DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MODULE OPTIONS

INFORMATION FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

The information supplied in this document was correct at the time of going to press (August 2019). 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. Irrespective of degree programme, all students must take modules to the value of four units each year. However, the range of options and permitted substitutions varies depending on the degree programme. All modules may not be available each academic year.
YEAR 1 MODULES

There are two types of first-year modules on offer in the History Department: A Foundation module and Gateway modules. The Foundation module (valued as a full unit) initiates students into the skills, themes and methods essential for studying History at university including the use of information technology, whilst Gateway modules (valued as one unit each) introduce broad historical themes and diverse periods and cultures.

Foundation Module (One Unit)

HS1004 History in the Making

This module takes you on a tour of major themes and debates that have shaped the writing of history, from the rise of classical antiquity to the revolutions of the modern world, and from the spread of Islam to the fall of the European colonial regimes. In addition to giving you a taste for the various regions and periods you might choose to study later in your university career, this module provides a foundation for your studies at Royal Holloway. It teaches you how to think about the study of the past as a series of challenges and problems that animate historians to carry out original research, rather than as a list of facts to be uncovered or memorised.

The module is taught through a combination of lectures and small-group tutorials with a dedicated tutor – who is also your personal advisor. Here you will analyse and discuss primary sources from medieval law codes to twentieth-century films. Building on exercises designed to sharpen your historical writing and source analysis, you will critically assess both secondary and primary literature. Finally, reflecting our department’s commitment to communicating to a broader audience, you will work in groups to develop a ‘public history’ project that explores how the past has been contested in media and politics beyond the walls of the academic world.
Gateway Modules (One Unit each)

Terms One and Two

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

This module 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) through the triumph of Rome 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 module 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  Renaissance to Revolutions: Europe and the World, 1500-1800**

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 module 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. For example, we examine how the process of state-building brought about a new culture of discipline and self-restraint in everyday life; how people’s attitudes to the sacred and standards of morality changed with the spread of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. We ask whether the introduction of print revolutionized ordinary people’s access to information and knowledge, and whether the encounter with Native Americans stimulated the development of a separate European identity, perceived as superior. This module 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 the Modern Europe, c.1770-2000

This module 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 module 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 module 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 module 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?