



A level Modern History

Who is this course for?

This course is for anyone who has a keen interest in History and wants to understand some of the major events and developments which have dominated the 19th and 20th centuries. It will be of interest to anyone who likes to think for themselves, put forward their own views, and argue in favour of their own interpretation of events. It will also be of interest to anyone who wants to develop their skills of analysis and learn to think critically. History is a subject intended for those who like to become involved and learn through active participation. Lastly, for all these reasons, History complements a range of other subjects very well.

What are the entry criteria?

It is expected that students will have satisfied the standard entry requirements for the college for advanced level study – that is, a minimum of five GCSE passes at grade C or above, including History. Most students who are accepted onto the History course usually have B grades or higher in History and English.

Students who have not studied GCSE History in secondary school, but who have clearly demonstrated their ability in English by gaining an A or a B grade, and whose other GCSEs are mainly Bs or above, will be considered.

The History Department

The History Department consists of three highly experienced members of staff: Trevor Ryan (Head of Department), Peter Bonner and Emma Kelley.

All History students are issued with AS and A2 textbooks, together with a substantial body of additional learning materials (maps, printed notes, study guides, historical sources, essay plans, revision exercises, etc). All these additional learning materials, together with supplementary learning resources, are available for students to access on the college intranet. The Department also has a substantial library of History books for students to use. History staff provide additional support for those students who need further guidance regarding their written work, and more generally for students who wish to discuss issues arising from the topics which they have been studying.

What does the Course involve?

AS History

Britain and the World 1856 – 1914

This unit analyses the reasons for Britain's international role in the nineteenth century. It focuses on the various problems Britain encountered in trying to preserve peace in Europe, and its role in various international crises. It explores the deteriorating relationship with Germany, culminating in the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914. This unit also explores the reasons for the expansion of the British Empire, and the problems this expansion created, especially for Britain's relationships with other countries in Europe.

America and the Cold War in Asia 1945 – 1975

This unit explores the attempts by America to extend its global power after the Second World War. It looks at the motives behind American policy, and considers the broader climate of cold war rivalry and the nuclear arms race. The unit analyses the various attempts by America to contain the spread of communism in Asia, culminating in the outbreak of the Vietnam War. It considers the nature of the war, the various phases of the war, and the reasons for America's withdrawal. The unit considers social and political developments in the USA, as well as developments in Asia.

Assessment

The British unit is assessed by means of a written exam, and the questions require answers in essay form, testing candidates' ability to analyse issues and present their arguments at length.

The American unit is also assessed by means of a written exam, and candidates have to answer questions based on a set of short sources and their own knowledge. The questions test candidates' ability to evaluate sources in context, and use the evidence in the sources, together with their own knowledge, to analyse a particular issue.

Both exams are taken at the end of the academic year; and each exam is worth 50% of the total marks available.

A2 History

Russia: Autocracy and Dictatorship 1855 – 1964

This unit explores the nature of the Russian autocracy up to 1917: how it tried to modernise in order to preserve its power, and the methods it used to minimise opposition to the regime. We look at the impact of the Great War and the Russian Revolution on Russian development. We also assess the extent to which the methods of rule of communist dictators such as Stalin were similar to those of the Tsars.

Nazi Germany 1933 – 1945

This unit explores the nature of Hitler's dictatorship, the methods used to maintain the Nazis in power, Hitler's racial policies, and the extent to which Hitler was in full control of his regime. While the broad outline of events will be familiar, we will be looking in much greater depth, posing different questions, and using different methods of analysis.

Assessment

The Russian unit is assessed by means of a two hour exam. All questions are essay questions and do not involve sources.

The German unit is assessed by means of two pieces of coursework. In both cases the focus will be a key issue currently being debated by historians. A typical issue might be the extent to which Hitler relied on terror rather than consent to maintain his regime.

The Russian unit is worth 60% of the total marks for the A2 course, and the German unit is worth 40%. The Russian exam takes place at the end of the

academic year. One piece of coursework is completed in the first term, and the other in the second term.

Exam Board: OCR Consult www.ocr.org.uk/History for the full specification.

How is the course delivered?

Every History class is taught by two teachers, so that students benefit from different teaching styles and approaches. Each History class takes place in a dedicated History classroom, with the resources appropriate to the course immediately to hand. Teaching and learning combine presentations, discussions, and debates, with source analysis, group work, research exercises, and skills-based activities. We expect students to be actively involved and encourage independent learning and critical thinking.

Departmental Enrichment

Over the years the History Department has taken History students to various places of national historic importance, including the Houses of Parliament and the Imperial War Museum. It has also taken students to various History conferences in Manchester and London, as well as Hull University. We also run a Diplomacy group for those who like to develop their strategy and role-playing skills in the famous board-game.

Student success

With 100% pass rates for AS and A2, and over 40% of our students gaining A and B grades at A2, the History Department has helped many students excel in the subject.

Some A2 History students who left in June 2011, and where they are now:

Guy Richardson, studying **Modern Languages** at Edinburgh University (A* in History)

Sam Lowsley, studying **History** at Leeds Metropolitan University (D)

Tom Maughan, studying **Journalism** at Trinity College, Leeds University (B)

Ainsley Sykes, studying **Law** at Lincoln University (B)

Xanthe Roantree, studying **Law** at York University (B)

Jael Clancy, studying **Law with Criminology** at Hull University (B)

Megan Ollerhead, studying **English** at York University (A)

Ruth Ollershaw, studying **English and American Studies** at Hull University (C)

Violet Sutcliffe, studying **Art History and Archaeology** at Hull University (D)

Adam Boufkir, studying **Sports Coaching** at Hull University (B)

Andrew Tennant, studying **Politics and International Relations** at Hull University (B)

Ailis Weir, studying **Law** at Manchester Metropolitan University (B)

Eve Bayram, studying **Classical Civilisations** at Warwick University (A)

Natalie Alden, studying **Psychology** at Manchester University (A)

Hannah Robinson, studying **History** at Hull University (B)



What does this course lead to?

Knowledge of the past, and being able to make sense of the past, are essential for students who wish to go on to study various subjects at university, such as History, Politics, Philosophy, Sociology, Heritage Studies, Languages, Classics, American Studies, Economics, and English Literature (or American or European Literature, etc).

However, the subject provides more than just knowledge of the past: it provides training in analytical thinking, and develops a variety of transferable skills which are highly relevant to your future employment.

Industry and commerce want people who can think for themselves, absorb a lot of information, ask critical questions, and draw their own logical conclusions. They want people who can analyse problems, research information, interpret information, present reports which consider different options or points of view, communicate clearly, and use their powers of persuasion to argue in favour of a particular decision or policy. All these skills are acquired through the study of History.

Consequently, the study of History is ideal for students intending to pursue a career in, for example, journalism, broadcasting, the law, the police force, the civil service, local government, politics, marketing, and the heritage and leisure and tourism industries, and publishing. It is also highly appropriate for students intending to pursue business or managerial careers in manufacturing industry and commerce as a whole.

Details for careers for History graduates can be found at:

www.prospects.ac.uk/options_history_your_skills.htm. See also:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/jan/16/history-degree-careers>.

<http://www.alec.co.uk/free-career-assessment/careers-with-a-history-degree-or-history-major.htm>

Most universities also provide lists of the career destinations of their graduates, by degree subject.

Some well-known History graduates

Lord Sainsbury, president of the family supermarket business.

Professor Sir Roland Smith, former director of the Bank of England,

Anita Roddick, the Body Shop entrepreneur

Sir Roy Strong, former Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum

John Tusa, Managing Director at the Barbican Centre

Sarah Tyacke, Keeper at the Public Records Office.

Lord Coe, Chairman of the Olympic Committee

Michael Atherton, former England Cricket Captain

Melvin Bragg, novelist and broadcaster

Dermot Murnaghan, Jonathan Legard, Martin Tyler, John Inverdale: TV journalists

Alan Green, Simon Mayo: BBC radio presenters

Sacha Baron Cohen, Louis Theroux, Russell Brand, Jonathan Ross: TV personalities

Michael Palin, Al Murray, Richard Herring: comedians and broadcasters

David Cameron, Gordon Brown, Diane Abbott, Alan Milburn: Politicians
Simon Schama, Michael Wood, David Starkey: Historians

What can I do now that would help prepare me for this course?

Choose a prominent figure from the last 200 years who you find interesting (eg: Admiral Nelson, General Gordon, Otto von Bismarck, Lenin, Stalin, Roosevelt, Mao Tse Tung, Kennedy, etc) and research their achievements. Consider what it was that made them so powerful and influential, and whether their achievements were lasting. Rather than merely relying on Google or Wikipedia, go to the central library and find a biography of your chosen figure, and dip into the book to find out more about their personality, beliefs and attitudes. Consider their achievements in the context of the difficulties of the period. With more detailed knowledge of such an individual, it will provide you with a useful analytical perspective when we come to assess the achievements of various leaders who we will be studying.