

**BA History**  
**For students entering Part 1 in 2008/9**

**UCAS code: V100**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	History
Faculty:	Arts and Humanities Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	18/Aug/2010
Programme Director:	Dr Emily West
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	History
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The single subject degree in History 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. It 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**

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills in line with the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to communication, interpersonal skills, learning skills, numeracy, self-management, use of IT and problem-solving and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

**Programme content**

Students must take 120 credits in each Part. In Part 2, students have a choice of Periods within the categories of medieval, early modern and modern history. At Part 3, students will have a choice of Topics and Specials. Part 1 introduces students to the discipline through study of historical causation, contextualisation and the utilisation of both primary and secondary sources in History. In Part 2 students are required to engage with a broad span of historical periods which develop both their range of knowledge and their analytical/critical skills, and to carry out independent work in historiography and applied historical skills. Part 3 involves the study in depth of Topics and a Special Subject which require that students apply their analytical skills in focussed areas and undertake independent research, especially in the Dissertation. Not all Optional modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.&lt;

**Part 1 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

HS1APH	Approaches to History	20	C
HS1LMH	Landmarks in History	20	C

Optional module which may only be taken if the compulsory modules are also studied

HS1DSH	Directed Study in HHistory	20	C
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**Part 2 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HS2HTP	Historical Themes in Practice	10	I
HS2TIH	Themes and Issues in History	20	I
HS2CMS	Career Management Skills	5	I

#### Optional modules

##### Periods

Students must take three Period modules (20 credits) 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 Co-ordinator, 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 up by Career Management Skills.

### **Part 3 (three terms)**

#### *Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
HS3HLD	Dissertation in History	40	H

#### Optional modules- Topics

Students must take two 20-credit Topic modules. A 20-credit module offered elsewhere in the University may replace one 20-credit module.

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

#### Optional modules - Special subjects

Students must take one Special subject, consisting of co-requisite A and B papers of 20-credits each (40-credits in total).

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

### **Progression requirements**

#### Prog rules

To progress from part one to part two, students must:

1. achieve an overall average of 40% over the 120 credits taken in Part 1, and
2. obtain at least 40% in each compulsory module, and
3. achieve a mark of at least 30% in modules representing a total of at least 100 credits.

To progress from part two to part three, students must:

1. achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
2. obtain at least 40% in each compulsory module and
3. achieve a mark of at least 30% in individual modules representing a total of at least 100 credits.

### **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 Themes and Issues Essay and the Long Dissertation, although individual supervisory support is also provided.

All parts are assessed by a mixture of coursework and timed examination. The Part 2 Skills in Periods modules, Themes and Issues and Historical Themes in Practice are based solely on coursework, while the Long Dissertation includes a substantial element of oral presentation.

Assessment criteria for each of the Levels are given in the School Handbook but it should be noted that Part 2 modules will count for 33% of the final assessment and Part 3 modules for 67% of the final assessment.

### **Admission requirements**

UCAS Tariff: 300 points from three A levels only. History at Grade B. Total points exclude Key Skills and General Studies.

International Baccalaureate: 32 points, with History at grade 6 or Advanced GNVQ: 18 units at Distinction overall; or Scottish and Irish Highers: 5 Bs or equivalent thereof.

Those with non-standard qualifications will be considered on an individual basis.

Admissions secretary: Mrs Elizabeth Berry, e.l.berry@reading.ac.uk, tel 0118 378 8148

### **Admissions Tutor:**

### **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 both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Directorate. The Student Services Directorate is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online ([www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk](http://www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk)), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student website ([www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)).

In the School, 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 Long 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. The PAR scheme also assists in helping students assess their development. 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 second year Career Management Scheme run by the School in conjunction with the Careers Advisory Service. 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 or for placements**

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.

### **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 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 Themes and Issues but also in the Long Dissertation.

#### *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 Long Dissertation. Understanding is also assessed in the oral presentation associated with the Long 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 Themes and Issues essay focuses students on methodological issues in historical writing, while the Long Dissertation requires them to engage creatively and critically with primary sources and/or historical interpretative works.

#### *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 Long Dissertation represents 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

### **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

Teaching and learning strategies and methods

The use of IT is encouraged throughout the degree especially in the Landmarks module at Part 1, and in the Skills in Periods. 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.

**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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**

### **Teaching/learning methods and 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.

#### *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 through the optional Directed Study, in Part 2 with Themes and Issues and ultimately in the Part 3 Long Dissertation. The portfolio required for the Skills in Periods reveals the diverse range of practical skills acquired as appropriate to the module.

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

#### *Assessment*

Written skills are examined at every stage both under timed conditions and in course work. Oral skills are examined in the presentation associated with the Long Dissertation. Historical Skills in Practice requires students to demonstrate competence in at least two of the skills outlined in the University Strategy in addition to written presentation skills.