

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Honours Degree programmes in Modern History and Politics**. For Combined and Joint Honours Degree programmes, please refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2008**.

The aims of all Honours Degree programmes in History are:

- to give a sound and extensive basis for the study of History;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which students 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 students 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.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits). The programmes are characterised by clear academic and intellectual progression and by opportunities for specialisation throughout, including the possibility of taking courses offered by other History departments within the University of London. The first stage of the programmes provides both a stimulating general introduction and lays the foundations for later, more specialised, study. In stage two, students explore periods and themes of history in greater depth, with the opportunity to undertake guided independent research or study. In the third stage, students follow courses 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.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- the concepts of continuity and change over an extended time span (centring on the Twentieth Century, but not exclusively so) and across more than one society and culture;
- the broad range of historical issues and events and the different approaches that may be employed in understanding or interpreting them (to include political thought, political theory, economic policy and economic history as well as history-specific approaches);
- the complexity and variety of situations, events and past mentalities;
- the diversity of specialisms in the discipline;
- the significance of cultural, social, economic and political factors in initiating and/or influencing important historical issues and events;
- the role of key individuals, groups and institutions in initiating and/or influencing important historical issues and events;
- the key sources of evidence and methods of enquiry employed in historical research.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to understand human behaviour in the context of the past;
- gathering, sifting, organising and interpreting evidence and source material;
- interpretation and evaluation of a variety of historical texts and other source materials;
- construction and use of historical databases;
- the use of social sciences theories, drawn from politics, economics and social policy, to extend the analysis and interpretation of historical events;
- research skills needed to plan and execute a project on a defined topic, and produce a coherent, extended piece of written work;*
- independent thought and study;*
- written and oral presentation of arguments and debate;*
- information technology, including word-processing and conducting on-line searches;*
- time-management;*
- ability to work with others and respect their reasoned views;*
- synthesis and critical analysis of information;*
- imaginative insight and the ability to propose creative solutions.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

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 a student's knowledge base (e.g. Foundation and Gateway Courses). 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 courses and the dissertation. The dissertation also provides the opportunity for guided independent research. Students are introduced to computing skills in the first year introduction to computing courses. As students progress through the programme, they develop a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of their skills in general, through their application and interpretation in particular historical and sub-disciplinary contexts.

Assessment of knowledge, understanding and discipline-specific skills is by formal unseen written examinations, coursework essays and other exercises, oral presentations and the independent dissertation. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

Single Honours Degree programmes

Stage one:

Students must take four Foundation courses:

HS1002: History and Meanings: Part 1

HS1005: History and Meanings: Part 2

HS1283: British Social and Economic History 1914-1945

Plus **EITHER**

HS1008: Doing History: Part 2 **OR**

HS1280: British Social and Economic History 1945-2000

The current listing of Foundation courses can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

All students may also substitute one or two half-units of modern foreign language study for an equivalent number of Foundation units at the rate of one half-unit per term, subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. No student may substitute other courses for more than two Foundation half units.

In addition students must also take two Gateway whole unit courses (or equivalents):

PR1400: Introduction to Politics and Government

Plus **EITHER**

HS1107: Republics, Kings and People **OR**

HS1109: Conflict and Identity **OR**

HS1113: From Mao to Mandela **OR**

The current listing of Gateway courses can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

Part-time students must take:

Year One: HS1002, HS1005 and a gateway option

Year Two: HS1283, HS1008/HS1280 and PR1400

Stage two:

Students must take:

HS2300 Independent Essay of 5,000 Words (½ unit)

This essay is freestanding. The subject of the essay must be outside the direct remit of the various Group 1 and Group 2 taught courses that the student is taking. Work on the essay takes place in Term One and Term Two.

This degree's focus on the modern world means that students, in their selection of second year Group 1 courses, should choose courses whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, within the twentieth century, or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate courses are published at the time that course choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

In addition, students must take five of the Group 1 half unit courses. This degree's focus on the modern world means that students, in their selection of second year Group 1 courses, should choose courses whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, within the twentieth century, or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate courses are published at the time that course choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Director of Undergraduate Studies:

In Term One students must take three Group 1 half unit courses, with at least one coming from each of two baskets (A & B)

In Term Two students must take two Group 1 half unit courses.

The current listing of Group 1 half unit courses (and their baskets in Term One) can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

Term Two Group 1 marked with an asterisk (*) are attached to Term One courses, which must be taken as a pre-requisite.

Students may elect to up to one second year whole unit in the Politics and International Relations Department in place of two Group 1 half units, subject to availability.

Students **also** take one Group 2 whole unit courses: **EITHER**
HS2271: Modern Political Ideas **OR**
HS2311: The Lever of Riches

Part-time students must take either:

Year 3, Term One: Group 1 option (basket A) Group 1 option (basket B)

Year 3, Term Two: Two Group 1 options ('Modern' basket)

Year 4: HS2271 or Hs2311 across both terms, Group 1 option (basket B) in term one and HS2300 in term two.

Stage three:

This degree's focus on the modern world means that students, in their selection of third year College-based or intercollegiate Group 2 and Group 3 courses, should choose courses whose coverage lies wholly, or at least predominantly, within the twentieth century, or within the accepted guidelines relating to the subject matter relevant to this degree. Lists of appropriate courses are published at the time that course choices are made. Exceptions to this rule can only be made with the written consent of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Students must take one Group 3 course. Group 3 courses are taught in two parts, as two annual courses in parallel. They are worth two units, one for the examination whole unit course, and one for the linked whole unit dissertation.

The current listing of Group 3 whole unit courses (both the examination courses and the linked dissertations) can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

and HS3103 Comparative History (½ unit)

and HS3105 Dissertation Research Methods (½ unit)

and one Group 2 course.

The current listing of Group 2 whole unit courses can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

N.B. Students may also choose a Group 2 OR Group 3 paper taught at other Colleges and Schools of the University of London.

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Progression and award requirements

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title (see programme structure above). Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses

taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%.

In addition, with effect from September 2010, all first year students on single, joint or combined honours programmes offered by the Department of History 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%. Certificates of Merit are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. 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 [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: *Conditions for progression to the next stage*) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

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Student support and guidance

- Week-long Induction Programme at the beginning of the first year, providing College and departmental orientation
- Personal Tutors: All students are allocated a personal tutor who meets with them regularly through the programme (joint degree students are allocated a tutor in each of the two departments responsible for the programme). The role of the tutor(s) is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- The First Year Tutor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies provides a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- All staff available and accessible through dedicated office hours system.
- Departmental Student-Staff Committee
- Detailed student handbook and course resources.
- Dedicated Student Common room.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and computer centre.
- College Careers Service.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Education Support Unit for students with special needs.
- Student History Society, providing a range of activities.

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Admission requirements

The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the [Course Catalogue](#) web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

N.B. students applying for a degree 'with an International Year (Pathway Two)' also need to have met certain language requirements, as specified by the language department concerned.

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Further learning and career opportunities

As well as providing a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research, and History-related careers, this degree programme will provide you with skills that are transferable to a wide variety of employment positions. In recent years our graduates have found employment in accountancy, the law, teaching, the music business, the police, the army, retail and personnel management, market research, computer programming, landscape gardening, publishing and journalism. The College Careers Service provides expert advice on opportunities for historians. The Department offers Masters programmes in with a range of options in History, include Public History. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

A Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency in November 1993 rated the Department's educational provision as 'excellent'. In designing and delivering its programmes, the Department draws extensively upon the research activities and expertise of its staff, particularly in final year undergraduate course units and dissertations, and postgraduate programmes.

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research. The Department of History was ranked joint 10th in the top 10 universities in the country in terms of proportion of 3* and 4* research. Sixty percent (60%) of the Department's research profile is of 3* and 4* standard. A further eight departments are in the top 10 ranked by proportion of 3* & 4* research: Biological Sciences (joint 3rd), Drama (joint 9th), Earth Sciences (joint 7th), Economics (joint 9th), Geography (joint 9th), German (joint 5th), Media Arts (joint 6th) and Psychology (joint 5th).

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List of Single Honours Degree programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in History are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statement in History describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Single Honours Degree programmes in History

BA Modern History and Politics (V136)

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