University of Birmingham

BA Ancient and Medieval History

To understand fully the modern world – its culture, language, political systems and people – you need to take a long perspective. This programme goes back to the roots of modern civilisation in Ancient Egypt, Greece Rome and the Middle Ages.

The emphasis of the programme is on social history: how people in the past lived, worked, traded and enjoyed their leisure but offers the opportunity to study many different forms of history. The chronological sweep of the degree is wide, from around 3000 BC to 1500 AD. Geographically you get to study Europe, the Mediterranean and Asian civilisations. Studying such a diverse range of societies and cultures enables you to analyse and reflect on the complex relationship between the Ancient and Medieval worlds.

Student satisfaction scores for Ancient and Medieval History at Birmingham are very high with 93% of students reporting that they are satisfied with the quality of the course. Our BA Ancient and Medieval History graduates benefit from a high average rate of employability with 95% going into work or study within six months of graduation.

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

UCAS code: V116

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 21

Applications in 2014: 144

Typical Offer: ABB (**More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details (?OpenSection=EntryRequirements)**)

Start date: September

Contact

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*NSS 2014

Department of History (/schools/historycultures/departments/history/index.aspx)

STUDENT SATISFACTION*

Details

The Ancient and Medieval History degree is taught in the School of History and Cultures which means that you can draw on a vast range of expertise in Ancient History and Archaeology, Medieval History, Classics and Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies.

We are very conscious that a true appreciation of the ancient and medieval worlds requires as broad an approach as possible. You get some module choices in your first year – you'll have to make at least one choice as soon as you get here – and more and more choices in the second and third years. At the beginning you will study broad time periods and issues but you do get to focus on particular topics of your choosing all the way through. If you are interested in History in its broadest sense then this is the programme for you. There is also the possibility of studying a year abroadp

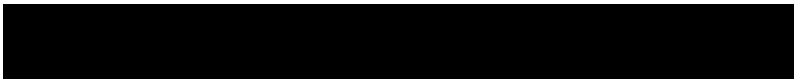
- Download the **programme brochure (/Documents/college-artslaw/history/v116.pdf)** for BA Ancient and Medieval History to find out more information about the course structure

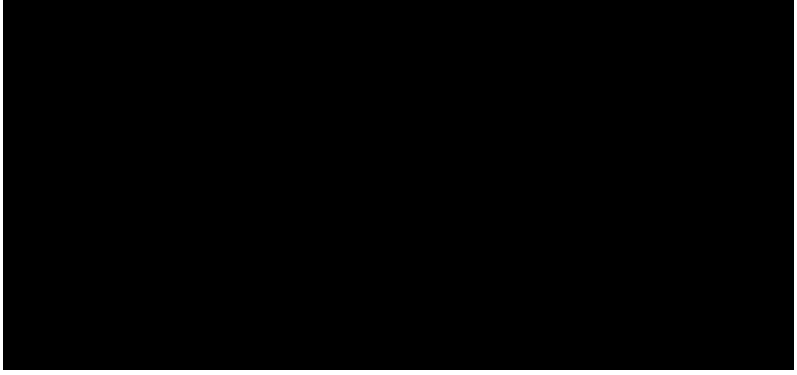
Why study this course

- Our distinctive emphasis on using literature, history and archaeology in the study of the ancient world, and the range of expertise available, ensures a wide choice of times, countries and cultures may be studied.
- Ancient and Medieval History at Birmingham is based in the Department of History, which has an outstanding international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. The Department of History was ranked first in the country in the Research Excellence Framework 2014. Its teaching was also ranked as excellent in the last official RAE survey.
- We have excellent library facilities with the Main Library is situated next to the History department and we have the Hilton and Styles libraries in the Arts Building. The University Special Collections houses some 60,000 rare and early printed books and upwards of 2 million manuscript and archive items.

A day in the life of a History student

Hannah Witton takes you on a tour of a typical day in the life of a History student at the University of Birmingham.





Ancient and Medieval History open day talk

Modules

First year

The first year represents a foundation year in which core skills and knowledge for historical enquiry. While those two things can never be separated, the emphasis is on skills in the modules Practising History A: Skills in History and Practising History B: Approaches to History (10+10 credits) and the Ancient History Project A (Autumn) and B (Spring) (10 + 10 credits). Each of these four modules centres on a different topic, two per semester, and helps develop your skills for university-level history. Broader survey modules help you to familiarise yourself with ancient and medieval history. Discovering the Middle Ages and Living in the Middle Ages (20 + 20 credits) explore fundamental themes and issues focused on the key periods concerned and indicate the kinds of questions historians explore and some of the methods they employ in answering them. Introduction to Greek and Roman History (20 credits) alongside another Classic and an Ancient History introductory survey module of your choice (for instance Early Civilisations: Egypt and Ancient Western Asia or Byzantium/Barbarians and the Transformation of the Roman World, also 20 credits), do the same on the ancient side of your degree. As you would expect the first year serves as a springboard for your studies in second year.

- **Detailed descriptions of first year modules (/undergraduate/courses/history/history.aspx)**

Second year

In the second year the emphasis on small group teaching and independent learning increases. Two core modules help to develop you as a historian of the ancient and medieval worlds. Ancient and Medieval History in Theory and Practice (20 credits) addresses questions to do with the nature of history and historical knowledge, particularly as they relate to the ancient and medieval worlds. Research Methods (Dissertation Preparation) gives you first-hand experience of the work of a historian as you learn to identify and frame a valid, intellectually coherent research question which, in year 3, will form your dissertation project (which can be on an ancient or medieval topic). You also take two medieval history options, one in the autumn term, one in the spring term (Medieval Option A, Medieval Option B , 20 credits each). You then choose two 20-credit modules from the wide range on offer for year 2 students within Classics and Ancient History.

- **Detailed descriptions of second year modules (/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#second)**

Third year

In the final year, your degree is split into three parts: your dissertation (40 credits), medieval modules (40 credits) and ancient modules (40 credits). Your 12,000 word Dissertation is your individual research project, using primary sources to answer a historical question which you have developed since year 2 and which is supervised by an appropriate specialist. The remainder of your degree is made up of modules you choose. On the medieval side you get the choice of either two Advanced options (one in the autumn term, one in the spring term, both 20 credits) or a medieval history Special Subject (40 credits). On the ancient side, as second year, you choose two final year 20-credit modules from the wide range on offer in Classics and Ancient History.

- **Detailed descriptions of final year modules (/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#final)**

Year Abroad

This four year route offers you the additional educational benefit of a year of study in an approved University in Europe or in English speaking countries. Students with grades of 2.1 or above in their first year will be asked to apply for the Year Abroad in the first term of their second year and if successful, will go abroad in their third year. In addition to the tutor support given from the host University, students who choose to take a Year Abroad will be allocated a member of staff from the Department of History who will monitor their progress while overseas through regular contact.

Fees and funding

Standard fees (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard) apply
Learn more about **fees and funding (/undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx)**

Scholarships
Learn more about our **scholarships and awards (/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx)**

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: ABB

Required subjects and grades: A language other than English at GCSE grade C is desirable but not essential

General Studies: not accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 34 points

Access programmes: 60 credits overall to include 45 credits at level 3, of which 30 must be at Distinction and 15 at Merit. All remaining credits must be at level 2 and include 12 in Maths and 12 in English.

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements)**

International students:

We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. We accept a range of qualifications, our **country pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx)** show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the **foundation academy web pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx)** .

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at **www.ucas.com (http://www.ucas.com/)**

Learn more about **applying (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)**

Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the **Unistats website (http://unistats.direct.gov.uk)** you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. At Birmingham we advocate an enquiry based learning approach, from the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

Support

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we will enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our **Academic Skills Centre** also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

The **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** will provide you with individual support from an academic writing advisor and postgraduate subject-specialist writing tutors. You will receive guidance on writing essays and dissertations at University-level which can be quite different from your previous experiences of writing. Support is given in a variety of ways, such as small-group workshops, online activities, feedback through email and tutorials.

Student experience

Supporting you throughout your transition to University, offering research opportunities and study skills support and helping you develop and prepare for your post-University careers - our **Arts and Law Student Experience Team (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/index.aspx)** strive to help you get the most out of your academic experience.

Central to Learning and Teaching in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham is **critical enquiry, debate and self-motivation**, summed up by the term Enquiry Based Learning.

What does this mean for you?

Enquiry-based learning describes an environment in which learning is driven by the shared enquiry of students and tutors. Depending upon the level and the discipline, it can encompass problem-based learning, evidence-based learning, small scale investigations, field work, projects and research.
Enquiry-based learning places you at the centre of your own learning process so that you learn through involvement and ownership and not simply by being a passive recipient of information thrown at you. You will spend time developing comprehension and note-taking skills. History is a subtle and complex subject and the literature you need to master can be demanding and complex. To 'get' it, you need plenty of thinking time. Reading, thinking and analysing for yourself are the most important parts of your degree experience. This approach will enable you to take control of your own learning as you progress through your degree. Moreover, it will encourage you to acquire essential skills that are highly valued by employers: creativity, independence, team-working, goal-setting and problem-solving.
The overall approach we adopt is one of more heavily weighted contact hours in Year 1, but tapering off over years 2 and 3, as you begin to acquire greater confidence in discussion and writing. We are strongly committed to small-group seminar teaching, particularly in the final two years of your degree: you will find that most of your teaching happens not in large, anonymous lectures but in smaller groups of students where you can actively participate in discussion and have the benefit of personal contact with academic staff. In your final year, you will also have individual tuition to help you work on your dissertation. As you progress through the syllabus, you are offered an increasingly wide range of particular subject choices.

Year 1 is highly directed – much of it lies in helping you to acquire a general overview of the medieval, early modern and near contemporary past. The 'Practising History' module introduces you to the key skills needed to study History at degree level and enables you to study select historical episodes. All this will help you make more informed decisions about subject choices in Years 2 and 3. These topics are increasingly specialised and enable you to get to grips with them in real depth. During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

In **Year 2**, in each term, you have a choice of around 15 Options to study. You will start doing preparatory work for your final-year dissertation, selecting a topic, assessing its feasibility and engaging in preliminary discussions with potential supervisors. The module History in Theory and Practice provides an overview of the evolution of history writing and an introduction to key issues confronting historians today: you will find this helps you reflect on your own historical research. A notable feature of Year 2 is Group Research: about a dozen specialised historical topics for you to research, not, however, as individuals, but on a collective basis. You are divided into groups of 5-6 students, to work as a team, and to produce both individual essays and a group presentation on what you have researched. The capacity to work as part of a team, to know what it is like to have to accommodate yourself to the way others work, is a valuable asset for future employment.

In **Year 3**, there are some 20 Special Subjects for you to choose from, ranging from the early medieval period almost up to the present day, and covering a wide range of British, European and non-European areas. You approach the particular subject not only through reading but also by intensive study of original documents. In addition, there are around a further 14 Final Year Options to choose from in each of the autumn and spring terms. The real centre-piece of the Final Year, however, for most students is their dissertation – a piece of extended writing on a subject of your choice and which requires significant use of archival and other primary source materials. You will have done extensive preparatory work for this in Year 2. In Year 3, you will have a calibrated set of one-to-one consultation sessions with an academic supervisor, who will comment and advise on your drafts. This will be real academic writing and the results are often impressive.

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a new style of learning, and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

You will be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations and formal exams (depending on your chosen degree).

During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you will be given information on how and when you will be assessed for that particular programme of study. You will receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You will be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

Employability

As a History student you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are attractive to employers, including self management and the abilities to research and analyse complex information, work independently and as part of a team, and communicate judgments and arguments articulately.

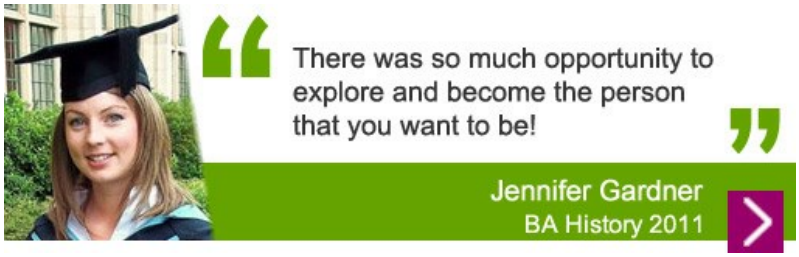
Over 50% of job vacancies advertised for new and recent graduates do not specify a degree subject, and our graduates have gone on to careers in accountancy, charity work, housing, human resources, international development, law, marketing, media, publishing, politics, retail management and teaching. Central and local government and the public services also attract History graduates, notably the civil service, NHS management, the police and armed services. About 23% of our graduates pursue postgraduate study to specialise in an area of history and cultures of interest to them, or to prepare for careers such as law and teaching.

Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our

Careers Network can help you achieve your goal. This is a unique careers guidance service tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team who can give you expert advice.

Last year around 200 employers visited the University, enabling students to meet them and to learn about skills through employer-led workshops. Throughout the academic year we also hold a number of alumni events, careers talks and other initiatives that are designed to answer our students' careers questions and help them forge useful contacts outside the university.

History alumni profiles



(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/history/undergraduate/alumni.aspx)

Extra-curricular activities

To enhance your career prospects even further, you will need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities while you're at university to broaden your skills and your network of contacts. This can include the many societies at the Guild of Students and also the many voluntary opportunities offered with local arts organisations. Our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx)** (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Our College of Arts and Law **undergraduate research scholarship scheme (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/studentexperience/urs/index.aspx)** enables interested students to work on a current academic research project being run by one of the College's academic researchers. Undergraduate research scholars gain work experience over the summer after their first or second year and have the chance to develop skills in both collaborative and independent research.

Cultural Internships

Our innovative **Cultural Internships (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/volunteering/regionally.aspx)** offer graduates the opportunity for a six month paid internship at a leading cultural institution in the West Midlands. These internships are a unique opportunity to learn fundamental, transferable business and interpersonal skills, through experience of real work in an established cultural institution. Our current partners include Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham REP, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust and the Library of Birmingham. We have plans to expand the scheme to include our own major cultural assets, such as Winterbourne House, the Lapworth Museum, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This scheme will give you professional experience to set you apart in a competitive graduate market.

We also offer voluntary work which complements your studies by helping you gain practical experiences in occupational settings while contributing back to society. This can bring new skills that will be useful throughout your future and can make a positive impact on your learning whilst at university. Volunteering enables you to develop skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline all of which can be transferred into your studies.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

96% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History
Full time

To see more details and compare with other courses
Visit UNISTATS
Official data collected by HEFCE

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