QUESTION EVERYTHING

HISTORY
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES 2018/19

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
TAKE NOTHING AT FACE VALUE

The best historians are unafraid of asking questions. They’re fearless, and won’t settle for the straightforward if there’s evidence to the contrary. They’re driven to uncover the truth. If you’re prepared to take your investigations further at Warwick, you’ll uncover those truths too.

We’ll help you deepen your understanding of the past and encourage you to think critically about the world around you. Whether you’re working with classmates in seminars and workshops, or getting involved with the History Society, at every turn you’ll find like-minded people who share your fascination with the past and its significance in the present.

The department is home to outstanding students and historians. Academic members of staff are recruited from across the globe. We’re ranked among the top 50 History departments in the world* and ranked in the top 10 for all major UK league tables for the subject**

We pride ourselves on our supportive and friendly environment and our excellent teaching. Our 94% satisfaction score for Teaching in the National Student Survey 2016 reflects the value we place on your student experience. You’ll be taught by some of the leading international scholars with expertise spanning the British Isles, continental Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin and North America. Our teaching covers the period from the Renaissance through to the present day. All our students can take optional modules that span this chronological range.

If you wish to focus on the Renaissance and Early Modern period, we have a pathway through the single honours degree that leads to you spending a term in the final year at Warwick’s teaching facility in Venice, at our 15th century Palazzo Pesaro-Papafava. Each year, we attract excellent students like you to Warwick. We will help you develop the skills needed to conduct research, including in the archives, engage critically with your sources, and support you in developing critical thinking skills.

*QS World University Rankings by Subject 2017

“Students who are happiest at Warwick, and those who do best, are students who are unafraid to ask innovative questions, who are unafraid to follow their noses and get beyond the page.”

Dr Sarah Hodges

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Cover image credit: Museum of London, UK / Bridgeman Images

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The way you learn is about to take a major leap forward.

On your degree you’ll be exposed to topics that are far removed from any A level syllabus, alongside the well-established themes in political, religious, cultural or social history. It’ll be demanding, and intellectually challenging, but you’ll enjoy where this approach will take you.

You’ll be taught in a variety of ways, through a combination of lectures, seminars, and tutorials alongside assigned reading. Our tutors also use film, visits to archives, libraries and museums, and other types of field trips to bring modules to life. This is best exemplified by our tutors in Venice, who use the city, its geography, and its art and architecture in their teaching.

Our modules are divided into two types: core modules required for all students and optional modules. For core modules in first year there are usually two lectures and an hour-long seminar per week, and for optional modules one lecture per week plus weekly or fortnightly seminars. During your third year study is heavily weighted towards seminar teaching and includes an individually supervised 9,000-word dissertation. We consider feedback on written work to be an essential part of our teaching. Throughout the year you will have the opportunity to attend feedback tutorials following the submission of your essays.

“I took a module this year called ‘Slavery, Memory and Memorialisation’ looking at the impacts of slavery and how we’ve remembered the trade since. We visited the Museum for London Docklands and then the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. The displays focusing on legacies were of particular interest to me. It always amazes me how powerful history is in shaping identity and culture. The ability of events and experiences to shape a people, even hundreds of years later, is something to marvel at. History, and particularly traumatic history, can span generations and influence contemporary culture in ways we might never perceive - yet it is there. My course has taught me to engage academically with difficult subjects like this but not at the expense of empathy.”

Matt Woodrow,
History student blogger

CHALLENGE YOUR THINKING
RESEARCH-LED TEACHING

History at Warwick has a formidable reputation: for research, insight, and passion for the subject, we’re held in high, international regard. Much of this is due to our acclaimed academics – we’re outstanding historians in our fields, and we’ll be the ones you’ll learn alongside.

Our academic research is not just written for academic audiences. Instead, we think it’s important to engage with the wider world: policymakers, theatre companies, journalists and members of local communities. We hope you’ll feel impassioned to engage non-historians in debates about the past and its significance to the world around us. We are deeply committed to our teaching, which is shaped by the research we do. Your dissertation in the final year, in particular, gives you a great opportunity to work closely with experts to develop your own piece of original historical research.

‘I teach courses on the political history of modern Africa, the Cold War in Africa, and the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. I am best known for my publications on colonial Kenya, and especially my involvement as an expert-witness in the High Court trial of 2012, in which the British government admitted to tortures of Kenyan suspects in the 1950s. I am also an authority on current terrorism in Africa, and have published several important papers on Al-Shabaab and its activities in eastern Africa. My current research examines the history of empire and violence over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.’

Professor David Anderson

‘I am a historian of medicine, health and the body. Happily, this is a pretty expansive remit, one that allows me to study almost anything that I find interesting: politics, lifestyles, social conventions, technologies, industries... you name it. Currently I am exploring the cultural history of Britain’s National Health Service. We can find traces of the NHS everywhere in British culture, from ‘Carry on’ films to public health campaigns to current reality TV, but most previous histories of the NHS focus on its politics, rather than the way it has physically and socially shaped British lives for the past 70 years.’

Professor Roberta Bivins

‘I am interested in the political culture of Britain and its colonies, from the sixteenth century Reformation to nineteenth century reform. I am currently researching and writing a book about corruption over that period and working closely with Transparency International, the leading global anti-corruption body. I mainly teach seventeenth and eighteenth century British history, including the second year option ‘Politics, Literature and Ideas in Stuart England’ and the final year option ‘The Birth of Modern Society? Britain 1660-1720.’

Professor Mark Knights

OUR STAFF

MEMBERS OF ACADEMIC STAFF

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History helps us understand more about the world we live in. We encourage you to explore more of that world too on a Year Abroad, by developing an internationalist approach to the study of the subject.

This is reflected in the modules we teach and the breadth of topics we cover. Our areas of expertise span the globe, from the British Isles, continental Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin and North America. The places where you can study and the numbers of places do change each year: currently we have partner universities in Europe, Australia and the Americas.

“McGill is certainly a fantastic university to attend for a year abroad. The module choices are broad and range from that of Native American History, to that of Canadian Politics. The lectures engage you constantly, question your thinking and advise you to find weakness in even the strongest of arguments. What have I learnt here? Well, aside from learning about some fascinating and obscure topics in Canadian and American History, I have learnt how to deal with -25 degree cold, how to dog sled, how to ice hockey and how to eat a 48-ounce steak in under 25 minutes!”

“With over 800 members, Warwick’s History Society (HistSoc) is one of the largest and best-known societies on campus renowned for its socials, ball, incredibly popular sports teams and tours. Socials are a big part of our identity with termly HistSoc nights out on and off campus, pub quizzes at the Dirty Duck and meals out in Leamington. The society runs both a domestic and foreign tour each year with previous destinations including Prague, Budapest, Berlin and Bristol. We look to support our members academically through essay workshops, module fairs, guest speakers and the newly developed mentor scheme. This year alone we have hosted a variety of talks including our extremely successful “Brexit: Historians Speak” and smaller more specific talks held by the developing Medieval and History of Art divisions of the Society.”

Ellie Webb, third year student

“Venice has a charm that refuses to wane, and I loved every minute of living in and exploring the city. I particularly loved doing my shopping at the Rialto market, meeting up with friends at Campo Santa Margherita (the only place that stays open past midnight), and studying in the beautiful Querini Stampalia library. Italy is really well connected by train and so it was easy to do some last minute booking, submit our essays and escape for a week of adventure.”

Charlie White, third year student

FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY-MAKERS

We’re passionate about pushing your understanding of the subject further, as you make connections between people and places.

If you choose to study our Renaissance and Modern History stream you will have the opportunity to spend a full term in your third year at our 15th century Palazzo Pesaro-Papafava in Venice. This is special because you’ll be taught on a Warwick site by Warwick staff. Located near the Grand Canal, we share the Palazzo Pesaro-Papafava in the autumn term with History of Art students. We make full use of the facilities on site, from the teaching rooms to the Palazzo’s own library.

Our students in Italy take a module which explores the history of the city during the Renaissance. We explore Venice, in all its principal aspects, cultural, economic, political, religious, and social. This gives you a unique opportunity to study the history of this great Mediterranean city while living in it. Venice is very well-suited for this purpose, as its overall appearance and structure have changed very little in the last four hundred years. Guided tours of the city are a key part of the module, giving you the chance to take in major monuments and sites of interest. During the term you’ll also have ten days to spend travelling across Italy.

In order to prepare for the Venice Term we ask that our students study Italian for the two years at Warwick. By developing a knowledge of the language, you’ll be well equipped to study Venetian history in depth. All of our students rent flats during their time in Venice, and our Venetian administrator helps to arrange the accommodation. The cost of living is comparable to nearby Leamington Spa, where many of our students live. The University guarantees accommodation on campus for third-year students on their return, which means that you don’t have to worry about renting a flat in England during the autumn term.

“McGill is certainly a fantastic university to attend for a year abroad. The module choices are broad and range from that of Native American History, to that of Canadian Politics. The lectures engage you constantly, question your thinking and advise you to find weakness in even the strongest of arguments. What have I learnt here? Well, aside from learning about some fascinating and obscure topics in Canadian and American History, I have learnt how to deal with -25 degree cold, how to dog sled, how to ice hockey and how to eat a 48-ounce steak in under 25 minutes!”

Charlie White, third year student

WARWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Ellie Webb, third year student

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It’s important that the skills and experiences you gain from your degree prepare you for life – including the career path you take.

As a University we’re ranked the most targeted University nationally by the UK’s Top 100 Graduate Employers.* Every year we invite nearly 300 leading employers to campus, which gives you the chance to meet employers at careers fairs, employer presentations or sector specific events.

Our students graduate with a range of transferable skills. These typically include the following:

• Excellent written and communication skills
• Ability to assimilate and analyse large amounts of data
• Intellectual rigour and independence in presenting findings
• Ability to construct arguments and communicate findings
• Competent research skills
• Capability to work independently and as part of a team
• Proficiency to deliver work to agreed deadlines
• Capacity to solve problems, think creatively and approach challenges with an open mind
• Knowledge and understanding of different factors that impact on individuals and groups in society.

Recent graduate destinations include: Account Executive, Analyst, Author, Broadcast Assistant, Business Analyst, Civil Servant, Community Organiser, Corporate Account Executive, Data Analyst, Digital Marketing Executive, Events Executive, HR Project Coordinator, NGO Programme Coordinator, Production Assistant, Research Assistant, Tax Graduate Trainee, Teacher, Writer/Editor.


Our Careers and Skills department also offer a wide range of workshops, from developing confidence and interview techniques to learning how to articulate what you have to offer in order to impress potential employers. Online resources are also available, including a CV and covering letter example library, practice aptitude and psychometric tests, online interview training and resources to help you research job vacancies.

You will also be able to book an appointment with a careers advisor for History at any point during your degree, whether you have no idea what you want to do, or if you have a clear direction in mind and need specific advice and guidance.

95% of full-time first degree graduates in BA History courses (all variants) were available for employment and had secured employment or further study.**

*The Graduate Market in 2017 published by High Fliers Research Ltd.
**DLHE survey of 2014/15 Warwick graduates, carried out approximately six months after completion.

In the first week at Warwick we will ask you to choose either the Renaissance or Modern stream.

On the Modern stream, the first year is built around our two core modules. The first provides an introduction to the history of the modern world through themes like the Enlightenment, the rise of democracy, industrialisation, imperialism and political cultural revolution. The second explores how historians practise history through the research process, from primary sources to the presentation, dissemination, manipulation and consumption of historical interpretation. Alongside these core modules, if you are on the Modern stream you can select optional modules within History or from another department. You may prefer to learn a modern language instead - that option is open to you too.

If you choose to take the Renaissance and Modern stream, you will also take the same two core modules as those on the Modern stream. You will also study a module in Italian, which will help prepare you for your time in Venice in the final year, and ‘The Medieval World’ module, an option designed to introduce you to key themes relating to the later Renaissance period.

In the second year, students on the Modern stream take our core module, ‘The European World’, one early modern optional module and two other options, either from History or from an outside department. The Venice students continue to learn Italian alongside ‘The European World’ module and another early modern core module. You can also choose one further option (or options) from a list of modern or early modern modules.

In the final year, whether in Venice or Warwick, you will complete our ‘Historiography’ core module and take two options, again covering the whole chronological and geographical range of our teaching. For students studying in Venice, this will take place in the first term of the final year. You will be given a choice of bespoke options when you return to Warwick for the spring term. All single honours students research and write a dissertation in the final year.
A Global History of Food

Eating is a deeply human activity. Language itself probably developed out of our desire to cook and share food. Yet the way we eat now may be destroying important aspects of human society and the environment itself. How did we get into this mess?

This second-year option module explores the long history of the production, marketing and consumption of food, from ancient times to the present, from vegetarianism to the first battery chicken. It provides a framework for thinking about the place of food and eating within historical analysis.

Studying food requires looking at new types of historical source, such as cookbooks, or landscapes, and using approaches drawn from other disciplines. We consider food from multiple overlapping perspectives - culture, ethics, labour, environment, hunger, science... to help contextualise our current attitudes to food, and to introduce important historical concepts (from ‘moral economies’ to ‘biopolitics’) relevant to all areas of historical analysis.

Being Human: Human Nature from the Renaissance to Freud

At different moments in time, ‘being human’ has been constructed and interpreted differently according to dominant values, norms, and systems of knowledge.

This module considers the different ways in which humans have thought about themselves from the Renaissance to the early 20th century, both as individuals and as collectives. It forwards the idea that ‘human nature’ is not a universal, trans-historical concept constant over time, but rather, is socio-culturally constructed. Our students investigate those differences over time in Western culture and how they link to wider social, cultural and economic contexts. We learn about the crucial moments in the history of conceptualising and defining ‘human nature’, from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment, to Freud and early modernity.

Ultimately we ask how a new age of humanity and new ways of knowing one-self came into being, and discuss what these new ways of understanding the self closed-off or overlaid.

Underlying the module is the question of the extent to which we are still within the Enlightenment project, or not.
Reform, Revolt and Reaction in the US

We explore the turbulent history of the United States from the New Deal through to Watergate. We consider how different movements, some rooted in local activism, others based on established political groupings, responded to a rapidly changing social, economic and cultural landscape. We also consider how liberal reformers, radicals, and conservatives all seized the initiative at different times, but, due in large part to a shared tendency to substitute rhetoric for clear analysis, all eventually failed, leaving the US by the mid-1970s in a state of ‘imagined’, and in some senses real, crisis.

Key themes include: the New Deal and the Great Depression; the impact of the Second World War on racial and gender relations; post-war anticommunism and the contradictions of the ‘Affluent Society’; the liberal agendas of the civil rights movement and the Kennedy and Johnson administrations; the military, social and political consequences of Vietnam; the radical vision of the New Left and counterculture; the re-emergence of a grass-roots political right; the ‘rebirth’ of feminism; 1968 and the ‘end’ of the 1960s; and Nixon, Watergate and the 1970s.

Kenya’s Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-60

We examine a wide variety of sources related to the origins, conduct and memorialisation of Kenya’s Mau Mau rebellion of 1952-60. The module has a particular focus on understanding the motives and actions of those Kikuyu who joined the rebellion, and those who opposed it. The sources we draw upon include: key documents from Kenya’s colonial history before 1952, the memoirs of those who participated in the rebellion, official records from both Kenya and the UK - including documents released since 2012 as a result of the court case brought by Mau Mau veterans against the British government - and fictional accounts of the war in Britain and Kenya (including films). We discuss sources produced by all sides of the conflict, examining the many political and cultural uses to which this deeply contested history has been put, including the use of historical evidence in the court case that brought an acknowledgement from the British government that Mau Mau suspects had been tortured.

Religion and Religious Change in England

We explore the social, cultural and political context of religion in England between the late-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. Our students are introduced to a range of important themes in the field of late medieval and early modern English religious history, much from a theological, as from a social and cultural perspective.

We consider the impact of the early Reformation (under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I) on religious belief and practice in England, though it approaches this from the long view of the later fifteenth century. This module begins with a detailed examination of strengths and weaknesses in late medieval Catholicism, focusing both on institutions (clergy, monasteries) and on structures of belief (saints, sacraments, purgatory).

The significance of unorthodox religion, Lollardy and early Protestantism, is explored and related to the reform policies of the Tudor monarchy. We devote equal attention to those who opposed and to those who supported the religious changes of the sixteenth century, and throughout there is a particular focus on parishes, and parish churches, as centres of religious culture and social organisation.

Credit: Private Collection / Bridgeman Images
JOINT DEGREES

Our joint degrees are taught in conjunction with partner departments across the university. You will be a member of two departments and be able to access the teaching and support of both throughout your time at Warwick.

BA English and History (VQ32)

This course considers history and literature as vitally intertwined disciplines. You will examine how the recording of history involves modes of representation that are themselves literary, and also about how literary texts imagine historical events and ideas - and are themselves shaped by a given social and political moment. The subjects of history and literary studies share many common concerns. Both ask questions about how human experience is written and recorded - in the past and present - and both probe the relationship between what is real and what is represented. You will address these issues from a variety of angles and through a wide range of option modules that span time and geography: from the medieval to the contemporary, and from Britain to America and the Caribbean. You will become adept at reading in different ways: on the one hand assessing large quantities of information taken from historical sources (including texts, images, and film), and on the other hand carefully unpacking the details and techniques of just a few lines of a poem, play, or novel. First and foremost, we will encourage you to develop your own ideas and arguments, to critically analyse what others say and write - and to reflect upon how the disciplines of history and literature might best speak to one another, today and in the future.

BA History and Philosophy (V1V5)

What sort of knowledge is historical knowledge? How much of what we understand and feel about the world around us is the direct result of the particular history of western culture? Has western philosophy, whether as practiced by the Ancient Greeks, the Renaissance, or the Enlightenment profoundly shaped the way in which western society has developed? Or should we understand philosophical ideas as merely reflecting the world in which they are developed, rather than playing a leading role in changing it?

History and Philosophy is designed for students who understand the importance of thinking critically about how we know and experience the world, but who also recognise the importance of linking precision in thought and analysis to a grounded understanding of different historical periods. It is aimed at students who are interested in ideas for their own sake, but recognise that they are developed in particular contexts, for particular purposes, and reflect the conditions under which they are produced.

BA History and Politics (VL12)

This course examines the political and social dimensions of history, and how historical events have influenced the world we live in today. You will explore the theory and the reality of why people and states interact in the ways that they do. The two subjects complement each other – one aiming to understand how the world works and the other to understand why it works that way.

The two departments in which you will learn approach shared research areas such as globalisation, democracy and human rights from different perspectives. In addition to core modules, you can choose from a variety of optional modules in both departments. You will learn to assess and analyse large quantities of information taken from historical sources including texts, images and film, and to present well structured conclusions. You will also develop the abilities to gather and analyse quantitative material (e.g. from opinion surveys and questionnaires), and to structure and communicate complex information and analyses.

BA History and Sociology (VL13)

This course will suit individuals with an interest in understanding the history of people, culture and societies, and their evolution in the modern era. It examines traditional Sociology topics, such as gender, race, medicine, food, sexuality, trade and health from a historical perspective.

The two complementary subjects both involve understanding people - their interests, motivations and culture - and why societies and social groups act as they do. You will be taught by staff from both departments, and will draw information from sources including film, visual images, literature and television as well as written texts. The flexible course structure allows you to choose modules from a wide range of options in both History and Sociology. You will learn to assess and analyse large quantities of information and present well-structured conclusions, to gather and analyse quantitative material (e.g. from opinion surveys and questionnaires), and to structure and communicate complex information and analyses.
Our History and languages degrees

Our four-year joint degrees with departments in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures will allow you to study the language and cultures of German, Italian and French speaking countries alongside your modules in History.

All the language departments combine language with the study of history and gain historical knowledge of the modern world since the mid-eighteenth century. In your second year you can choose a choice of GSD modules. You can take ‘Bodies, Ageing and Health’, which will introduce you to the key debates surrounding health and the representation of bodies in contemporary culture, and ‘Food Security’, which will examine the relationship between food and sustainability using theories and methods from the sciences, social sciences and humanities. If you wish, in place of one of these modules you can choose a module from a range of options available across the University which has a focus on sustainability. In your History modules, you will be able to pick from the wide range of optional modules open to all in the department.

Alternatively, you can spend the first term at Warwick studying either ‘Bodies, Ageing and Health’ or ‘Food Security’, optional History modules, and an optional module from another Warwick department. Then, for the remainder of the year, you may choose to travel to one of the University’s partners abroad to study. There you will continue studying Global Sustainable Development and History by taking relevant courses offered by the partner institution.

In the third year, you examine the sustainability issues surrounding Work and Energy and complete your exploration of sustainability in relation to History. You will bring together your knowledge, ideas and conclusions in a dissertation focusing on an issue or question that is of particular concern or interest to you from a Global Sustainable Development point of view.