

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

LESSONS FROM THE PAST



“ Our personal histories, our family histories, our local or national histories, the cultures and traditions which surround us: they all make us who we are. So history belongs to all of us, and as a History student at the University of Reading you get to encounter the lives of people in the past in all their diversity, across time from the medieval period to the



present, and across the globe from Africa and South Asia to the USA and Europe. Every aspect of human life has a history: nothing is off-limits to historians, and through the words and stories and artefacts which survive from the past, we explore not just world-changing events and famous figures, but also the experiences, ideas, and feelings of much more ordinary people too.

At Reading, you will join an ongoing conversation about the past with the professional historians who teach and mentor you. You will gain the confidence to research and interpret history for yourself, and through our placement modules you can discover how history is presented to wider audiences and how it will benefit your career. We hope you will join us on this exciting journey. ”

Dr Rachel Foxley,
Head of Department

www.reading.ac.uk/history



PUNK POLITICS



**Professor
Matthew Worley**

What were the politics of Punk? Is music a form of resistance and can it define a movement? As a twentieth-century historian Matthew has continued to explore his love of the Sex Pistols, Crass and The Clash by challenging preconceptions of punk culture through his research. He believes that youth culture is more than just consumerism; punk offered a platform for young people to challenge the world around them and to express themselves and their ideas. It exposed the fault-lines and anxieties running through British culture and society during the 1970s and 1980s.

In his undergraduate module on "Anarchy in the UK" students go beyond mohawks and fashion and consider music, artwork and writings of the Punk era to explore the wider historical context of the

time. Considering these sources gives an insight into how teenagers felt about the rise of trade unions, nationalism, Thatcherism and the reigniting of the Cold War. Punk culture was messy and contested, but it also opened up space and gave people a voice. By immersing themselves in the sounds and imagery of the time students unpick the contradictory, conflicting yet important issues of the time for those coming of age.

As co-founder of the Subcultures Network, Matthew has created an international network of scholars, writers, artists, musicians and poets researching the history of British youth culture. His free online course, 'Anarchy in the UK: A History of Punk from 1976-78' gives an exciting taster of his module and research. Visit futurelearn.com/courses/anarchy-in-the-uk to join



“ The medium of punk enabled youths to grapple with politics; to display the concerns and anxieties of people at a critical juncture. ”

**TIME FOR
CHANGE**



BECOME A HISTORIAN



Abbie Tibbott

Abbie is the first to say that entering the world of academia was not something she expected to achieve. The warm welcome and support from Reading's History department helped her demystify what academia is and discover what it personally meant to her.

Whilst exploring the department's diverse research strengths in gender history, black and non-western history and medical history, Abbie soon found herself captivated by women's history. Her growing curiosity inspired her to delve into political modules which

examined the first female MPs in Britain, the development of women's political rights, and their place in society during the interwar period. The freedom to choose from a breadth of modules enabled Abbie to evolve her specialist area and gain hands-on archive experiences which further ignited her passion.

Reading's two-way collaborative teaching process and unique opportunities helped Abbie's confidence in developing her own theories and informed critical analyses. During her second year she worked with

Dr Jacqui Turner to research and support the organisation of Vote100, which celebrated the centenary of the first women being granted the vote in Britain and found her second passion, academia.

Abbie continued her academic journey through her master's degree at Reading and worked as a Historical Impact Assistant for the Astor 100 project in celebration of the centenary of the first woman to take her seat in the British Parliament: Viscountess Nancy Astor. These experiences, plus a tour of the House of Lords, enabled Abbie



to gain unique insights into political history and fostered her love of academia.

Currently pursuing her PhD on Conservative Cabinet politics of the 1920s, with a focus on citizenship and women's voting rights, Abbie now teaches using her own research and mentors young, working-class students from educationally deprived backgrounds, and is a firm believer that school experience should not define anyone's future aspirations. She credits the university's History department with setting her on her next journey to become Dr Tibbott.



“Today, I’m a completely different person to who I was five years ago. I’m confident in who I am and ready to take the next step to join the world of



**Dr Rohan
Deb Roy**

Inspired by South Asian historians to examine the voices of those previously silenced in history, Rohan has gone one step further: animals. Rohan's ground-breaking work on the histories of public health and animals in colonial India has led to several awards, funding from the Wellcome Trust, and international papers, and feeds directly into his teaching.

With supervision from Rohan, students can place animals at the centre of their research. By studying insects and mammals, they push the boundaries of what they know and give a voice to the excluded. Recently, undergraduate dissertations have considered imperialism and veterinary science before India's independence, and Rohan's

postgraduate module on 'Animal History' is always popular.

Rohan believes that animals are fundamental to the politics of our past and are interwoven in historical themes, such as gender, religion, class and nationalism. In India the cow can be seen as a politically charged religious icon used by the ruling political party, and as a gendered image of the mother providing nourishment.

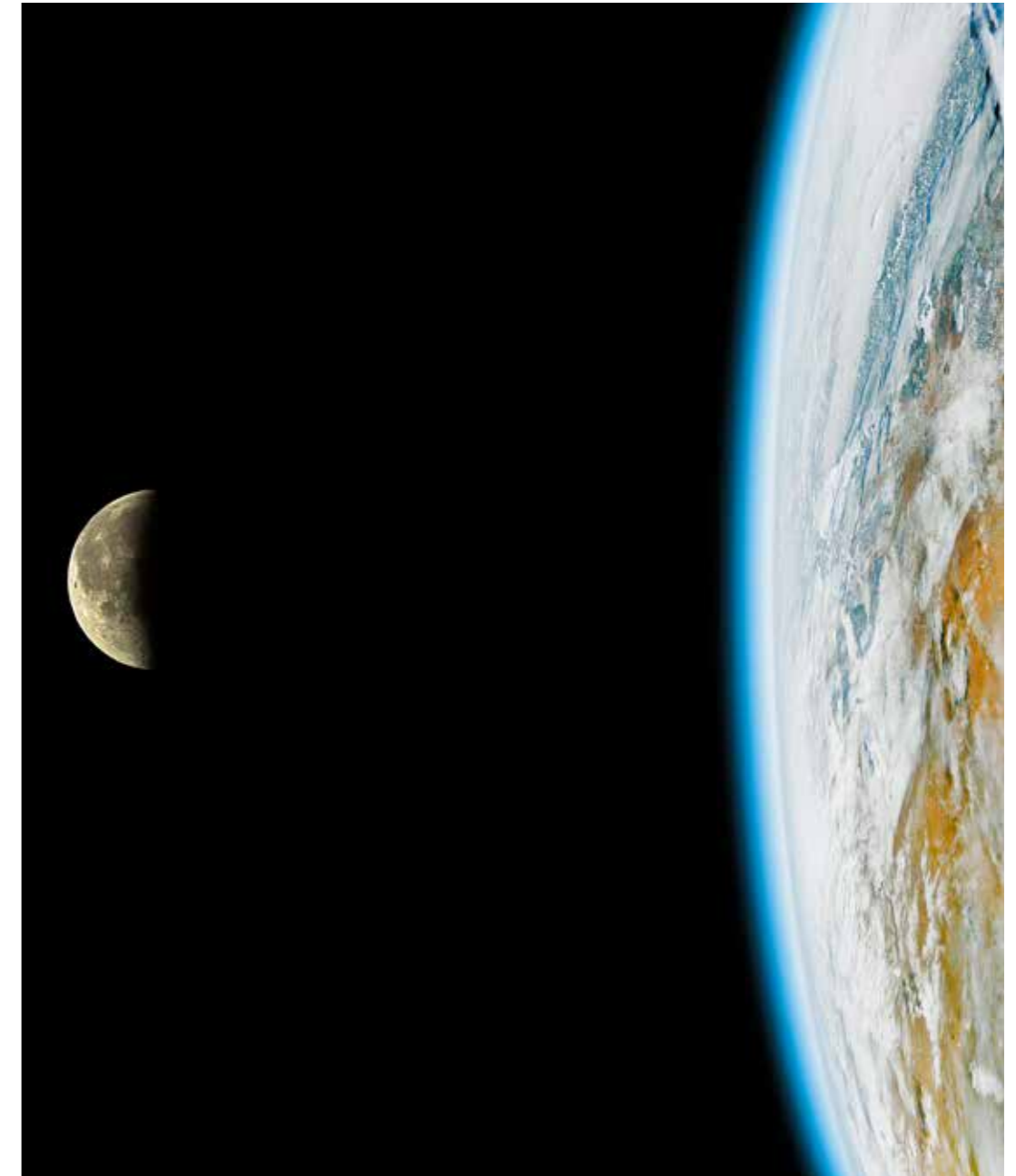
Studying animals across time pushes frontiers and unsettles the notion that history is composed of humans alone. Rohan's mission is to expand the voices we value, recognising the multiple ways marginalised groups have impacted our history.

“ I am inspired by histories from below. I hope to go beyond the traditional margins of history to address voices other than humans. ”

ANIMAL INSTINCTS



SORCERY?



Professor Anne Lawrence-Mathers

Could medieval meteorologists have forecast winds when Henry V's ships sailed to invade France, did armies use a foretelling of storms to their advantage during the Wars of the Roses and was sunshine predicted on Richard III's coronation? Anne's research centres on the interactions between medieval magic and science. She hopes to disprove the critics and demonstrate that medieval science and medieval scientific weather forecasting really did exist.

Anne's findings have shed light on a logical and radical scientific system being developed from c. 700 and

flourishing until 1600. By using the sun's rays, astronomers and meteorologists developed new technologies like the astrolabe for interpreting the world around them, measuring the movements of the planets and understanding their effects.

Embedding her research into teaching, Anne's first-year students begin discussing medieval magic and science under her supervision, and her second-year module on medieval women sees lively debates on scientists and witches. Her third-year module focuses on the forms of magic practised between c.1100 and c.1500 and traces the gradual changes in attitudes towards magic and science.

“ A lot of the science we accept today was influenced by the medieval period. Whilst religious and magical belief in the medieval period was important this shouldn't overshadow the scientific theories and discoveries. ”

WE'RE ALL ABOUT YOU



Lucy Brown

Thinking about entering the world of university made Lucy nervous but after visiting Reading's lively History department and green campus, Lucy knew this is exactly where she wanted to live and study. She was immediately welcomed by staff and students and soon learned that community is at the heart of the History department, where staff quickly got to know her name and career aspirations.

“ The department and staff really recognise you. They have definitely helped me adjust to university life. ”

Lucy Brown, BA History

Lucy began to make excellent relationships with her lecturers and fellow students through the department's academic tutor system, small-group teaching, thriving Student-Staff Liaison Committee and staff office hours which she can rely on for guidance and support. Joining the vibrant and inclusive student-run History Society this year, Lucy is looking forward to meeting others passionate about the past whilst enjoying fun events and making memories that will last a lifetime.

Eager to get the most out of her university experience, Lucy is excited to begin her second year at Reading and take advantage of the opportunities to participate in events, seminars and conferences. She can't wait to enhance her employability skills and gain hands-on experience in Reading's local archives and special collections whilst exploring the wealth of career options and to prepare for the workplace through the variety of employability-boosting modules, work experience and research opportunities available to her at Reading.



OPENING DOORS

Join us on a journey of discovery and open the door to a variety of careers.

Our focus goes beyond your degree – we place a great deal of importance on preparing you to embark upon a successful career after you graduate.

We help you stand out in an increasingly competitive job market with practical experience built into your degree.

Our innovative employability modules enable you to explore career options:

- “Going public” – work with an external organisation to present history to the public.
- “History education” – a two-week, history focused placement in a secondary school, and structured training at our Institute of Education.

- “Discovering archives and collections” – a ten-day placement exploring a career in historical research, or the archive and heritage sectors.

“The ‘Discovering Archives and Collections’ module acted as a catalyst for my career as an Archive Assistant in the heritage sector, providing me with invaluable practical experience working in an archive.”

Chloe Wilson, BA History

You can also apply for a paid summer placement in our Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP), working with an academic on their research.

“During my UROP I got to present at the annual American Politics Group conference and I have co-authored two academic articles using my research and end report. I now continue to do research with my UROP supervisor who set me on my path to my MA degree and hopefully a PhD in the future. I recommend the UROP project to anyone keen on research!”

Beth Snyder, BA History and MA History

PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS

Transfer to a 4-year programme and complete a professional placement year, gaining invaluable experience and putting your knowledge into practice. Our Placement Coordinators will support you throughout securing a placement, during the placement and while transitioning back to university.

“The unique opportunity to work with, rather than for, archivists at the Museum of English Rural Life and University of Reading’s Special Collections was amazing. The freedom given during the placement to pursue projects which were meaningful to me, meant I could utilise the time I had working with professionals.”

Nikita Rai, BA History graduate

UNLOCKING YOUR FUTURE

A history degree from Reading aims to equip you with the ability to think clearly and critically, to communicate with confidence, to manage your time efficiently, and to work well in teams.

Our previous history graduates have gone on to work in a variety of institutions, including the British Museum, Civil Service (including Fast Track), government, the NHS, KPMG, the Armed Forces, Barclays Bank, the National Trust, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Rhinegold Publishing, and various schools.

“I now work as a secondary school history teacher. I would like to believe I deliver my lessons with enthusiasm for the subject I teach. This enthusiasm comes from the incredible four years spent with the Department of History at Reading. It has allowed me to adapt my current school curriculum to ensure it covers a diverse range of topics”.

Sean Atkinson, BA History and MA History



UNCOVER THE WORLD'S SECRETS

By studying History at the University of Reading, you will gain unique insights into the richness and variety of the human experience whilst developing your skillset, valued by employers. Discover the chronologically, geographically, and thematically diverse topics you could explore with us.

COURSES

BA History

BA History and Economics

BA History and English Literature

BA History and International Relations

BA History and Philosophy

BA History and Politics

BA Ancient History and History

BA Archaeology and History

BA Modern Languages and History

YEAR ONE

Your first year will introduce you to the range of historical periods, approaches and themes that you can study at Reading. You are encouraged to look at history from different perspectives, explore evidence, and learn important research skills that you will need to progress on the course.

Topics you could study include:

- Medieval history – find out more about the real Merlin; learn about the emergence of chivalry; or get to know the medieval history of Reading and its abbey.
- History on a global scale – travel the seas in the early modern world; learn about over 300 years of immigration to Britain; study Rwanda in the 1990s; or explore the ways in which Western culture has 'imagined' and depicted the Middle East.
- Modern history – examine how concerns over nuclear disaster shaped popular culture in the second half of the twentieth century; study US environmental diplomacy from Nixon to Obama; or investigate the 'winds of change' in Britain's twentieth century.
- Hidden voices in history – investigate the challenging history of rape in the United States; or the developments of welfare in Britain; or explore women's history in America from slavery to 'second wave' feminism.

*Topics are provided as a taster of what is available on this course and may change. Module information will be updated on reading.ac.uk. Placements are subject to availability.

YEAR TWO

Apply the research skills you acquired in the first year beyond the classroom and broaden your professional historical knowledge. You will examine the ideas and ideologies that have shaped the modern world, and explore different approaches to studying the past. You will become a successful independent researcher ready for your dissertation in year three.

Topics you could study include:

- Non-Western history – develop your understanding of global history by studying colonialism in Africa; study the making of modern South Asia; or explore the early modern Atlantic world.
- Politics and people – find out about kingship in crisis in the Middle Ages; study England's seventeenth-century revolutionary politics; investigate radical women and the changing perceptions of women in Britain from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century; or study the 'Arab Spring' in Egypt.
- Culture and change – investigate how medieval medicine was shaped by contemporary concepts and cultures; or explore how women interacted with the medieval world; discover how Hollywood films depicted the past on screen; investigate race and migration in post-war Britain; or explore youth cultural movements and the music of 1950s-90s Britain.

*Topics are provided as a taster of what is available on this course and may change. Module information will be updated on reading.ac.uk. Placements are subject to availability.

YEAR THREE

In your final year you can choose to keep your studies broad or to specialise in a particular area. The research skills you developed in your first year and second year form the foundation for your final year dissertation.

You will work hands-on with primary sources and can choose from a variety of topics:

- Enhance your employability – Apply your skills through placements in archives and collections, and educational settings, whilst developing your key employability skills to discover what working in history-related fields is like.
- Politics and culture – learn how to become a revolutionary in late eighteenth-century France; find out about Britain's early female MPs; explore Cold War Berlin; dive into punk, politics and anarchy in Britain in the 1970s-80s; or see how politics and cultures combine in post-Arab Spring Egypt.
- Global history – discover pirates in the early modern Caribbean; study slavery in America; or survey Africa from European settlement to Nelson Mandela.
- Pre-modern history – learn about heresy in the medieval world; explore magic and the origins of the witch craze; or get better acquainted with the Tudors.
- Provoking thought – study the complex picture of medieval religion and politics; or develop your understanding of the history of eugenics from Darwin to World War II; get to grips with gender, sex, and feminism in twentieth-century Britain; look at the changing world of the 'Super Powers' in relation to America and China; or explore the topics of 'race' and ethnicity.

*Topics are provided as a taster of what is available on this course and may change. Module information will be updated on reading.ac.uk. Placements are subject to availability.



Important Information

This brochure was issued in 2023 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2024. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (May 2023). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check reading.ac.uk/study

The University undertakes to take all reasonable steps to provide the services (including the courses) described in this brochure. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the University interfere with its ability to provide the services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption to the services.

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Topics

Topics are provided as a taster of the areas of study that may be available on each course. Information is correct at the time of going to press (May 2023), for a list of compulsory (core) modules please check the webpage [insert] for the most up to date information from [month they will be approved and uploaded]. Teaching staff on specific courses mentioned in this brochure may be subject to change.

Joint courses

Our joint courses may have extra requirements, including English language requirements. Please check the individual course pages on our website for further details.

Year abroad and placement fees

Some courses include an optional or compulsory year abroad or placement year. During this year you will only pay a partial fee which is currently set at 15% of the normal tuition fee. Check the website for the latest information: reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding

Placements

Programmes with a Professional Placement Year (also known as 'Year in Industry' or 'Placement Year') are fully dependent on students securing their own placement opportunity, normally through a competitive recruitment process. The University provides dedicated career and application support for placement year students. Students who do not secure a placement or who are unable to complete the placement year due to extenuating circumstances, have the option to transfer to a three year variant of their programme with agreement from their School/Department.

Study abroad

The partnerships listed are correct at the time of publication (May 2023). For up to date information on the University's partnerships contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk

Where Study Abroad is not a compulsory part of the degree programme, the University of Reading cannot guarantee that every applicant who applies for the scheme will be successful. Whilst efforts are made to secure sufficient places at partner institutions, the number of places available and the University's partners can vary year-on-year. In all cases, the University cannot guarantee that it will be possible for applicants to choose to study abroad at a particular institution.

Further, certain courses and/or institutions may require you to satisfy specific eligibility criteria. It can be a competitive process. For further information on the University's Study Abroad Scheme please contact studyabroad@reading.ac.uk



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Ask us a question
reading.ac.uk/question

