

## MA Texts in History, 1500-1750

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts and Humanities	Programme length: 12 months FT (24 months PT)
For students entering in 2004	Date of specification: Sept 2003
Programme Director:	Dr Adam Smyth
Board of Studies:	<i>Texts in History</i>
Accreditation:	None

### Summary of programme aims

*Texts in History, 1500-1750* aims to develop students' knowledge of the early modern period and to enable them to analyse and appraise a variety of kinds of texts or documents within their historical contexts. The MA will provide students with the skills and confidence to undertake an original piece of research in their chosen area, and will provide appropriate training for those who wish to proceed to doctoral work in the period. The MA aims to augment students' existing skills and knowledge in order to enhance their personal development and, where relevant, to enable them to further an existing career in a cognate profession.

### Transferable skills

Students on this MA will:

- 1) develop post-graduate level study, research and writing skills
- 2) develop the ability to present and analyse information in written and oral form
- 3) be able to analyse and think critically about complex texts and issues.
- 4) develop the ability to evaluate and discuss a variety of sources
- 5) be able to communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons for it
- 6) be aware of methods and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding further, as part of an ability to learn independently.

### Programme content

#### Compulsory modules

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ENMTHI	Introduction to Texts in History and Literature	40	M
ENMTHS	Skills and Methods in History and Literature	20	M
ENMTHD	20,000 word dissertation	90	M
ENMBIB	Bibliographical survey essay	10	M

**Optional modules: ONE of the following:***Credit Level***(All these options will not necessarily be available in any one year)**

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>		
ENMTHT	Turks and Drama in Early Modern England	20	M
HSMTHR	The State and its Opponents: Riot, Rebellion and Popular Protest in Early Modern Europe	20	M
ENMTHV	The Social Transmission of Verse	20	M
HSMTHP	Protests, Plots and Putsches: Mid-Tudor Political Narratives	20	M
HSMTHB	An Elizabethan County: Berkshire	20	M
ENMTHE	Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman	20	M
ENMTHW	Soldiers' Stories: Writing about War in Late-Tudor England	20	M
ENMTHG	Gender, Colonization and Conflicting Cultures in Early Modern Drama	20	M
POMTHH	Thomas Hobbes	20	M
CLMTHM	The Early Modern Midwife	20	M
ENMTHO	The Beggar's Opera	20	M

**Part-time/Modular arrangements**

Part-time and modular students take the core module Introduction to Texts in History and Literature before they take optional modules, and the core module Skills and Methods in History and Literature before they write the dissertation. The choice and timing of optional modules will be agreed between the student and the Programme Director.

**Progression requirement**

A Certificate may be awarded on the completion of at least 60 credits. Thirty of the credits must be for the core Introduction to Texts in History and Literature.

A Diploma may be awarded on completion of at least 120 credits to be made up of 90 credits of coursework, plus the completion of an extra 30 credits of written work.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

**For Masters Degrees**

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in modules ENMTHI and ENMTHS. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Merit.

### *For Postgraduate Diplomas*

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in modules ENMTHI and ENMTHS. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Merit.

### *For Postgraduate Certificate*

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and not have a mark below 40 in module ENMTHI. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.\*

\*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

### **Summary of teaching**

Students are taught in group seminars by the tutors from mainly the History and English Schools. Some options will be taught by experts in the period from other Schools in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Active participation by the students is expected and encouraged in the seminar teaching. The dissertation is supported by a Skills and Methods core module and by one-to-one supervision.

Reassessment arrangements are that:

- (a) All modules other than the dissertation to be re-assessed in September.
- (b) Students undergoing re-assessment to be allowed one month's extension to submit their dissertation.
- (c) A failed dissertation to be re-submitted within one year from the original submission date.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

A 2:1 or better following a BA course in which English, History, or a related discipline forms a major component.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Adam Smyth

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities for those students choosing modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The University has excellent research facilities, and students are offered an induction to the use of the Library. The Stenton Library is an important resource for local history, law, and women's studies; the Overstone Library, collected by the political economist John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864), contains some 8,000 printed volumes, and is especially strong in economics, travel, history, literature and classics, and political and religious philosophy; the Cole Library contains research materials for the study of early medicine. The library also has a large microfilm collection, including The Thomason Tracts: an extensive collection of seventeenth century texts. Close by are the Abingdon, Buckland, Didcot, and Henley Parish Libraries, containing theological and polemical works. In addition, Reading has strong links with the Berkshire Record Office, and is very close to the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the National Register of Archives, and the Public Record Office. Reading University also has a strong range of digital research resources, including *Early English Books Online*, the *MLA Bibliography*, and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The MA is based in Reading's lively, interdisciplinary Early Modern Research Centre (Director Professor Houlbrooke; Deputy Director Dr Smyth; [www.reading.ac.uk/english/EMRC.htm](http://www.reading.ac.uk/english/EMRC.htm)) which organises regular seminar programmes, international conferences, research bids, and publications. Students can thus meet and engage with many visiting scholars from Europe and America, and experience the very latest academic research. The University of Reading's Centre for Writing, Publishing, & Printing History complements and supports many Early Modern Research Centre initiatives relating to the history of the book.

### **Career prospects**

The MA in *Texts in History* offers both useful knowledge and skills appropriate for a number of careers, and an excellent grounding for those wishing to undertake future research. Those who wish to become , or who already are teachers of History, English or the Humanities will find their specialist knowledge of the early modern period greatly enhanced, and their awareness of approaches and analytical techniques sharpened and developed. Skills of research, presentation, self-reflection and presentation will serve graduates well in a range of kinds of employment outside the classroom. The course also provides excellent preparation for PhD research in terms of the emphasis on working with early modern texts and documents in detail, on archival skills, and on critical and analytical thinking and writing.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

These are not applicable to this course.

### **Educational aims of the programme**

*Texts in History, 1500-1750* aims to develop students' knowledge of the early modern period and to enable them to analyse and appraise a variety of kinds of texts or documents within their historical contexts. The MA will provide students will the skills and confidence to undertake an original piece of research in their chosen area, and will provide appropriate training for those who wish to proceed to doctoral work in the period. The MA aims to augment students' existing skills and knowledge in order to enhance their personal development and to enable them to further an existing career in a cognate profession.

## Programme Outcomes

### Knowledge and Understanding

#### A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- 1) Aspects of the early modern period
- 2) A variety of texts or documents within their historical contexts
- 3) A range of issues and approaches relevant to interdisciplinary study of the early modern period

#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1) The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature core module will take students chronologically through a selection of texts and documents relating to four key topics or periods from 1500 – 1750. In addition each student will take two modules which will introduce them to the detailed study of a single topic or group of texts. In the dissertation, students will have their own opportunity to explore in considerable detail an aspect of the period that particularly interests them.
- 2) The Introduction to Texts in History core modules and all the options will be taught through close study of relevant texts and documents.
- 3) The Introduction to Texts in History core module will be taught by teachers from both the History and English Departments, and is designed to focus both on the methods and approaches distinctive to each discipline, and explicitly on the questions and opportunities of interdisciplinary study.

#### *Assessment*

The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature is assessed by means of two 4,000 word essays. Skills and Methods in History and Literature is assessed by means of two short practical exercises. The bibliographical survey and the optional module are each assessed by means of a 4,000 word essay. The Dissertation is 20,000 words, and must be submitted by August 31st.

### *Skills and other attributes*

#### **B. Intellectual skills – able to:**

- 1) Analyse and appraise a variety of kinds of texts and documents from the early modern period
- 2) Understand the nature of academic enquiry, evidence and argument in studies of both Literature and History
- 3) Tolerate and engage with a range of approaches and ideas, and differing ideas or perspectives from other students and from staff
- 4) Undertake independent research.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- 1) The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature presents a broad range of early modern texts and documents for analysis. The two options encourage students to consider and appraise other, often contrasting texts and documents. This analysis of a variety of texts is undertaken in seminar and supervision discussions, and in written essays.
- 2) The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature considers contrasting approaches and theories of literary scholars and historians, and students are encouraged to reflect on and critically engage with various kinds of academic enquiry, evidence and argument, in both seminar and supervision discussions, and in written essays.
- 3) The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature explicitly presents and considers a variety of approaches, ideas and perspectives. Teaching across the MA is offered by a range of staff and their crucial diversity of perspective will be considered and discussed. Lively seminar discussion encourages students to reflect on the variety of methods and ideas they, and their tutors, bring to study.
- 4) The dissertation of 20,000 words, supervised on a one-to-one basis, enables students to undertake independent research.

#### *Assessment*

The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature is assessed by means of two 4,000 word essays. The Dissertation is 20,000 words, and must be submitted by August 31st.

**C. Practical skills – able to:**

- 1) Use research facilities such as the libraries, archives, and the internet appropriately and efficiently.
- 2) Use information technology, such as computer software, where necessary and useful.
- 3) Organise and focus their own learning and develop it further.
- 4) Plan and write a dissertation.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- 1) Library induction, and use of the on-line resources available; learning on modules and in supervision to assess and differentiate the usefulness and thoroughness of information acquired.
- 2) Use in presentation and formulation of written work, and to compile bibliographies and databases. Encourage the attendance of university IT modules where appropriate.
- 3) Through independent reading and study required on the MA course, through the Skills and Methods core module which can be tailored to support individual students' specific needs, and particularly during the writing of the dissertation, supported through one-to-one supervision.
- 4) Through supervision, research and writing of the dissertation.

*Assessment*

See above.

**D. Transferable skills – able to:**

- 1) Develop post-graduate level study, research and writing skills.
- 2) Develop the ability to present information and analysis in written and oral form.
- 3) Be able to analyse and think critically about complex texts and issues.
- 4) Develop the ability to evaluate and discuss a variety of sources
- 5) Be able to communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons for it.
- 6) Be aware of methods and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding further, as part of an ability to learn independently

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- 1) Students read, analyse and discuss a wide variety of texts and documents for seminars and essays; undertake directed and independent research for essays and a dissertation; write essays and a dissertation.
- 2) Seminar group and supervision discussions, and written essays will develop student abilities to present information and analysis in a written and oral form.
- 3) Students read a wide variety of texts with close attention to language, discussed and questioned in seminar groups, supervisions and essays.
- 4) The Introduction to Texts in History and Literature encourages students to consider and reflect on a variety of texts and documents; more specialised options introduce further kinds of sources. Skills and Methods develops students' abilities to evaluate and engage with a range of sources. Students undertake oral and written discussion of these sources.
- 5) Seminar and supervision discussions help students become more adept at lucid oral communication; essays and the dissertation encourage a written clarity of thought and prose.
- 6) Students are introduced to the broad range of resources at Reading, including library collections, archives, digital research tools (including CD-ROMs, and the Internet). Throughout the course, students are encouraged to develop seminar and supervision discussions into their own research. Possibilities for further post-graduate study at PhD level are discussed, where relevant.

*Assessment*

All these transferable skills are assessed in the writing of the essays and the dissertation.

*Please note:* This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.