University of Birmingham

BA History and History of Art

History and History of Art are two complementary subjects that can be studied alongside each other at degree level. If you want to understand the past to prepare for your future in a changing world, studying History is the way forward. Studying History of Art is not just about appreciating the 'great works', although a passion for art in all its forms is certainly a huge part of it. It is also about understanding past and present cultures, and the process of human creativity itself.

The Department of History has been ranked first in the country in the Research Excellence Framework 2014. As a research-led University, this means you will be taught by world-renowned academic staff with excellence in teaching and research. You will study works of art at first hand; you will have access to original works and an extensive library and collection of resources in our on-campus gallery - the **Barber Institute of Fine Arts (http://barber.org.uk/)**. Here you will find works by such major artists as Bottecelli, Picasso, Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Monet, Degas, Gwen John, Gauguin, Vigée LeBrun and Rodin.

Course fact file

UCAS code: VV13

Duration: 3 Years

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

School of History and Cultures (/schools/historycultures/index.aspx)

Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies (/schools/lcahm/departments/historyofart/index.aspx)

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

Details

We are one of the largest History departments in the country with 30+ full time academic staff operating on an international level.

Whatever your interests - whether cultural, social, military, political, economic or religious history - there is someone in the department teaching your kind of history. Moreover, historians in other departments in the University expand the range of courses on offer, notably in the fields of Byzantine and African history. You will be taught by academic staff who organise and contribute to conferences and exhibitions in Britain and abroad at venues such as the Royal Academy, the Huntington Library in California, the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Study trips (https://thegolovine.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/prague-study-trip/) play an important part in your degree and include visits to galleries and museums. In addition, all students participate in a week-long university-funded trip to a major European centre of artistic importance where you have the opportunity examine works of art and architecture *in situ*. Previous study trips have been to Rome, Berlin and Paris and are led by staff with specific teaching and research interests in the destination city. In addition to the opportunity to visit works of art not available in the UK, this trip provides a great opportunity to get to know the entire year group in an informal and inspiring setting.

Why study this course

- **You will benefit** from an intellectually challenging and stimulating environment for your undergraduate studies, focused on ensuring you are a fully supported and active learner. Our unique degrees are designed to provide both academic excellence and vocational development; a balance that's highly sought after by

employers in today's intellectual and creative industries.

- **Excellent student experience**: Small classes, the Barber, study trips, writing for **The Golovine (https://thegolovine.wordpress.com/)**, links to local institutions, access to extensive **Research and Cultural Collections (/facilities/rcc/index.aspx)** and an array of other extra-curricular activities lead to an excellent student experience.
- **Study abroad:** You can opt to Study a Year Abroad in the History programme.
- **Our wide variety of History and History of Art modules** are very flexible, allowing you to specialise more and more as you progress.
- **The city**: Birmingham has a wide range of **cultural venues (/schools/lcahm/departments/historyofart/about/birmingham-culture.aspx)** to visit, volunteer or work with.

Hear from our students

Open day talks

Three full videos on YouTube of recent open day talks relevant to this course:

- **Undergraduate History at Birmingham (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6dWspWZmok)**, June 2015
- **Undergraduate History of Art at Birmingham (https://youtu.be/wx1iLwV2GBI)**, June 2015
- **Joint Honours at Birmingham (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyPPAj5HcHI)**, June 2014

Modules

The optional modules listed on the website for this programme may unfortunately occasionally be subject to change. As you will appreciate key members of staff may leave the University and this necessitates a review of the modules that are offered. Where the module is no longer available we will let you know as soon as we can and help you make other choices.

First year

In the first year of a Joint Honours degree programme study is split equally between the two disciplines. Following this you have the option to alter the balance of your study, meaning that you could change to a major-minor weighting. In your final year you have the option to maintain your second-year balance, switch your major subject to your other discipline or revert to an equal balance. If you wish, you can maintain an equal balance throughout your degree. This flexibility allows you to tailor the course throughout your degree programme, once you have had the time and experience to consider where your strengths and interests lie. The list of modules below are based on studying half of your modules (60 credits) in History and half in History of Art (60 credits).

The first year is the foundational year in an academic process that will see you progress from being a dependent to an independent learner. You will study modules spanning the early medieval to late modern periods. You can choose two out of the following five modules, Discovering the Middle Ages, Living in the Middle Ages, The Making of the Modern World 1500-1815, The Making of the Contemporary World 1815-2000 and War and Society (one in the Autumn and one in the Spring term, 20 credits per module). These explore fundamental themes and issues focused on key periods and indicate the kinds of questions historians explore and some of the methods they employ in answering them. You will also study Practising History (A): Skills in History (Autumn term) and Practising History (B): Approaches to History (Spring term), which look more closely at the techniques of the historian and at the nature and evolution of key historical debates. In History of Art this is your foundation year and you will take modules which introduce you to concepts, categories and approaches to studying art and artists, as well as modules which examine the techniques and materials used in the production of artworks. Other modules will give you an outline of selected key historical periods and themes in the history of art, such as the Renaissance and Modernism.

In History of Art, lectures and seminars are supported with study trips to galleries and current exhibitions in London or elsewhere.

Compulsory History modules

- Practising History A: Skills in History

- Practising History B: Approaches to History

Choose two out of five of the following History modules:

- Discovering the Middle Ages
- Living in the Middle Ages
- The Making of the Modern World 1500-1815
- The Making of the Contemporary World 1815-2000
- War and Society

History of Art First Year modules may include:

- Historical Concepts in the History of Art
- Debates and Methods in the History of Art
- Ideas of the Renaissance
- Concepts of Modernism in the History of Art
- **History first year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx)**
- **History of Art first year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/histart/history-art-modules-first-year.aspx)**

Second year

The second year is an intermediate year that builds on the foundations laid in the first year of study. You engage in Group Research (20 credits) and extend your historical knowledge through two (20 + 20) subject-specific modules chosen from a wide range of available from Option A in the Autumn term and Option B in the Spring.

The second year in History of Art is structured to allow you to acquire greater depth by focusing a number of more specific subjects. You will have the opportunity to choose from a number of optional modules on themes or periods in the history of art. If you are taking 80 or 60 credits of History of Art these are supported by a module on research techniques in the history of art as well as a study trip to a major artistic and cultural centre overseas, where you will have the opportunity to access works of art and architecture unavailable in Britain and to study them in situ.

Compulsory History modules

- Group Research
- Option A (History)
- Option B (History)

History of Art second year modules options may include:

- Research Techniques in the History of Art
- Art History in the Field – Overseas Study Trip
- Renaissance Art in Italy and the Netherlands 1400-1460
- Art, Architecture and Design in Fin de Siècle Vienna
- Power, Society, Politics: Religious art in Northern Europe
- Inside the Gallery. Histories, Theories and Practices of Museums and Galleries
- Impressionism and after: Art and Society in the Nineteenth-Century France
- Arts and the Industrial Revolution

History second year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx) History of Art second year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/histart/history-art-modules-second-year.aspx)

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.

Third/Final year

This year represents the culmination of undergraduate study and the final stage of your transition to an independent learner. You hone your historical skills in Advanced Option A or Advanced Option B (20 + 20 credits) and you also undertake a History Special subject chosen from a variety of available subjects. In the final year of History of Art you opt to focus on several History of Art special subjects, which you study in depth and detail. If you are taking 80 or 60 credits of History of Art you have the opportunity to develop your research skills in a Dissertation, a piece of writing on a topic of your own choice. You may also study for a linked Dissertation, focusing on a topic of relevance to History and History of Art.

Compulsory History modules

- Advanced Option A or Advanced Option B
- Special Subject (History)

History of Art final year modules may include:

- The Dissertation
- Women and Artistic Culture 1400-1600
- Paris Moderne 1850-1930: Image, Concept, Femininity
- Prague, Budapest, Cracow: Art and the Politics of Identity in Central Europe, 1867-1918
- Fashioning Flesh and Technology: Modernism and the Body in Germany 1918-1933
- Architecture and Decoration in Sixteenth-Century Venice
- The Destruction of Images
- Representing War: British Art, Design and the First World War

- Contemporary Art: New Practices, New Worlds
- **History third year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/history/History-modules.aspx#final)**
- **History of Art final year detailed module descriptions (/undergraduate/courses/histart/history-art-modules-third-year.aspx)**

Fees and funding

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

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

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: ABB

Required subjects and grades: A Level History, Medieval History or Ancient History at grade A

International baccalaureate update

Please note that we have reviewed our policy on the IB Diploma for 2016 entry and our offers will now focus on performance in Higher Level subjects. For more information and details please read **our 2016 IB Diploma requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/requirements/index.aspx)**.

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

University of Birmingham students are part of an academic elite and learn from world-leading experts. We will challenge you to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers.

You will have a diverse learning experience, including:

lectures

small group tutorials

independent study

and peer group learning, such as delivering presentations with your classmates

Support

You will have access to a comprehensive support system to help you make the transition to Higher Education.

- **Personal tutors** - You will be assigned your own personal tutor who will get to know you as you progress through your studies. They will provide academic support and welfare advice to enable you to make the most of your time here at Birmingham.
- **Transition review** - you will undergo a formal transition review during your first year with an academic member of staff. They will see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support.

- **Academic Skills Centre** - the centre aims to help you become a more effective and independent learner through a range of high-quality support services. The centre offers workshops on a range of topics, such as note-taking, reading, academic writing and presentation skills.
- **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** - the AWAS team will provide guidance on writing essays and dissertations at University-level. You will receive individual support from an academic writing advisor and meet with postgraduate tutors who specialise in particular subjects. Support is given in a variety of ways, such as small-group workshops, online activities, tutorials and email correspondence.
- **Student experience** - our **Student Experience Team (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/team/index.aspx)** will help you get the most out of your academic experience. They will offer research opportunities, study skills support and help you prepare for your post-university careers. They will also organise social events, such as field trips, to help you meet fellow students from your course.

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.

Study trips play an important part in the teaching on the programme. These include visits to galleries and museums in Birmingham and the West Midlands, as well as overseas group trips that are funded by the University. Recent destinations have included Rome, Berlin and Paris, and provide you with the opportunity to examine works of art and architecture in situ.

One-to-one tutorials become increasingly important as you progress through your course. This is particularly the case in your final year, when a major part of your programme will be a dissertation on a topic of your choice. Tutorials enable you to discuss your research with your project supervisor in depth.

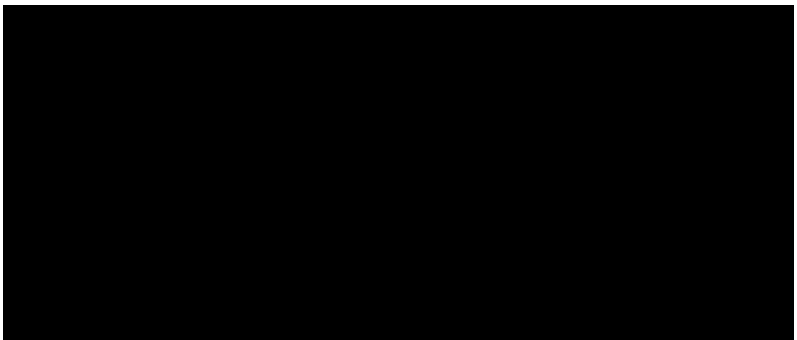
Assessment methods

Assessments - you will be assessed in a variety of ways to help you transition to a new style of learning. At the beginning of each module, you will be given information on how and when you will be assessed. Assessments methods will vary with each module and could include:

- coursework, such as essays
- group and individual presentations
- and formal exams

Feedback - you will receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so you can learn from each assignment. You will also be given feedback on any exams that you take. If you should fail an exam, we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is provided to help you prepare for future exams.

Employability



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[**Video above** - Dr David Gange discusses careers and employability in the History open day presentation]

As a History and History of Art student you will have an excellent opportunity to develop skills that are attractive to employers, including:

- Strong communication skills;
- A deep understanding of the past;
- The ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information;
- Leadership and teamwork;
- Handling complex information;
- The ability to form concise and articulate arguments;
- Managing your time and prioritising your workload

These are key skills that will enable you to pursue either further study in History and History of Art disciplines or move into employment in a wide range of other careers.

96.8% of History of Art students and 89% of History students are in work/study six months after finishing their degree. Our graduates have gone on to careers in:

- Accountancy
- Charity work
- Housing
- Human Resources
- International Development
- Law
- Marketing
- Media
- Publishing
- Politics
- Retail Management
- Teaching
- Library and Archive work
- Postgraduate study

You will benefit from organised events in the Department of History whereby our graduates return to campus to talk to current students about their careers, how to find opportunities and the variety of roles available to historians. Many careers-orientated events are arranged in the Department of History over the course of your time at Birmingham to enable you to gain skills so that you join the working world with confidence in your abilities.

Throughout your degree you will have the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in museums and galleries, both on and off campus and you can also benefit from our biennial History of Art Careers Fair. Graduates return to campus to talk to current students about their careers, how to find opportunities and the wide variety of roles available in the industry. Recent speakers hold positions at the Wallace Collection, BMAG, Sotheby's Institute, Manchester's Craft and Design Centre and the White Cube Gallery.

Our History of Art graduates have also gone on to work at:

- Kettle's Yard
- The Bodleian Library
- Cath Kidston
- Historic Royal Palaces
- The National Portrait Gallery
- Christie's
- National Museum of Wales
- The Victoria and Albert Museum

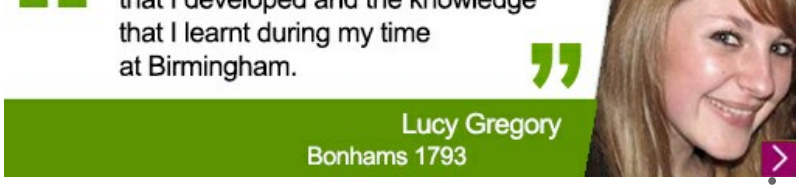
Examples of History of Art graduate jobs include:

- Archivist
- Curator
- Gallery Coordinator
- Events Officer
- Exhibitions Assistant
- Learning and Access Officer
- Programme Coordinator
- Researcher

Alumni profiles

Almost every day, I use the skills that I developed and the knowledge

(/schools/lcahm/departments/historyofart/undergraduate/alumni-profiles.aspx)



Developing your career

Employers target University of Birmingham students for their diverse skill-set and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of our wide range of opportunities you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

Careers events - we hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities to help you meet potential employers and learn more about these sectors.

- Global Challenge - you can apply to work overseas on an expenses-paid placement during your summer vacation through our Global Challenge initiative.
- Work experience bursary - we encourage you to apply your skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer. Our work experience bursaries allow you to apply for funding to support you during unpaid internships.
- 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 will give you professional experience to set you apart in a competitive graduate market. Our current partners include Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham REP, Birmingham Royal Ballet, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust, Library of Birmingham.

There are also internships available at our own cultural assets, such as Winterbourne House, the Lapworth Museum, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Extra-curricular activities

To enhance your career prospects even further, you will need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities to broaden your skills and network of contacts.

- **Undergraduate Research Scholarship Scheme** - our College of Arts and Law **Undergraduate Research Scholarship Scheme (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/urs/index.aspx)** enables interested students to work on a current academic research project being run by one of our 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.
- **Personal Skills Award** - our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award (/students/careers/psa.aspx)** (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.
- **Guild of Students** - there is a vast number of **student groups (http://www.guildofstudents.com/studentgroups/find-groups/)** and **volunteering opportunities (http://www.guildofstudents.com/jsv/volunteering/chooseavolunteeringopportunity/)** offered by the Guild of Students, which cover a wide variety of interests.

94% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) History and History of Art
Full time

To see more details and compare with other courses

Visit UNISTATS

Official data collected by HEFCE

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