

BA History (Part-time) For students entering Part 1 in 2006

Awarding Institution: University of Reading
Teaching Institution: University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group: History
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Programme Director: Dr Jeremy Burchardt
Programme Adviser: Dr Jeremy Burchardt
Board of Studies: History
Accreditation: n/a

Programme length: 5 –7 years
Date of specification: July 2007

<http://www.rdg.ac.uk:80/AcaDepts/lh/History/history.htm>

Summary of programme aims

The single subject part-time degree in History, as its full-time equivalent, offers insights into the richness and variety of human experience. Throughout this process of discovery, students encounter a wide range of subjects and approaches, while having the opportunity to pursue their own enthusiasms and to benefit from the research expertise and activities of staff. We aim to familiarise students with a broad chronological range, whilst providing them with the opportunity of specialisation in particular periods and topics of British, European and American history. The programme also enables students to pursue their own interests through an independent study and a dissertation. Subject-based and transferable skills are developed in a programme which encourages a scholarly, committed and enthusiastic engagement with the study of the past.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology.

History is a discipline which lends itself to critical judgment and problem-solving, both through personal engagement with issues and through dialogue and group discussion. Also integral is the collection, collation and analysis of substantial quantities of material and its communication and presentation. History also prompts an awareness of numeracy through chronology, periodisation, and basic quantification. In addition, the development of powerful tools of research, analysis and presentation associated with information technology is reflected in several ways, such as in the location and retrieval of bibliographic and source material, the production and presentation of student work, and, where appropriate, the use of more sophisticated databases and exploitation of the internet.

Programme content

Part-time degree programmes, like full-time programmes, are made up of study elements called *modules*. The size of a module is measured in terms of credits; a credit entails a notional 10 hours of study. For a full-time programme, each year contains modules totalling 120 credits. Most modules are 20 credits in size but some are 10 credits and others are multiples of 20 credits (for example dissertations are often 40 credits in size). Modules are

offered at one of three levels. In ascending order these are: Certificate (C) level; Intermediate (I) level; Honours (H) level.

All part-time degree programmes entail study of modules totalling a minimum of 360 credits. Students must take the compulsory and optional modules required for their degree programme, the following minimum number of credits being required at the levels indicated:
Certificate level (C) 100 credits minimum
Intermediate level (I) 100 credits minimum
Honours level (H) 100 credits minimum

Part-time programmes are divided into two sections:

Part 1 involves studying at least 80 and no more than 120 credits at level C (120 credits are equivalent to one year of full-time study), then passing the Part 1 examination in order to proceed to the remainder of the degree.

Post Part 1, where students taking the remaining modules needed to complete their degree programme.

Students must take at C level those modules required for progression to one or more degree subjects but may take individual modules from any available programme to make up the necessary minimum total of 100 credits at C level.

Of 100 or more credits taken at I level, 5 are taken up with Career management Skills.

Students must complete at least 80 credits at Level I before they can proceed to study any H level module.

In this History programme, level C modules provide an introduction to the subject of history and its study, and establish a foundation for subsequent work at degree level. At Level I students must study one Period from early and modern history. At Level H there is more focused work in the Topics and Special Subject, and the Dissertation. There is thus inherent progression within the syllabus from introductory modules through broad-based methodological modules, to specialised, focused and independent work.

Part 1		Credits	Level
<i>Compulsory modules</i>			
HS1APH	Approaches to History	20	C
HS1LMH	Landmarks in History	20	C
<i>Optional module which may only be taken if the compulsory modules are also studied</i>			
HS1DSH	Directed Study in History	20	C

The remaining credits may be chosen from other modules available within the University at Level C.

Level I

Compulsory modules

HS2HTP	Historical Themes in Practice	10	I
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(Students may replace the Themes and Issues in History with a 20 credit module offered elsewhere in the University).

Optional modules

Periods

Students must take three Period modules with the co-requisite skill module (10 credit), totalling 90 credits. At least one of these must be from the Early Period and one from the Modern Period. A complete list of Period options is available from the BA Programme Coordinator, and a list of current options can be found in the BA Programme Handbook.

Of the 120 credits in Part 2, 5 credits are taken by Career Management Skills.

N.B. Not all Periods and Skill modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to such modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

Level H

Compulsory module

HS3HLD	Dissertation in History (Single Honours)	40	H
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Optional modules – Topics

Students must take two 20-credit Topic modules from the following list. Students may replace one Topic with a 20 credit module offered elsewhere in the University.

A complete list of Topic options is available from the BA Programme Coordinator, and a list of current options can be found in the BA Programme Handbook.

Optional modules – Special subjects

Students must take 40 credits in a Special subject. A and B papers are co-requisites in all cases.

A complete list of Special Subject options is available from the BA Programme Coordinator, and a list of current options can be found in the BA Programme Handbook.

N.B. Not all Topic and Special Subject modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to such optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director

Progression Requirements

The structure of part-time degrees is that students first of all take at C level the degree subject(s) they want to study. The subjects form Part 1 of the programme. Part 1 must contain at least 80 credits, so that if the modules for a student's chosen subject add up to less than 80 credits, an additional module or two will need to be taken to achieve that total.

There is a Part 1 examination in May or June which students have to pass in order to go on to their degree choice at I and H levels. To progress from Part 1 to Part 2 students must have passed modules totalling at least 80 credits at Certificate level and must also have passed

those modules required for progression to their chosen degree according to the progression requirements for that degree. To pass the part 1 examination a student must have a minimum average in at least 80 credits and not less than 30% in any individual module.

Students who do not qualify to progress from Part 1 at the first attempt may re-sit the required modules in a re-examination held in September.

Students must complete at least 80 credits at level I before they can proceed to any module at level H.

Re-examinations for C, I and H level modules are held annually in September.

Students who do not qualify for a degree will be entitled to the following qualification provided they have obtained the minimum number of credits indicated:

Certificate of Higher Education	100 credits at C and 20 credits at any level
Diploma of Higher Education	240 credits with at least 100 credits at I level or above

The *specific* progression requirements for this programme are as follows:

To progress from Part 1 to Part 2:

An average of 40% over the compulsory history modules at Part 1, HS1APH and HS1LMH]

The degree is designed in end-stopped stages relating to the qualifications of Certificate, Diploma, and Honours Degree according to the National Qualifications Framework. Each stage is discrete yet developmental. Part 1 provides a general introduction to the discipline and methodology of history, and to periodisation and causation. This foundation is reinforced and extended in Part 2 through students' engagement with three different Periods and by means of the work required for the Historiographical Essay and Independent Study. At Part 3, students' historical skills are refined to a high level of sophistication through the Dissertation and the Special Subject in particular, and their historical knowledge is extended through the Topics which also allow students to themes and issues in depth.

Summary of teaching and assessment

At Part 1 teaching is by large group lectures reinforced by seminars of c. 15 students, and for those taking the Directed Study, individual supervision is provided. At Parts 2 and 3 it is principally by seminars, of around 25 students in Periods, 15 in Topics, and 8 in Special Subjects. At all levels, independent research is expected and encouraged. It is most apparent and significant in the preparation of the Independent Study, Directed Historiographical Essay and the Dissertation, although individual supervisory support is also provided.

All parts are assessed by a mixture of coursework and timed examination. The Part 2 Independent Study, Skills in Periods modules and the Directed Historiographical Essay are based solely on coursework, while the Dissertation includes an element of oral presentation.

Assessment criteria for each of the Levels are given in the School Handbook. The Conventions for final degree classification are also included in the Handbook but you should note that the weighting between Part 2 and Part 3 for classification purposes is 33% and 67%.

Admission requirements

Applications from mature candidates and from those with non-standard qualifications are particularly welcomed. An applicant is more likely to receive an offer if he or she has undertaken recent study (e.g. Access course) but each case is assessed on its individual merits. We recommend that you contact us as soon as possible to discuss your individual circumstances.

Please address all enquiries to the Admissions Secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Berry (email e.l.berry@reading.ac.uk; tel. 0118 931 9148; fax 0118 931 6440.

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 one million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 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 both for those students combining history with a language, and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens, the School Staff-Student Committee and the Students' Union.

In the School of History, students are provided with handbooks which outline the programme, provide guidance on study skills, and contain information on staff, facilities and sources of specialised help within the University. Additional support is given through orientation sessions on module choices, the Independent Study and the Dissertation. Advice is also given by the Director of Teaching and Learning. There is full written feedback on essay work. Each module teacher gives personal guidance and feedback and sends termly reports on progress to Personal Tutors for discussion with students. Support for students in their studies is provided through the University's Personal Academic Record (PAR) scheme, in which students meet their personal tutors regularly to review their progress. There is also a School Library which provides quiet study space, a photocopier and networked computers..

Career prospects

History graduates are trained in clear thinking, research skills, diligence, independence, adaptability and the ability to understand people and situations in the world at large. As such, they are eagerly sought after by employers. In addition they are given specific vocational training and orientation through a Career Management Scheme run by the School in conjunction with the Careers Advisory Service. This is of particular value to those returning to study who wish to explore career possibilities, but special arrangements are made for mature students who have already followed a career and who are taking the programme for leisure. Past graduates have used their degree as a springboard for various areas of employment such as accountancy, banking and commerce, law, publishing, information science, museum work, teaching and social work. Many also enter the business world through management training schemes operated by national companies in retailing, marketing, sales, computing, while others go into the civil service and local government. Several graduates also go on to postgraduate study in History, both at MA and PhD level, at Reading and elsewhere.

Opportunities for study abroad

Students in the School of History have the opportunity to spend a period of study abroad (normally in Part 2) as part of the Socrates scheme, or in conjunction with the American Studies programme's exchange.

Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to provide a thorough degree-level education in History which develops the student's knowledge of events, structures, and historical agents or actors, a sophisticated and sensitive understanding of the complex interplay between cause and effect in the historical process, and a critical awareness of the variety of ways in which the past has been interpreted in historical writing. The part-time programme has the same aims and learning outcomes as the full time programme.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. the broad sweep of post-classical history and its principal divisions
2. a range of eras and cultures, within a degree structure flexible enough to allow breadth or specialisation
3. the contextualisation of forces, events, and individual experiences in the historical process
4. the nature and variety of historical sources as defined by period and culture
5. the nature of debate and dispute in historical writing

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Part 1 incorporates topics and texts from all eras. At Parts 2 and 3 single subject students must take one Period from each of the medieval, early modern and modern groups, but opportunities exist for geographical specialisation.

At Part 1 (daytime) formal lectures impart crucial information and perspective, which is reinforced and deepened by regular seminars. As the degree progresses, less use is made of the lecture form and students engage with historical problems and texts through the structured exploratory contexts of the seminar and the workshop. Class sizes become progressively smaller as greater emphasis is placed on student-centred learning. The importance of both primary and secondary texts is registered throughout the degree, and is established at the outset particularly in the Approaches module, being reinforced not only in the Directed Historiographical Essay but also in the Dissertation. Formative assessments are used for guidance

Assessment

Students' knowledge and understanding are tested through a combination of seen and unseen examinations, a variety of coursework assignments, including essays, projects and the Dissertation.

Understanding is also assessed in the viva voce examination associated with the Dissertation.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

1. accumulate and apply information and perspective in a structured manner
2. identify and appreciate the forces which generate historical change
3. analyse and solve historical problems, and formulate arguments based on evidence
4. develop a critical and nuanced appreciation of issues, and challenge received conclusions
5. negotiate both primary and secondary sources in history, and demonstrate how they inter-relate
6. develop creative intelligence in independent research and interpretation


Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Through specific focus on topics, issues and texts in seminars, workshops and personal study, students are enabled to develop critical modes of enquiry about the selection and treatment of material. Through essay, project, and dissertation preparation, the research and analytical skills are reinforced which are necessary to form and to validate arguments and judgments. The Directed Historiographical Essay focuses students on methodological issues in historical writing, while the Dissertation requires them to engage creatively and critically with primary sources and/or historical interpretative works. Formative assessments are used for guidance.

Assessment

Essay and project work tests all aspects of intellectual skills, while examinations assess the ability to marshal information and arguments under given time constraints, and according to a variety of conventions, involving open book, seen and unseen papers. The Independent study and Dissertation represent the evaluation of personal research and creative interpretation.

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. develop and carry out individual research programmes and strategies
 2. locate and synthesise large quantities of material
 3. prepare bibliographies and references according to the conventions of the discipline
 4. use IT to access sources and information relating to the subject
 5. engage in group discussion and debate on historical issues
 6. develop a critical self-awareness as a working historian
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Teaching/learning strategies

All of the practical skills are present in each Part, and are developed through essay and project work as well as through seminars and workshops. The Skills in Periods modules consist of various appropriate exercises aimed to promote, amongst other things, research, IT and referencing skills. Feedback on an individual basis combined with the University's personal tutor system encourages constructive self-criticism. Formative assessments are used for guidance.

Assessment

The Special Subject papers test the ability to cope with and interpret large quantities of material. Independent Research skills are assessed in Part 1 by essay work and the optional Directed Study (day-time) and, in Part 2 with the Independent Study and ultimately in the Part 3 Dissertation. The portfolio required for the Skills in Periods reveals the diverse range of practical skills acquired as appropriate to the module.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. present findings and arguments in a cogent and coherent manner, both orally and in writing
2. use IT for word-processing and information retrieval
3. use library resources to optimum effect
4. operate effectively in a group
5. show a competence in numeracy within the parameters of the subject
6. assess aptitudes in preparation for a career
7. work to deadlines

Teach/learning strategies and methods

Seminars develop oral skills and group work. Essay work develops writing skills, library research and the keeping of deadlines. The Careers module at Part 2 introduces students to vocational issues. A basic appreciation of numeracy is developed through an awareness of chronology, cataloguing systems and estimation, with certain modules taking this skill further as appropriate to their subject matter. Formative assessments are also used for guidance

Assessment

Written skills are examined at every stage both under timed conditions and in course work. Oral skills are examined in the viva voce associated with the Dissertation. The Independent Study requires students to demonstrate competence in at least two of the skills outlined in the University Strategy in addition to written presentation skills.

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 be expected 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 the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.