

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA History, Politics and International Relations (VLN1)

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 University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree course in History, Politics and International Relations is normally delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which you must follow modules to the value of 120 credits. The course comprises 'mandatory' disciplinary modules, including a compulsory stage one common to all degree modules in the departments, and 'optional' specialist modules, with an extended essay in the final stage. Whilst the development of disciplinary-specific skills are emphasised in the mandatory modules, the specialist options provide focused opportunities to examine the application of these skills. Moreover, the multi-disciplinary common first year, and the opportunity to take modules offered in complementary disciplines gives a heightened appreciation of disciplinary distinctiveness.

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 a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

Module – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	April 2024	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA History, Politics and International Relations	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	3008	UCAS code	VLN1
Year of entry	2026/27		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	History	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	Politics, International Relations and Philosophy
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the course	3 years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

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					
Year	Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC)
1	HS1004	History in the Making	30	4	MC
1	PR1400	Introduction to Politics	30	4	MC
1	PR1500	Introduction to International Relations	30	4	MC
<p>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 each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.</p> <p>In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. 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. 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.</p>					
3.2 Optional modules					
<p>In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example, where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) 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. There may be additional requirements around option selection; please contact the Department for further information.</p> <p>Year 1</p> <p>In addition to the mandatory History module, you must also take one Gateway 30 credit module from the following list:</p> <p>HS1107: Republics, Kings and People (30 credits)</p>					

HS1108: From Renaissance to Revolutions: Europe and the World, 1500-1800 (30 credits)
 HS1109: Conflict and Identity in Modern Europe, c. 1770 - 2000 (30 credits)
 HS1113: Mao to Mandela: Twentieth-Century Leaders of the non-Western World (30 credits)

Year 2

From the **History** Department you must take one 30-credit 'Further Subject' module. You can then take two 15-credit Survey modules **OR** one 15-credit Survey module and HS2300 Research Essay / Public History Project (15 credits) attached to the Further Subject.

You must also take a further 60 credits from a list of options available from both European Studies and **Politics and International Relations**.

Year 3

You will follow one of two pathways, depending on whether you decide to write your dissertation in History or in Politics and International Relations:

Pathway A (History dissertation)

One History taught 'Special Subject' module (30 credits) plus HS3003 'Dissertation in History' (30 credits), which is attached to the special subject module

Plus

Two final year modules in Politics and International Relations (60 credits).

Pathway B (Politics and International Relations dissertation)

Two taught Special Subject module (30 credits each) in History

Plus

One final year module in Politics and International Relations (30 credits) and the Politics and International Relations freestanding dissertation (30 credits).

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](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a 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.

All first year students on single, joint or combined honours courses offered all or in part by the School of Humanities, School of Performing and Digital Arts, or department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%.

Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

History, Politics and International Relations with an International Year (4 years)

Stage one:

As Stage one.

Stage two:

As Stage two.

Stage three, part 1 - Extra-curricular year: **

You must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus or Student Exchange Programmes. The equivalent of a full academic load at the overseas university must be taken. The modules to be taken overseas are to be agreed with the Tutor for International Studies in History. The marks achieved are converted into equivalent University marks and count as a thirteenth unit, HS3400. This will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks.

Stage three, part 2 – Final year in the History Department:

As Stage three. These modules will contribute 80% to the final stage three marks.

**Students commencing stage three, part 1 on this four year course will not be permitted to transfer back to one of the three year modules offered by the Department of History. The Department will give consideration in the case of extreme hardship, documented by extenuating circumstances and supporting material, as it normally would, should a student not be able to complete their year abroad.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are:

- Provides a systematic understanding and knowledge of Politics and International Relations theory and institutions in an historical context;
- Encourages a critical awareness of current problems at the international level, in terms of both their contemporary complexities and their historical bases;
- Provides theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the development and interpretation of knowledge in History, Politics and International Relations and to the evaluation of current research and scholarship in the fields;
- Fosters an independent learning ability for continued intellectual development;
- Provides an opportunity for students to obtain an undergraduate qualification in History, Politics and International Relations.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes			
In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (<i>Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)</i>)			
Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
1 To address the conceptual and methodological problems faced by historians [History]	1.4 Recognise and show awareness of the variety of approaches and methods taken in the production and evolution of historical writing over time.	1.5 Apply and reflect upon the key ideas, methods and theories used in historical study, both in particular contexts and at a general conceptual level, whilst demonstrating an understanding of the dialogue between the past and the present.	1.6 Be able to apply critical self-reflexivity and problem-solving to the conceptual approaches adopted in one's own historical writing and methods, including awareness of ethical considerations in one's own historical research.
2 To be able to utilise primary and secondary sources appropriately in historical writing and research [History]	2.4 Identify, understand and differentiate between primary and secondary sources in a variety of formats and across a diverse range of historical subjects, both geographically and chronologically.	2.5 Understand the ways in which secondary sources are produced in conversation with each other whilst demonstrating an ability to analyse the reasons for changes in historiographical approaches over time.	2.6 Evaluate and synthesise the professionalism, scholarly value and significance of works by historians, and be able to evaluate critically the intertextuality of primary and secondary sources.
3 To acquire, reflect upon, and be assessed on knowledge that is drawn holistically from a range of History modules, reflecting the Department's diversity of strengths and global span of its teaching in ancient to contemporary history [History]	3.4 Become familiar with and explore a chronological and geographical array of historical topics within the appropriate confines of the chosen degree, covering an array of historical topics and themes, through the completion of the compulsory History in the Making module and chosen Gateway module.	3.5 Analyse material of increasing complexity and nuance within particular periods or fields of study.	3.6 Demonstrate through written reflection and oral discussion a critical expertise and specialist knowledge of specific regions and periods through the study of optional modules.
4 To produce written work in a variety of formats, short written reflections, reviews, and essays of varying lengths [for both History and PIR]	4.4 Digest and organise material for production of written work of varying word lengths, including an understanding of the functions and formalities of an appropriate	4.5 Production of substantial pieces of coherently structured, fluently written and accurately referenced work with a significant analytical focus.	4.6 Independently and creatively design and produce to completion a specialist and question-driven piece of original research in the form of a dissertation on a topic of your

	bibliographical and referencing apparatus used in scholarship.		own choosing, whilst applying professional conventions of scholarship and research.
5 To be able to communicate ideas and research findings orally [both]	5.4 Work with peers towards a collaborative project and share in the presentation of this project.	5.5 Be able to apply effective and fluent oral communication skills through class participation and assessed presentations, whether working independently or collaboratively with peers, and whilst using presentational aids where appropriate.	5.6 Demonstrate critical self-reflection upon one's own oral presentations or performances, and those of others, showing a sensitivity to different audiences and settings.
6. Understand developments in Political Science and International Relations	Demonstrate introductory knowledge of Politics and International Relations.	Demonstrate more advanced knowledge of Politics and/or International Relations.	Apply demonstrable knowledge of Politics and/or International Relations at the most advanced level.
7. Application and use of theory, including the merits of new developments in Politics or international affairs	Assess current problems in Politics and International Relations in a basic theoretical context	Analyse and apply theory to context in Politics and/or international affairs.	Use of theory at the highest level for understanding and analysing new developments in the study of Politics and/or International Relations
8. Recognise current issues in Politics and International Relations that are of use in public service, the media, the voluntary sector, or NGOs	Learning to recognise contemporary political or international questions of importance.	Enhancing capacity to analyse contemporary political and international questions of importance that can be deployed in the workplace.	Mastering the capacity to analyse contemporary political and international questions of importance for use in public service, the media, the voluntary sector, or NGOs.
9. Applied Skills understand the relevance of subject skills to professional and applied contexts, and how to apply that knowledge in the future. [Both]	Recognise and identify subject skills as transferable to work-based situations and competencies.	Generate outputs in a variety of formats which have application to work-based uses and/or particular audiences and/or functions.	Effectively plan and manage an extended project/essay/dissertation in either subject, using adaptive skills, initiative and self-management to ensure successful task completion.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of History and Politics and International Relations. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching and learning on the course draws on the methods and concepts used to investigate international political phenomena and to conduct historical scholarship. It is also very strongly informed by the current research interests of the teaching staff from the two departments contributing modules to the course. This is particularly the case with the 2nd and 3rd Year options, all of which are offered by staff based on their own individual research interests (fully consistent with the University's approach to research-led teaching).

The main methods used to develop knowledge and understanding are: formal lectures by academic staff, tutorials and seminar discussions based on a combination of staff led sessions and student participation (including presentations). There is also guided independent research and study for the 3rd Year Dissertation.

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Royal Holloway Curriculum 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.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this 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	4-6
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 courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
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– 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
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College