



Trotsky famously described war as 'the locomotive of history'. It has raised up kings and thrown down empires, spread ideas and religions around the world and has made and destroyed faith. It has made heroes of some, villains of others and fools of many. Can we understand our world without understanding the violent forces which created it? War Studies helps us do that, not only in the realm of power politics, but also in the culture which surrounds us from day to day.

[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)
 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

Course fact file

UCAS code: L252

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 25

Applications in 2014: 151

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

Contact:

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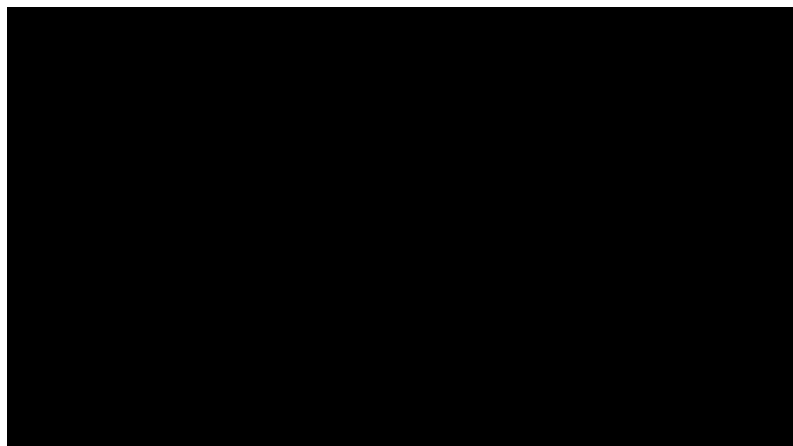
Email: historycultures-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk (<mailto:historycultures-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk>)



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



Details



[Video transcript \(/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/history/war-studies.aspx\)](/accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/history/war-studies.aspx)

What is war? Why study it? Why are wars so common? What are they for? What, if anything, do they achieve? How have combatants (and non-combatants) experienced war and how has this changed over time? How does war affect society and how does society affect war? How important are technology, leadership and tactics to the outcome of wars? If these questions are of interest to you, then a BA in War Studies at Birmingham could be the right choice for your degree.

Firmly rooted in military history, but also drawing on a wide range of other disciplines, the BA in War Studies at Birmingham is based in the School of History and Cultures, which has an outstanding international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. There is also the possibility of studying a year abroad.

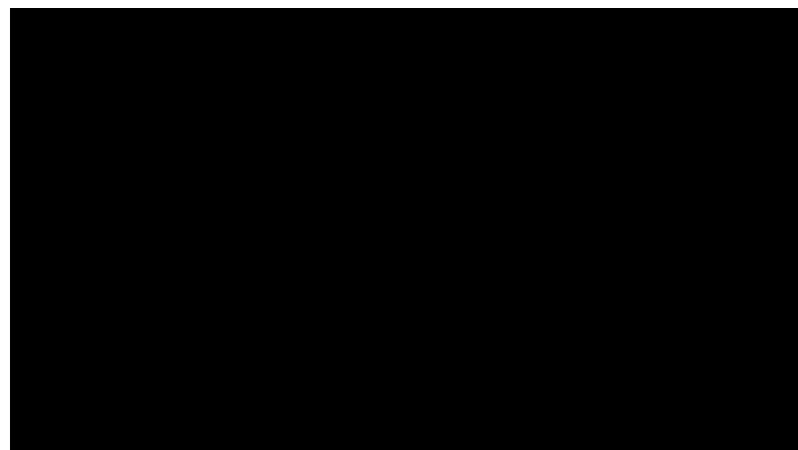
- Download the [programme brochure \(/Documents/college-artslaw/history/l252.pdf\)](#) for BA War Studies for more information about the course structure

Why study this course

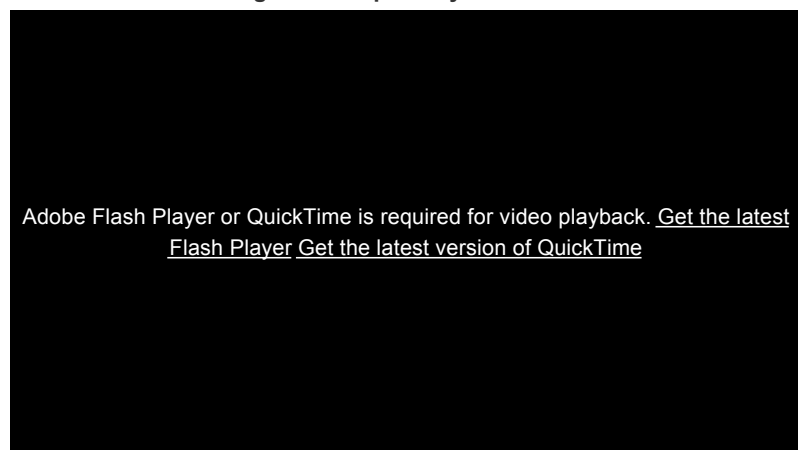
- Birmingham is home to the Centre of War Studies, the Centre for Studies in Security and Diplomacy and the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine
- Drawing on a wide range of disciplines, War Studies at Birmingham is based in the School of History and Cultures, which has an outstanding international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. Its teaching was ranked as excellent in the last official RAE survey and it also has the high official research ranking of 5.
- The University Special Collections houses some 60,000 rare and early printed books and upwards of 2 million manuscript and archive items.
- The Styles Room in the Department of History has an excellent selection of books and resources available to War Studies students.
- The War Studies Society (WarSoc) organises events and activities for social and education purposes <http://warsoc.wordpress.com> (<http://warsoc.wordpress.com/about/>)

A day in the life of a History student

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



BA War Studies Undergraduate Open Day talk 2014



Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

Modules

First year

This represents a foundation year in which core skills and knowledge are acquired and developed. Our interdisciplinary module War, Armed Forces and Society (40 credits) addresses general questions relating to the nature of warfare and considers how war has evolved from ancient times to the present. In addition, War Studies students choose two 20 credit survey modules from either Discovering the Middle Ages and Living in the Middle Ages; or The Making of the Modern World 1500-1815 and The Making of the Contemporary World 1815-2000). Focused on key periods, these are contextual modules that examine fundamental themes and issues and indicate the kinds of questions historians explore in answering them. The aim of Practising History (A): Skills in History (10 credits Autumn semester) and the Practising History (B): Approaches to History (10 credits Spring) is to give War Studies students a firm grounding in the principles, skills and methodologies needed to approach their subject from a historical perspective.

The remaining 20 credits Themes and Areas 1 (the Module Outside Main Discipline) enables War Studies students to choose from an extensive range of modules on offer within the wider University that serve to extend their conceptual training and enhance their knowledge of their discipline. For example, a War Studies student may choose to study philosophy, a social science or a language, or to engage more closely with archaeology or international relations.

- [Detailed descriptions of first year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx\)](#)

Second year

In the second and intermediate year, War Studies students are encouraged to consider and address a diverse set of questions aimed at extending their knowledge and exciting their interest prior to a greater degree of specialisation in their third year. The Rise of Modern War (20 credits), taught in the autumn term, traces the evolution of war in a global context from the early seventeenth century to the late 1800s. In the spring term, Introduction to Strategy and Operational Art (20 credits) studies the work of leading theorists of western war since the Renaissance and examines the intermediate field of military knowledge situated between strategy and tactics. War Studies students also choose a War Studies option for the autumn (Option A) and the spring (Option B) terms (20 credits each). A wide range of options is available.

Group research (20 credits) reinforces research skills being developed elsewhere in the second year and provides a further opportunity for students to engage directly with primary source material; this module also provides students with the invaluable experience of working collaboratively on a common research project.

Lastly, Research Methods (Dissertation Preparation) (20 credits) gives War Studies students first-hand experience of individual research as they learn to identify and frame a valid and intellectually coherent research question for their final year dissertation.

- [Detailed descriptions of second year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#second\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#second)

Third year

In the final and advanced year of their undergraduate studies, War Studies students study **Writing the History of Warfare** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx>) (20 credits) which addresses some key figures and newer methodological approaches in the historiography of warfare. The War Studies **Advanced Option** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx>) (20 credits), which is studied in the spring term, is chosen from a list of options that in 2013-14 included 'The United States and World War II' and 'Military Revolutions and the Conduct of War, c.1300-1650'.

War Studies students also choose a War Studies **Special Subject** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#specialsubject>) (40 credits) from a number of available modules, which in 2013-14 ranged from 'The Sharpe End: The British Army and the Defeat of Napoleon' to 'The British Army and the Western Front 1914-1918'. The Special Subject provides an opportunity to focus more narrowly on a specific area of study and to develop an in-depth understanding of issues and debates in the secondary literature; this module also requires students to engage with primary sources at an advanced level.

War Studies students must also complete an independent piece of research, their War Studies **Dissertation** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#historydissertation>) (40 credits); this allows students to showcase the skills gained throughout their undergraduate studies and to deepen their knowledge of a closely defined War Studies subject of their own choice.

- [Detailed descriptions of final year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#final\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/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](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx))

Scholarships

Learn more about our **scholarships and awards** ([/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx))

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: ABB

Required subjects and grades: An A level in History or Ancient History or Medieval History

General Studies: not accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 34 points to include History at Higher Level

Access programmes: 60 credits overall to include 45 credits at level 3, of which 30 must be at Distinction, of which 12 must be in History plus 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) (<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) (<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.

Related news and events

[Birmingham teams up with BBC to offer online WW1 course](/research/activity/warstudies/news/2014/bbc-mooc.aspx) (</research/activity/warstudies/news/2014/bbc-mooc.aspx>)

[World War 1: Aviation Comes of Age MOOC](/schools/historycultures/departments/history/news/2013/mooc.aspx) (</schools/historycultures/departments/history/news/2013/mooc.aspx>)

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) (<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.

Related research

- [Centre for War Studies \(/research/activity/warstudies/index.aspx\)](#)

Employability

War Studies graduates have a range of general skills that are highly prized by graduate employers: they can research and analyse complex information, work independently and as part of a team and communicate judgments and arguments articulately. University of Birmingham students are enquiry based learners, able to take control of their own learning as they progress, to learn through involvement and ownership and to reflect on their learning through feedback. This means that by the end of the degree, they have developed self management skills which are very attractive to employers.

War Studies graduates often go on to pursue highly successful careers in professions such as 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. Postgraduate study is also a popular option for War Studies graduates with many specialising in an area of history of interest to them, or to prepare for careers such as law and teaching.

The average annual starting salary for our BA War Studies graduates is an impressive £21,000, with 78% of those in employment being in professional or managerial level roles within six months of graduation.

War Studies graduates have started careers with a wide range of employers from Government departments and local councils to charities and companies in many business sectors. Notable employers which have recruited history graduates include the BBC, the House of Commons, KPMG, Oxfam, and Nestlé.

The School of History and Cultures works together with the University's [Careers Network](#) (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/undergraduate/history/www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers>) to provide a comprehensive service to our students from answering initial questions to in-depth career guidance. Last year around 200 employers visited the university, enabling students to meet them and to learn about skills through employer-led workshops. Outside the business world, our students can also hear from employers working in media, film, communications, publishing and museums and heritage. Throughout the academic year we hold a number of alumni events, careers talks and other initiatives that are designed for our students to answer their careers questions and help them forge useful contacts outside the university.

Extra-curricular activities

We encourage our students to apply their skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer; the work experience bursary scheme enables students to apply for funding for those career areas where placements are often unpaid. To enhance your career prospects even further, you'll need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities while you're at university to broaden your skills and your network of contacts. Our employer-endorsed award-winning Personal Skills Award (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 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 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 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.

83% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things



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