

# History

Undergraduate programme  
and course information

SEPTEMBER 2020  
ENTRY

[www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology](http://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology)



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
School of History, Classics  
and Archaeology



Welcome to the University of Edinburgh! We are delighted that you are interested in joining us to study History at one of the largest, most vibrant and diverse History Departments in the country, located in the heart of the historic city of Edinburgh.

Our History Department is embedded within the larger School of History, Classics and Archaeology – all disciplines concerned with the human past. Our classicists complete the chronological spread of history through their focus on the history of ancient Rome and Greece, while our archaeologists offer a different methodological approach to the past, deriving their conclusions from non-textual evidence of material culture and human remains.

The School is not only diverse in terms of subject matter, but also in its staff and student intake. Students and staff come from all over the world, with different backgrounds and perspectives that they bring to bear on the teaching and study of history. You will have the opportunity to meet people from across the globe and to benefit from their unique perspectives.

The School also derives much from its local setting in Scotland's capital city. The close relationships that we have with archives, libraries, museums and galleries are a unique

aspect of the student experience. We hope that you will learn about many areas of the world and about themes that have global implications, whilst also learning about Scotland and your local surroundings.

Under the Scottish four-year degree system, we encourage you to be experimental and adventurous, to try out subjects and disciplines you have not previously explored, particularly in your first two years of study. The University of Edinburgh offers a unique range of subjects and courses, which will broaden your horizons. The School and the University take pastoral care very seriously. In the School, you will have a personal tutor at your side who will support you with everything from course choices to coping with the stresses of university study. Volunteering can be another way of adding to your experience. The Edinburgh University Students' Association provides information and opportunities in this area.

We are delighted that you are seriously considering studying with us in the near future.

**Dr Fabian Hilfrich,**  
Head of History, Senior Lecturer

### **Coronavirus update - April 2020**

**We intend to begin the 2020-21 academic year as usual in September. This brochure reflects these intentions. We will let you know of any changes, and confirm start dates in our pre-arrival communications.**

# Why choose History at Edinburgh

Join one of the UK's largest and most international departments of History where you will be part of a vibrant culture of inquiry and debate led by our dedicated team of staff.

### **A historic city**

Edinburgh is a modern, thriving, and cosmopolitan city, but also a historic one where the earliest human habitation is traced back to a Mesolithic campsite dated to c. 8500 BC. Since then, the city has seen the rise and fall of kings and queens. It has witnessed wars, rebellions, plagues, and the flowering of the Enlightenment.

Edinburgh's rich historical resources and archives feature prominently in our teaching. This will help you become acquainted with the city you are studying in. It will also allow you to use the events that have happened here to enhance your general understanding of history.

### **A world-leading university**

The University of Edinburgh is one of the world's leading universities. We are consistently ranked among the top 50 best universities in the world, and we attract some of the world's brightest staff and students. History at Edinburgh is ranked 23rd among all history departments in the world (QS World University Rankings 2019) and ranked 3rd in the UK for research power (combined quality and volume) based on the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (Research Fortnightly, Overall Ranking of Institutions). Our historians have won many international prizes, produce award-winning publications, and are often quoted in the media as experts on a wide range of issues.

Join us, and you will experience the best in teaching, working alongside world-leading academics whose research directly informs their teaching.

### **Flexibility and choice**

We are one of the largest departments of History in the UK, covering an enormous range of subjects: from Charlemagne to Gandhi, from the Industrial Revolution to the Chinese economic miracle, from Scotland to the Caribbean, and from political radicalism to the history of financial crises.

By taking one of our four-year degrees, you will have the flexibility to study subjects outside of History in years 1 and 2. These may complement your History courses, or be something completely different. This flexibility ensures you are adaptable and allows you to develop a wide variety of skills attractive to future employers.

### **A degree with employability at its core**

A History degree at Edinburgh is not just about studying the past. It's about combining academic study with employability to develop the skills you need, both to become a successful historian and to excel in any career after you graduate. We offer skills courses to support your successful progress through your degree and help you hone the transferable skills that employers value.

### **A supportive environment**

We want you to feel supported throughout your time with us at Edinburgh and a wide range of services is available. You will be allocated a Personal Tutor who will guide you through university life. Further support and advice are provided by the School's Student Support Office and Peer Support.

## A flexible four-year degree

Edinburgh offers a four-year honours degree, which gives you the benefit of developing a breadth as well as depth of knowledge.

Among the advantages of the four-year degree are:

- **Breadth of study.** The flexible nature of our degrees enables you to expand your academic range by studying subjects outside your major discipline during the first two years. Year 1 History students have recently taken courses in subjects as varied as philosophy, politics, criminology and sociology.
- **Joint degrees.** A huge range of joint degrees offers you the opportunity to study two disciplines in real depth.
- **Third year abroad.** An extensive network of reciprocal exchanges with major international universities can give you the chance to apply to study overseas for an entire year, and still spend a full three years in Edinburgh.
- **Final-year dissertation.** A feature of the fourth year is a dissertation undertaken by all students. This piece of original research, of up to 12,000 words, represents the culmination of your undergraduate career and the demonstration of your abilities as an independent scholar.
- **MA (Hons).** The added experience and intellectual depth that you will gain over the course of the four-year honours undergraduate degree is widely recognised and greatly valued by employers.



## Study abroad

We offer undergraduate students the opportunity to undertake a wide variety of international experiences. Living and studying abroad can broaden your horizons, transform your academic perspective, and help you to get the very most from your undergraduate career. The four-year degree offers the opportunity to study abroad even for non-language learners.

We have partnerships with a large number of prestigious universities across Europe, North and South America and Australasia from which you can apply.

The University of Edinburgh is currently participating in the Erasmus programme which enables students to access funding for a period of study or work abroad in Europe. The UK's participation in Erasmus beyond 2021 will depend on negotiations between the EU and the UK. The University of Edinburgh will continue to offer students opportunities to study abroad in Europe regardless of the outcome of these negotiations but there may be a change to currently available exchange destinations and number of exchange places available if the UK is no longer part of Erasmus. As these are on-going negotiations we will regularly update our webpages on developments.

For degree programmes starting in 2020 that have a compulsory period of study or work abroad in Europe - such as Modern European Languages - the University will guarantee funding equivalent to current Erasmus grants, with the exception of students studying in Switzerland.

In 2019/20, over 20% of our year 3 History students studied abroad in universities including the University of California, the University of Sydney, McGill University, Sciences Po (IEP) Paris, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and the University of Oslo.

For further information

[www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad](http://www.ed.ac.uk/global/go-abroad)

# What you will study

At Edinburgh, we have been teaching students since 1583. Today, we are one of Europe's leading centres for the study of the human past.



## Breadth and depth of study

Our academic staff are at the cutting edge of their disciplines. Their teaching is informed by the latest research in their fields.

With more than 20 single and combined degrees to choose from, you will be able to deepen your knowledge of subjects you have studied at school, and have the opportunity to explore something completely new.

- Geographical coverage: Scotland, Britain, Europe, the Americas (including the Caribbean), Africa and Asia.
- Chronological coverage: everything from early medieval history to the contemporary world.
- Thematic coverage: political history, cultural history, social history, economic history, environmental history, gender history, intellectual history, and global and transnational history.

## Our teaching

In the first and second years teaching is mostly conducted in lectures and small group meetings called tutorials where you will have a chance to discuss selected topics in greater detail. Tutorial groups normally comprise around twelve students. The emphasis shifts in the third and fourth years towards more specialised, seminar- based courses and independent study.

Assessment in years 1 and 2 is a mixture of continuous assessment of written work, tutorial participation and exams. Students' work in third and fourth year is assessed mainly by essays and examinations. In your final year you will conduct your own research in the form of a dissertation, with one-to-one supervision. For many students, the dissertation is the most rewarding part of their programme.

## History curriculum

In year 1, the curriculum will emphasise processes and patterns within broad chronological and geographical frameworks. In year 2, you will deepen your knowledge of particular geographical regions, chronological periods, and themes.

In years 3 and 4, you will have the opportunity to take courses that are more specialised. In year 4 you will also conduct your own research in the form of a dissertation, under the direction of a supervisor.

### Skills courses

Particularly in the first two years you will take courses that engage with broader questions about the nature of History as an academic discipline and the methods and skills required in historical research. These courses are designed to give you the expertise and confidence to succeed in your degree and give you the opportunity to obtain the transferable skills you need for the career of your choice upon graduation.

### Outside courses

Whichever degree you take, you will study courses outside of History in years 1 and 2. Studying courses in other subject areas allows you to keep your degree options open or simply to choose unrelated subjects in which you are interested. The exceptionally wide choice on offer includes courses across areas as diverse as social and political science, law and physics, subject to availability and to you being able to accommodate these combinations in your timetable.

# Courses available to study in history

Our courses reflect the expertise of our staff and demonstrate the breadth and depth of our provision. Below you'll find the courses that are available in the current academic year (2019/20). For up-to-date information about courses and programme structures for 2020 entry, visit [www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees)

## First year courses

### The Historian's Toolkit

A practical, hands-on introduction to studying history at university. It will build your confidence by training you how to think and work like a historian. The course will take you through all the steps of the historical research process. A large part of the course is dedicated to working with historical evidence, both primary and secondary, and including non-written sources.

### Medieval Worlds: A Journey through the Middle Ages

The European Middle Ages were a time of enormous diversity, change and discovery. It was during this period, between the fifth century and end of the fifteenth, that the ancient Roman world was transformed by the emergence of new empires and kingdoms, new identities and new ideas. This introductory course takes you on a journey, primarily through the central Middle Ages (c.800 to c.1300), seeking to capture key aspects of this age of transformation.

### Early Modern History: A Connected World

The period between c.1500 and c.1800 was an age of discovery in which adventurers, merchants and diplomats sailed farther than ever before, and the lives of peoples from disparate parts of the globe became meaningfully entangled for the first time in human history. You will learn how established relationships between church, state and the individual were contested; how social and technological developments allowed for the dissemination of the written word beyond a privileged elite; and how a vibrant and noisy urban culture – and the emergence of women into the public sphere – brought with it new opportunities, as well as new anxieties.

### Making of the Modern World

This course contextualises modern history by providing a framework in which major historical processes can be understood. It moves away from a Eurocentric position towards a more global history that takes in different approaches and regions. Although the structure of the course is chronological, the main focus is on processes and themes. You will be expected to use specific case studies to illuminate large themes such as modernity, revolution, nationalism and decolonisation.

### British Economic and Environmental History since 1900

The course examines the main developments in the British economy since 1900, and the persistent and increasing interest in the environmental impact of economic activity. As well as looking at major shifts in macro-economic policy, the course will also examine the process of deindustrialisation, the rise of public expenditure, and the growing concern with sustainability.

### The History of Edinburgh: From Din Eidyn to Festival City

This course is designed to introduce you to the history of the city in which you are studying. The lecture series will highlight both the way in which the built environment and physical layout of the city has been shaped by historical processes, and how extant buildings, monuments and objects can be used to illuminate the concerns and ambitions of those societies that have occupied the area from the early-medieval period onwards.

## Second year courses

### Introduction to Historiography

You will be introduced to some of the important frameworks through which academic historians approach (and have approached) the past. This will enable you to comprehend how historical events can be interpreted through diverse methodological frameworks and how these approaches determine the analytical outcome. This course will provide you with the necessary skills to understand what historiography is and why it matters.

### Making and Breaking Medieval Britain: England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales c.1100–c.1500

This course starts with the profound transformation of the various polities within the British Isles in the wake of the Norman Conquest of Anglo-Saxon England. Thereafter, Frankish political and cultural norms extended over much of the British Isles and Ireland, drawing the various societies of the islands into European networks, largely mediated through the English crown and its associated institutions. The course outlines the way in which this 'Europeanisation' process allowed the English monarchy to reinforce its dominant position within Britain, before the impact of war, plague and famine in the fourteenth century destroyed the coherence of this 'English Empire'.

### Themes in Scottish History since 1560

This course introduces you to the main themes in Scottish history in the period since 1560. Beginning with the Reformation and the Union of Crowns of 1603, you will then examine the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707 and post-union Scotland, including such themes as Jacobitism, the Scottish Enlightenment and imperial expansion. The course encompasses nineteenth-century industrialisation, political reform and social change, before turning to the radical political and cultural upheavals of the twentieth century.

### Britain, Ireland and Empire c.1800–2000

The course provides a wide-ranging introduction to the history of, and relations between, modern Britain, Ireland and the Empire over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Themes discussed include the evolution of the British political system, the development of the British state, the changing nature of the union (with particular emphasis on British-Irish relations), the expansion (and eventual loss) of an overseas British empire, and Britain as a warfare state (with particular emphasis on the two world wars).

### Themes in Modern European History

This course offers a broad survey of European History from the late eighteenth century to the present. Its prime purpose is to demonstrate how European society has evolved as a result of the interplay of major economic, social, political and cultural developments of the period c.1780 to the present.

### Modern United States History

This course explores key themes in the development of the United States, from the post-Civil War period to the twenty-first century. The course pays particular attention to the development and challenges of American democracy, particularly with regard to minorities. The course will promote the development of your skills (both written and non-written) in historical research and analysis, especially focusing on historiographical engagement and the analysis of primary sources.

### Global Connections since 1450

The course explores the global history of three themes – goods, peoples and ideas. We interrogate the new forms of power which sought to reshape global connections in the period from c.1450. At the same time, the course also provides an opportunity to reflect critically on the writing of global history and to consider how we best make sense of the intersections of the local and the global in this period.

### The Global Economy since 1750

In the nineteenth century the world economy underwent decisive changes with the emergence of modern industrialisation and modern forms of economic development. We consider the question “what made it all happen, in some economies to a far greater extent than in others?”

### Third year courses (junior Honours)

There will be a compulsory element of study in your third year which will allow you to reflect on history as a discipline and introduce you to the practice of historical research.

You will also choose several from a very wide range of option courses. The courses available will vary slightly from year to year, but the entire programme usually comprises around fifty different courses. Current examples include courses on the American Civil Rights Movement, the Third Reich, post-colonial Africa, the history of the Crusades, Machiavelli and his world, the history of medicine, twentieth-century China, the history of India from 1700 until independence, Britain and the Second World War, the French Revolution, and the Scottish Enlightenment.

### Fourth year courses (senior Honours)

Fourth-year students normally take either one or two Special Subjects, depending on their degree programme. Special Subjects are year-long courses which involve close work with primary source material. Again, the programme of Special Subjects varies from year to year, but current examples include courses on the Spanish Civil War, Gandhi and popular movements, the European witch-hunt in the early modern period, the United States in Vietnam, the history of financial crises between 1300 and 1914, Irish history since 1780, and the history of medieval England in the years after the Norman conquest. Depending on your degree programme, you may also choose option courses as in third year.

All fourth-year students write a research dissertation. This is a substantial piece of independent research and, in many respects, represents the culmination of the four-year degree programme. Topics are chosen in consultation with a named academic advisor. They range widely and have included, for example, studies of relations between Norman Sicily and Islam, Gandhi and race relations in South Africa, banqueting at the court of James I, French student revolt in 1968, and the Brass Band Movement between 1962 and 1982.



## Life beyond the classroom

The friends you meet, places you discover and the lasting memories you create contribute as much to your university life as your formal learning.

### History Society

The History Society hosts internationally renowned lecturers, organises historical tours across the country, hosts career events and provides academic support. Regular socials are also a big part of the society, such as history-themed nights out and an annual Winter Ball, which is now one of the biggest at the University. It also has three active sports teams – Football, Rugby and Netball.

[www.shca.ed.ac.uk/societies](http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/societies)

### Retrospect

Retrospect is the University's student-led History, Classics and Archaeology journal. Whether you are interested in writing about your subject outside of your studies, or simply want to gain experience in writing, editing, designing or publishing, Retrospect publishes once a semester with an excellent calendar of socials and careers events.

<https://retrospectjournal.com>

### Edinburgh University Students' Association

The Students' Association offers an array of bars, shops, cafes and entertainment venues, including the city's biggest student nightclub. Regular entertainment includes a variety of clubs, live music and comedy, plus debates and regular club meetings. The Students' Association also supports more than 280 student societies covering all areas of interest across sport, music, drama and the arts.

### Sport and exercise

Whether a recreational gym-user or a performance athlete going for gold, our world-class sports facilities and coaches cater for you.



## Advance your career

Choose to study at Edinburgh and you will be investing in an education that will help you build a successful future. We help students to develop a broad range of skills, grow in confidence and learn more about themselves.

Six months after graduating, 94 per cent of Edinburgh students are in employment or postgraduate study. We are ranked in the top 10 in the UK and top 100 in the world for the employability of our graduates (Times Higher Education, Global Employability University Rankings 2019).

### Career advice and opportunities to enhance your CV

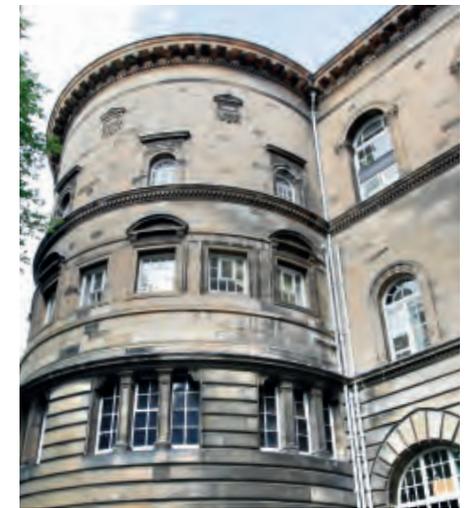
Our Careers Service can help with your career choices, and offer practical advice about how to advance your career goals. They organise hundreds of career events and workshops each year, including the annual Creative and Cultural Heritage Career Festival, and regularly invite employers onto campus to meet with our students. They also make occasional contributions to the curriculum ensuring students' awareness of the possibilities a History degree offers.

The School of History, Classics and Archaeology has its own dedicated careers consultant who works on a 1:1 basis with students in the School to guide and support their career needs. Most employers expect something extra from today's graduates so the University also runs the Edinburgh Award to help set you apart – this award recognises student involvement in a wide range of co- and extra-curricular activities, and the skills and attributes demonstrated.

### Stand out with a degree in History

With a degree in History from Edinburgh, you will gain the intellectual and transferable skills that employers are looking for. You will learn to develop intellectually rigorous arguments, based on sound independent research and analysis. You will be able to compile and critically evaluate large amounts of complex and conflicting evidence, and to formulate and present your views coherently, both orally and in writing.

Our History graduates have gone on to pursue a wide variety of careers, in the media, politics, the civil service, heritage, law, business, and finance, to name just a few.



# Get ready for History

The following reading list relates to first-year courses in History. It is not a requirement that you read these books before arrival, especially because you may choose other courses, and entry to some courses may be restricted to ensure that tutorial groups do not become too large. **You are therefore advised NOT to buy books before your courses are confirmed by your Personal Tutor once you arrive.**

## The Historian's Toolkit

Jo Guldi and David Armitage,  
**The History Manifesto**  
(Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2014), open access:  
<http://historymanifesto.cambridge.org>

Peter Claus and John Marriott,  
**History: An Introduction to Theory, Method, and Practice** (Routledge: Abingdon, 2013)

David Cannadine,  
**What is History Now?**  
(Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2004)

John Tosh,  
**The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the study of History**  
(Routledge: London, New York, 2015)

Robert C. Williams,  
**The Historian's Toolbox: A Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History**  
(Routledge: Abingdon, New York, 3rd edition, 2015)

## The History of Edinburgh

Brian Edwards & Paul Jenkins (eds),  
**Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City**  
(Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2005)

## Medieval Worlds

J. Arnold,  
**What is Medieval History?** (London, 2007)

J. Le Goff,  
**Medieval Civilisation** (Oxford, 1991)

C. Wickham,  
**Medieval Europe** (New Haven, 2016)

## Early Modern History: A Connected World

Felipe Fernández-Armesto,  
**Civilizations** (London, 2000)

C H Parker,  
**Global Interactions in the Early Modern Age** (Cambridge, 2010)

Beat Kümin,  
**The European World**  
Merry Wiesner-Hanks,  
**Early Modern Europe**

## Making of the Modern World

Sebastian Conrad,  
**What is Global History?** (Princeton, NJ, 2016)

Christopher Bayly,  
**The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914**  
(Oxford, 2004)

Kenneth Pomeranz,  
**The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy**  
(Princeton, 2000)

Felipe Fernández-Armesto,  
**The Americas: a Hemispheric History** (New York, 2003)

## British Economic and Environmental History since 1900

Introductory reading:  
Roderick Floud, Jane Humphries and Paul Johnson,

**The Cambridge Economic History of Britain, vol. 2: Growth and Decline. 1870 to the Present;**

John Sheail, **An Environmental History of Twentieth-Century Britain**



# FAQs

## Contact us

For further information about studying history at Edinburgh,  
**email: [hca-prospective-ug@ed.ac.uk](mailto:hca-prospective-ug@ed.ac.uk)**

For further information about your application,  
**[cahss.ugadmissions@ed.ac.uk](mailto:cahss.ugadmissions@ed.ac.uk)**  
**+44 (0)131 650 3565**

**[facebook.com/HCAatEdinburgh](https://www.facebook.com/HCAatEdinburgh)**  
**[twitter.com/HCAatEdinburgh](https://twitter.com/HCAatEdinburgh)**  
**[instagram.com/hcaatedinburghuniversity](https://www.instagram.com/hcaatedinburghuniversity)**

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in this brochure before going to print. However please check online for the most up-to-date information:

**[www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology](http://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology)**

This document is available in alternative formats upon request such as large print, please email  
**[hca-prospective-ug@ed.ac.uk](mailto:hca-prospective-ug@ed.ac.uk)**

## Where do I find degree programme listings and entry requirements?

[www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees)

## Where do I find out more about history courses?

[www.shca.ed.ac.uk/ma-history](http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/ma-history)

## Where can I find out about accommodation?

[www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/accommodation](http://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/accommodation)

## Where do I find out about applying?

[www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/applying](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/applying)

## Where do I find out about my offer?

[www.ed.ac.uk/studying/my-offer](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/my-offer)

## Where do I apply and track my application?

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## What financial support can I apply for?

[www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding)

## What information can I get about facilities and support services?

[www.ed.ac.uk/undergraduate/facilities](http://www.ed.ac.uk/undergraduate/facilities)

## Where can I find out about sports facilities?

[www.ed.ac.uk/undergraduate/sport](http://www.ed.ac.uk/undergraduate/sport)

## Where can I find out more about transport in and around the city?

[transportforedinburgh.com](http://transportforedinburgh.com)

## What do your students think?

[edin.ac/student-life](http://edin.ac/student-life)



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