BA History

Course Handbook

2019/20
Since its inception in 1961, the University of Sussex has consistently ranked among the best British universities for the study of arts and humanities.

In 2009 the University brought together four leading programmes - History, Art History, Philosophy and American Studies - into a new dedicated School of study. The subjects we teach focus on the ability to reason, to analyse, to take critical positions and to expound them. Your studies with us will be an intensive high-level training in how to think - whatever your area of study - fitting you with the skills for a wide range of careers.

The School of History, Art History and Philosophy (HAHP) combines high-quality teaching, cutting edge international research and a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

**Professor Liz James**  
**Head of School of History, Art History and Philosophy**
Welcome from the Joint Heads of the Department of History

Welcome to the History BA degree! This is your course handbook. It contains important information about how your degree course and related matters are organised, which you will need to know as you progress through your years of study here. Please read it carefully. We look forward to meeting you, and wish you an enjoyable and fruitful time at Sussex. You are now a member of a higher education academic community. There will be exciting challenges ahead, and we look forward to helping you master them.

Please take some time to work out how your School and Department works. Please take time to read the ‘Where Do I Go For Help?’ leaflet, so you find answers to any questions you may have about Sussex Direct, Canvas, and similar matters relating to access to your on-line course materials. All of your seminar tutors have drop-in feedback times (‘office hours’) twice a week, so you should make sure you make the most of the time that they place at your disposal. Your lecturers and tutors are friendly, approachable, and knowledgeable people: they want you to feel at home at Sussex, help you to succeed as a student, and help you to grow as a person.

We are always happy to meet with you during our office hours or by appointment, and we very much look forward to getting to know you.

Professor Lucy Robinson, Arts A A36, Head of the History Department (Research), email: L.Robinson@sussex.ac.uk

Dr Chris Warne, Arts A A117, Head of the History Department (Teaching), email: C.M.Warne@sussex.ac.uk
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Key HAHP School and History Department Contacts

The History Department sits within the wider unit of the School of History, Art History and Philosophy (HAHP). Administration of your degree and modules is organised by the School. The School, and its component Departments including History, are all situated in Arts A on campus (here’s a [campus map]).

**HAHP School Office**

Arts A7

**History Departmental Co-ordinator** (your first point of contact for any administrative issues or difficulties that arise, such as changing modules, change of contact details, etc.)

Arts A7, history@sussex.ac.uk

**Head of History (teaching)**

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**Head of History (research)**

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**Head of School of HAHP**

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**School Director of Teaching and Learning**

Kathleen Stock, Arts A114, K.M.Stock@sussex.ac.uk

**School Administrator**

Deborah Jackson-Smith, Arts A115, D.K.Jackson-Smith@sussex.ac.uk

In addition, you can find out the contact details of your lecturers, seminar tutors by checking Sussex Direct (see p.10).

**How We Contact You**

We will use your university email address to contact you (not a private one). Please check it regularly for important course and module information.
Careers and Employability

It’s never too early to start thinking about your future career after you leave Sussex. The Careers and Employability Centre is based in the Library. See the Careers and Employability Centre’s website for more details of workshops, cv advice, internship opportunities, employer drop ins, job fairs, individual appointments, and lots more.

BA History Course Aims

The aims of the History course are to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the human past.
- Foster awareness and understanding of historical processes which have a direct or indirect bearing on the present.
- Encourage respect for historical context and evidence.
- Reflect critically on differing interpretations of the medium and distant past.
- Impart particular skills and qualities of mind relevant to the discipline of history.
- Satisfy key criteria of historical knowledge and method, including an awareness of span and change over time across geographical range.
• Engage with primary as well as secondary sources.
• Reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of the historical discipline.
• Foster an appreciation of the diversity of historical specialisms (including social, economic, cultural, political, intellectual, gender, oral, and environmental history).
• Satisfy progression requirements by conducting i) survey history, ii) particular historical topics or short periods, iii) comparative and thematic history, iv) historiography, v) documentary-based special subjects.

BA History Course Learning Outcomes

The History course learning outcomes are as follows (“course learning outcomes’ are the skills, abilities and characteristics we expect you to acquire over the length of your History degree course). We expect you to:

• Have developed the historian's skills and qualities of mind.
• Have developed an awareness of continuity and change over an extended time span (Time Depth).
• Have understood historical process over an extended period.
• Have a broad and comparative understanding of the history of more than one society, culture or state (Geographical Range).
• Have undertaken close work on primary source material and carry out intensive critical work on such source material (Contemporary Sources).
• Reflect critically on the nature of the discipline, its social rationale, its theoretical underpinnings and its intellectual standing (Critical Awareness).
• Critically engage with a variety of approaches to history and critically engage with the concepts and methodologies of other disciplines where appropriate (Diversity of Specialisms).
• Formulate, execute, and complete an extended piece of writing under appropriate supervision (Extended Writing).
• Have acquired a range of core and personal attributes, cognitive, research, practical, and transferable skills (HAHP Core Transferable Skills).

Course Structure

In YEAR ONE, you will be taught by practicing historians in lectures, seminars and digital skills workshops – helping you to become a critical historian. You will study world history from 1500 to 1900 and important areas of continuity and change. In workshops, you develop digital history skills and learn how digital media is transforming our world. You will also explore how historians use evidence, and take part in group projects where you evaluate historical perspectives to understand the modern world. You will take four ‘core’ modules: Historical Controversy; The Early Modern World; The History of Now; The Making of the Modern World. In addition you will have the opportunity to take two ‘elective’ modules from other subject areas, either to complement your historical studies, or to provide an illuminating contrast with them.
In **YEAR TWO**, in lectures and group presentations, you will focus on using ideas to explore the ways historians have approached the past. You will study global history and discover how global connections shape the histories of human rights, democracy and migration. You will also choose a specialism by region, such as modern Britain, Europe or China. To develop your research skills, you will carry out a project to tackle historical debates on topics including Thatcher’s Britain or the coming of the American Civil War.

In addition to two further core modules, *Ideas of History* and *Global History 1500-2000*, you can choose from a range of ‘History Short Period’ options (Autumn term) and ‘Time and Place’ options (Spring term). The following is the list of modules running in 2018-19 for current second year students, though these may be subject to change in light of any faculty changes. Alternatively, you may again choose to take one or two elective modules from other subject areas.

**Autumn**
- History Short Period: America in the 20th Century
- History Short Period: Britain in the 20th Century
- History Short Period: Europe in the 20th Century
- History Short Period: South Asia Since 1880
- History Short Period: The Middle East and North Africa since 1908
- History Short Period: Austria in the 20th Century (with Vienna field trip)

**Spring**
- Time and Place: 1453: The Renaissance
- Time and Place: 1851: Science, Empire and Exhibitionism
- Time and Place: 1861: The Coming of the American Civil War
- Time and Place: 1938: Kristallnacht
- Time and Place: 1942: Holocaust
- Time and Place: 1948: The Arab-Israeli Conflict
- Time and Place: 1956: Battle of Algiers
- Time and Place: 1968: Rivers of Blood
- Time and Place: 1980: The Iran Hostage Crisis
- Time and Place: 2015: Fortress Europe

In **FINAL YEAR**, you will choose your Special Subject you will choose your Special Subject, which is delivered two parts: Part A in the Autumn Semester, and Part B in the Spring Semester. You will work with an expert in your chosen area, handling primary sources and relevant materials. You will also work on your Dissertation (an original archive-based project on a topic you choose) with a supervisor who is normally your Special Subject tutor. In your other optional modules, you will study how Past and Present perspectives interact in areas of controversy and debate (choosing one for the Autumn Semester) and develop your comparative historical understanding through the use of Thematic history (choosing one for the Spring Semester).

In addition to your Dissertation, the following is a representative sample of options, though subject to possible change in the light of any faculty changes or availability:
Special Subjects (all Parts A & B)

- Special Subject: Britain and the Second World War
- Special Subject: Domesticity and its Discontents: Women in Post-War Britain
- Special Subject: End of Empire: Nationalism, Decolonisation and the British Raj in India 1937-1950
- Special Subject: Gone with the Wind? The Civil War in American Memory
- Special Subject: Modernism
- Special Subject: Palestine in Transition, 1900-1948: Everyday Life in Times of Change
- Special Subject: Post-Rave Britain 1988-present
- Special Subject: Global Darwinisms
- Special Subject: The Civil Rights Movement
- Special Subject: Witches and Witchcraft
- Special Subject: Demagogues and Dictators

Past and Present (Autumn Semester)

- Past and Present: Revolution and History
- Past and Present: Resistance and History
- Past and Present: Objects and History

Thematic (Spring Semester)

- History Thematic Course: Fascisms
- History Thematic Course: Emotions
- History Thematic Course: The Enlightenment
- History Thematic Course: Awakenings

Choosing Your Options

You will choose your options for the next academic year around the end of the Autumn Semester of the current academic year. You will be sent an email by your departmental coordinator at the relevant time. In addition, your Head of Department or their nominee will hold an ‘Options Fair’ around that time: a publicised general meeting for your year group, to discuss the various modules available to you, and to help you make an informed choice. If you want further information, please drop in to see the tutor of the module you are interested in during their office hours (see below).

‘Sussex Choice’: Pathways and Electives

In addition to your main degree subject, those of you on Single Honours degrees will be expected to take modules or sets of modules from other subject areas in your First and Second Years (Elective Modules). You can also string these Elective Modules into a ‘pathway’.

Electives are single modules which allow single honours students to study a subject outside of their main discipline within and beyond their home School. These modules may be at
Level 3, 4 or 5 of the Academic Framework and will always have a credit rating of 15 credit points per module. Electives are different from Option modules; the latter are selected by students on both single and joint honours awards from a group of modules linked to a specific degree course. Options are normally delivered within a single School.

A Pathway is an approved, academically-coherent combination of modules, which students study across the first two years (60 credits) of their degree. The rationale for Pathways is to enable students to study a second subject outside of their main discipline in a structured manner.

More information on pathways and electives is available on the Sussex Choice web pages.

**Student Feedback and Drop-in Hours**

Every member of teaching faculty holds “student feedback and drop-In hours” (sometimes also known as “office hours”) each week during term time, which will be advertised on their office doors and on Sussex Direct. These hours are for, among other things: following up material discussed in lectures or seminars; raising questions you still have; trying out new ideas; or discussing any feedback you have received on written work or presentations. They are a form of contact hours available to you throughout your degree, should you wish to make use of them. You are strongly encouraged to ‘drop-in’ during these hours or else make an appointment via email. (If a tutor is away without notice during a published office hour, please let the History Co-ordinator know - see p.5).

**Teaching and Learning on the History Degree**

Modules on the History Degree are typically taught on the basis of a 50-minute lecture and smaller group seminars later in the week. Seminars tend to be an hour or 2 hours long. The dissertation module is supervised on the basis of fortnightly seminars that run for 2 hours. The weekly seminars are complemented and enriched with fortnightly 2-hour seminars taking up various aspects of research methodology, access to archival sources, and other matters relating specifically to the challenges posed by detailed historical research.

In addition to attending lectures and seminars, you are expected to do independent reading and note-taking and any other tasks the lecturer has set you for the week. Whilst your core reading will normally be provided on-line, you will be expected, especially in years 2 and 3 of the degree, to consult books and articles in the Sussex library.

In addition to attending lectures and seminars, you are expected to do independent reading and note-taking and any other tasks the lecturer has set you for the week.

Much of your course material is found on Canvas, the University’s online learning platform, which you will need to check every week. You should be automatically subscribed to the Canvas sites for your modules but if not, please contact the History Co-ordinator in the School Office (see p.5).
Any additional reading material not on Canvas can be found via the University Library. In addition to their physical copies of books, they have an extensive electronic library which is accessible remotely. Please contact your tutor if some recommended book or other reading is not there so they can order it for you.

All of your class times and locations, and the contact details of your tutors, are to be found in your timetable on Sussex Direct. Sussex Direct is the University’s online tool for administrating your degree. Please contact the History Co-ordinator in the School Office (see p.5) if anything is missing or in error.

**Helpful Learning Resources for the History Part of Your Degree**

- Skills and Methods for History Students - Canvas Site
- History Department Referencing Guide
- History - How to Write an Essay
- How to Write a History Reflexive Essay
- How to Give A History Presentation
- History - Answering Primary Source Analysis Questions
- Library Subject Guide: History
- For final year students
- History Dissertation Handbook

**Student Mentors in HAHP**

Mentors are HAHP PhD students who are available to help you with a range of study skills, such as time management and effective planning, help with presentations, planning and structuring written assessments, revision skills and exam preparation, contributing effectively to seminars, and making the best use of feedback. Mentors run lunchtime drop-in sessions every day of the week; see posters around the school for details.

**Brushing up Your General Academic Skills**

The Careers and Employability Centre runs a range of workshops on specific skills such as: academic writing, planning and structuring essays; referencing; managing stress; revision; and more. See here for a range of online and in-person resources.
English Language Skills

The Sussex Centre for Language Studies offers resources designed to help students improve their academic English and their understanding of British academic culture.

They offer free workshops, 'time to write' sessions and one-to-one tutorials throughout the academic year for students for whom English is not their first language. These are available to international/overseas students studying for a degree at the University of Sussex.

Contact the team on elas@sussex.ac.uk or see the SCLS website for more details.

Assessment

Whilst at Sussex you will sit a range of mid-term and end-of-term assessments and get marks for them. In First Year, these marks will contribute to an overall mark which determines whether you can progress to Second Year. In Second and Final Year, your marks will be combined to compose your eventual degree classification. Degree classifications are as follows: First (70-100), 2.1 or ‘Upper Second’ (60-69), 2.2 or ‘Lower Second’ (50-59), Third (40-49), Fail (39 or below). Your Second Year marks will be weighted at 40%, and your Final Year marks will be weighted at 60% of your overall degree mark.

Assessments may take the form of essays, primary source analysis, presentations, exams, dissertations, take away papers or in-class tests, for instance.

The Examination and Assessment Regulations govern the way in which all taught students – undergraduate and postgraduate – are examined and assessed at the University of Sussex. For full details, you can consult the Examination and Assessment Handbook. Alternatively see the Frequently Asked Questions.

‘Assessment criteria’ broadly describe the characteristics typically associated with various marks and classifications.

For History Assessment Criteria, follow the links below:

History Assessment Criteria Essays Dissertations
History Assessment Criteria Primary Source Analysis
History Assessment Criteria Presentations

Feedback on your work

Written feedback will normally be provided to all students on all assessments within three weeks of the assessment deadline. If it is necessary to return comments after this time, every effort will be made to notify students in advance, but please remember that sometimes there are unexpected delays for reasons beyond our control (e.g. staff illnesses).
We aim to make our feedback clear and helpful, giving you constructive information about how to improve which you can take forward to other assessments in the rest or your degree. If anything is unclear about a piece of feedback, or you don’t feel it has been as helpful as it might be, we strongly encourage you to discuss it further with your tutor during an office hour (see p.10). If you have a complaint about a piece of feedback, please contact the School Director of Teaching and Learning (see p.5), about it and they will try to resolve the matter

In addition to written feedback, you will get informal feedback during seminars, as you discuss, explore and clarify new ideas with your tutor and fellow students.

Electronic Submission

Students will usually be asked to submit assessments electronically where assessments are text-based, for example, an Essay or Take-Away paper. Your Sussex Direct webpages and Canvas site for your module will give all assessment details. Feedback for all e-submission assessments is also provided electronically.

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for further information.

Turnitin

All electronic submissions are filtered through internet-based text-matching service, Turnitin. This may help you identify problems with your referencing.

Turnitin is also used during the marking process as a means of checking the originality of submitted work. All assessments submitted electronically via e-submission will be uploaded to the Turnitin database and an Originality Report will be made available to the marker. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for further information.

Late Submission

Should you miss an assessment submission deadline (for whatever reason) you may still submit the assessment after the published deadline. However, this will incur a penalty, as follows:

- Work submitted up to 24 hours late shall incur a penalty deduction of 5 percentage points (not 5% of the actual mark).
- Work submitted after 24 hours and up to 7 days late shall incur a penalty deduction of 10 percentage points (not 10% of the actual mark).
- No work shall be accepted after the 7-day penalty period has elapsed.
Exceptional Circumstances

If you believe that your ability to perform at your best on any assessment has been affected by circumstances beyond your control, then you should consider submitting an Exceptional Circumstances claim. If accepted, this will be taken into account when your marks are finalised at the Exam Board stage. For further details on why and how to make a claim, see the Student Life website.

The Student Life Centre

The Student Life Centre offers information and advice to all Sussex Students. Our aim is to help you to gain the best university experience you can, whatever your circumstances, by ensuring if you run into problems you get appropriate guidance and support.

The Student Life Centre is based in the heart of the campus: on the ground floor at the side of Bramber House. There are lots of ways to access our service. We are open from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm every week day, you can drop in to see us, call 01273 876767, email studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk or make an appointment – just go onto your Sussex Direct site, click on your ‘Study’ tab and then on Student Life Centre. You can select the advisor you wish to see at a time that suits you.

Amongst the many issues we can help you with are:

- Personal concerns affecting study progress or well-being.
- Funding and finance including scholarships, bursaries and hardship funds.
- Sources of help to improve academic performance – identifying obstacles to learning.
- Understanding university systems and regulations in relation to assessment, services, complaints, conduct, and discipline.
- Progression, intermission and withdrawal processes - discussion and support.
- Referrals to other professional services on campus.
- Exceptional circumstances claims help.
- If you don’t know who to talk to or who to ask – start at the Student Life Centre.

Because we are also a proactive service you may be contacted directly by the SLC while you are a student here as we may wish to offer you particular support. This may be, for example, in response to concern from your School about your attendance, participation or engagement with your course.

Good Academic Practice

The University takes academic misconduct very seriously, as do both your departments. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, collusion, and personation (getting someone else to write work for you). It is your responsibility to find out what constitutes plagiarism,
collusion, and personation, and to avoid them. If in doubt, please ask your tutors or academic advisor. Here are some useful links:

**Sussex Student Union information on academic misconduct**

**Sussex Skills Hub material on Plagiarism**

**Sussex Skills Hub Referencing and Plagiarism quiz**

**History Department Referencing Guide**

**English Literature Student Handbook**

**University regulations on Academic Misconduct**

**English language resources and support**

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**Your Feedback to Us**

We like to hear from you how we are doing and how we might improve things. There are several ways you can get in touch:

- Informal feedback half way through the module, normally taken in class by your module tutor (if this doesn’t happen, please ask your tutor, or failing that, alert the HAHP School Director of Teaching and Learning).

- Electronic Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) after the module is over (you will be sent an email with a link).

- A chat with your tutor, or your academic advisor, passing on any concerns you have.

- A chat with your Student Rep: [Information about the Student Rep system, and to find your Rep.](#)

- If you have a major concern that you cannot resolve with your tutor, please contact either the HAHP Director of Student Experience or the HAHP Director of Teaching and Learning.

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**What to Do If You Decide to Change Course**

We recognise that sometimes students can feel after some reflection that a course is not for them, and wish to change to some other more suitable course. If this describes your situation, please discuss the matter with the HAHP Director of Student Experience, Hester Barron (Arts A151, [H.Barron@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:H.Barron@sussex.ac.uk)), and/or see the HAHP Curriculum and Assessment Officer, who will guide you through the process of applying to make a change.

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**Placements and Study Abroad**

[Details on opportunities to do an optional professional placement in your third year](#)
Information about Study Abroad opportunities whilst at Sussex

The University Student Handbook
For other more general material, please also see the University Student Handbook.