

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA Modern and Contemporary History (V140)

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 Modern and Contemporary History is 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 courses are characterised by clear academic and intellectual progression and by opportunities for specialisation throughout, including the possibility of taking modules offered by other History departments within the University of London. The first stage of the course provides both a stimulating general introduction and lays the foundations for later, more specialised, study. In stage two, you explore periods and themes of history in greater depth, with the opportunity to undertake guided independent research or study. In the third stage, you follow modules which closely reflect the research interests of members of staff, and also research and write a 10,000 word dissertation, which is seen as the climax of the stage-by-stage training in research techniques, analysis and presentation.

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	June 2024	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA Modern and Contemporary History	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	3009	UCAS code	V140
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	
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time or part-time	Duration of the course	Three years or six 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
2	HS2300	Research Essay / Public History Project	15	5	MC
2	HS2045	Concepts in History	15	5	MC
3	HS3003	Dissertation in History	30	6	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 Students must take three Gateway 30 credit modules from the following:</p>					

HS1107: Republics, Kings and People (30 credits)

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

The mandatory module Research Essay/ Public History Project is attached to the 30-credit Further Subject. Work on the essay takes place in Term One and Term Two.

This degree's focus on the modern world means that you, in your selection of a second year Further Subject module, should choose modules whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (i.e. the post-1800 period), or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate modules are published at the time that module choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Education Lead (History).

In addition, you must take four of the 15 credit Survey modules. This degree's focus on the modern world means that you, in your selection of second year Survey modules, should choose modules whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (i.e. the post-1800 period), or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate modules are published at the time that module choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Education Lead (History):

In **Term One**, you must ordinarily take two 15 credit 'Survey' modules,

In **Term Two**, you must take two 15 credit Survey modules.

The current listing of 15 credit Survey modules can be found via the History Department's [webpage](#).

You must also take one suitable Further Subject module (30 credits) from the list of Further Subject options.

Year 3

You must take three taught 'Special Subject' modules (90 credits), plus the module HS3003 Dissertation in History (30 credits).

This degree's focus on the modern world means that you, in your selection of third year University-based or intercollegiate Special Subject modules, should choose modules whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (i.e. the post-1800 period), or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate modules are published at the time that module choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Education Lead (History).

The current listing of Special Subject 30 credit modules can be found via the History Department's [webpage](#).

N.B. You may also choose a Group 2 **OR** Group 3 paper taught at other Universities and Schools of the University of London, subject to availability.

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.

OR

All first year undergraduate students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to progress into the second year of study (unless their course includes the alternative mandatory SS1000 module). 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 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.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

- The aims of this course are:
- to give a sound and extensive basis for the study of modern and contemporary History;
 - to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which you are able to gain knowledge, understanding and appropriate skills relating to distinctive research specialisms, which provide a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research;
 - to develop in you a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond higher education, the ability to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

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 (*)*)

Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
1. To address the conceptual and methodological problems faced by historians of the modern and contemporary world.	1.4 Understand and show awareness of the variety of approaches and methods taken in the production and evolution of historical writing over time; to show awareness of the ways that historical knowledge can inform – and be informed by – the present.	1.5 Apply the key concepts, themes and theories used in historical study to particular contexts; reflect critically on the practices and uses of historical knowledge both within and beyond the academy.	1.6 Be able to apply critical self-reflexivity to the conceptual approaches adopted in one's own historical writing and the methods of one's own research; construct ethically-aware historical research; apply high levels of independence and initiative in problem-solving.
2. To be able to utilise primary and secondary sources appropriately in historical writing and research	2.4 Identify, understand and differentiate between primary and secondary sources in a variety of formats and across a diverse range of subjects, both thematically and geographically.	2.5 Understand the ways in which secondary sources are produced in conversation with each other; demonstrate an ability to analyse the reasons for changes in historiographical approaches and methodologies over time; analysis of different and complex types of historical source.	2.6 Evaluate and synthesise the professionalism, scholarly value and significance of works by historians; critically evaluate the intertextuality of primary and secondary historical 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 modern and contemporary history (defined as post-1750)	3.4 Become familiar with and explore a chronological and geographical array of historical topics within the appropriate confines of the chosen degree, through the completion of the compulsory <i>History in the Making</i> module and chosen Gateway module(s) that specialise in the post-1750 period.	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 various formats from short reflections, reviews, essays through to a dissertation; to demonstrate oral communication and presentation skills	4.4 Digest and organise material for production of written work of varying word lengths; work with peers towards a collaborative project.	4.5 Production of more substantial pieces of coherently structured and fluently written work with 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 the student's own choosing; expression of complex ideas through the design and delivery of oral presentations.
5. To apply the professional conventions of historical scholarship and research	5.4 Develop recognition and understanding of the functions and formalities of the bibliographical and referencing apparatus used in historical scholarship	5.5 Demonstrate the accurate and appropriate referencing of secondary and primary sources	5.6 To produce for oneself relevant and selective bibliographies that reflect the diversity of historical scholarship on a specialist topic in a professional manner
Engaged Humanities (SH) K6 Display a breadth and depth of subject knowledge and engage with developing subject conversations and their currency in cultural discourse now.	K6.4 Recall foundational knowledge of the subject area, and use core subject skills.	K6.5 Recognise and classify focussed sub-fields within the subject area and identify and respond to relevant critical materials and contexts.	K6.6 Select and apply specific debates/theories/conceptual frameworks within specialist areas of the subject field and critically identify the potential for new ideas and subject directions.
Applied Humanities S1 Understand the relevance of subject skills to professional and applied contexts, and how to apply that knowledge in the future.	S1.4 Recognise and identify subject skills as transferable to work-based situations and competencies.	S1.5 Generate outputs in a variety of formats which have application to work-based uses and/or particular audiences and/or functions.	S1.6 Plan and manage an extended project/essay, using ADAPTIVE skills, INITIATIVE and SELF-MANAGEMENT to ensure successful task completion.
Global Humanities S2 Understand and enact intercultural awareness and competencies.	S2.4 Identify and respond to diverse cultural contexts and viewpoints	S2.5 Understand and differentiate the circumstances and contexts that give rise to diverse viewpoints and world views.	S2.6 Reflect on bias including one's own: operate within, appreciate, and evaluate different cultural context.
Critical S3	S3.4	S3.5	S3.6 synthesise and evaluate information from disparate and potentially conflicting sources to reach INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT with

	FOCUS in detail to FILTER, summarise and classify a range of information (issues, texts, contexts.)	objectively evaluate information (issues, texts, contexts) demonstrating INTEGRITY and evidence-based reasoning.	the capacity to deconstruct the conditions pertaining to the construction of knowledge.
Collaborative S4	S4.4 Reflect on current experience and identify the potential to ADAPT and modify in response to that experience.	S4.5 Carry out collaborative activity with RESILIENCE and provide an individual contribution to a collective goal/task.	S4.6 Co-work and/or co-create in partnership with others in achievement of collective goals and recognise acknowledge the importance of collaborative practice in knowledge production.

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 Modern and Contemporary History. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching takes place in lectures, large and small seminar groups, and occasionally in one-to-one tutorials. Lectures are primarily used to provide a broad introduction to themes and issues, and to expand your knowledge base (e.g. Foundation and Gateway Modules). Oral presentation skills are developed in small to medium sized groups. The chance to study historical texts occurs throughout the degree, but especially in the third year modules and the dissertation. The dissertation also provides the opportunity for guided independent research. You are introduced to computing skills in the first year introduction to computing modules. As you progress through the course, you develop a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of your skills in general, through your application and interpretation in particular historical and sub-disciplinary contexts.

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
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