organisation of primary and secondary sources of evidence, both textual and otherwise, relating to the chosen field of history (K); 5. The variety of media and resources for the public presentation of history (K); 6. The research skills that are commonly used in the study of history (K). 7. Assimilating, interrogating and evaluating critically a wide range of material required for research into history, including both documentary and other sources; 8. interpreting developments within a long-term framework (S); 9. The ability to analyse and assess complex historical debates in a variety of areas and topics within history and to engage in constructive debates with other students and with course teachers (S); 10. Analysing and synthesising complex and often contradictory material to create coherent and logical arguments supported by relevant evidence (S);(*) 11. Addressing complex problems of history, and making judgements on the basis of incomplete data (S); 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. In addition to the above skills, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important to the world of work, and that strengthen the ability to engage in continuing professional development and to contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work, as appropriate, both autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; critical reflection; intellectual integrity; flexibility, adaptability; and creativity.* 13. Making productive use of research institutions: libraries, record offices, museums, world-wide web and other useful sources of information (S);(*) 14. The capacity to evaluate when it is appropriate to employ aggregative and historical methodologies such as historical databases, prosopography, and various cliometric techniques (S); 15. Independently planning and executing an original Skills Project (S); 16. Independently planning and executing an original and extended piece of research for the Dissertation (S); 17. The ability to reflect critically on the results of research investigations and the methods used to obtain these (S);(*) 18. The ability to convey the results of research clearly and systematically in a manner comprehensible to the non-specialist, both orally and in writing (S);* 19. Independent learning and scholarship (S);(*)
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Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Your interest and enthusiasm is nurtured through your close involvement with the current research of established scholars. As befits an advanced research programme, all teaching is highly interactive, with an emphasis on open discussion within a 'community of scholars'. Methods used to develop knowledge and understanding are seminars, discussion groups and student oral presentations. In the mandatory modules, assignment sheets are given to you each week to provide suggested reading and advance notice of topics for forthcoming discussion. In the skills modules, teaching involves small groups with presentations from the tutor and/or visiting speakers and/or weekly reports from students.

Discipline-specific and transferable skills are developed throughout the course by means of group discussion; a range of other participative activities (e.g. short student papers; the reciprocal pre-circulation of discussion points by all students in a class) and by guided independent research or study. All modules will contribute to the acquisition of these skills but the Final Project is particularly important in this respect. Research skills are developed to a professional level through the design and production of the independent Final Project, which also serves to integrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course.

Assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills is by coursework essays, by other related coursework as appropriate (e.g. skills project) and by independent Final Project work. The assessment methods used for a particular module will vary in accordance with the knowledge and skills being developed by that module. Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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
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 programmes of study.	
QAA Characteristics Statement (Master's Degrees) – September 2015	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources
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 the course of 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 (with the exception of any course specific requirements)	Royal Holloway, University of London

PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway, University of London
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Section 12 - Associated award(s) with Banner Codes	