

HY12120: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY



Semester One: 2014/2015

Module Convenor: Dr Jessica Gibbs (jcg@aber.ac.uk)

Introduction

This course is designed to help students make the transition to the study of history at degree level. Through a series of **fifteen sessions** you will be introduced to a range of skills, techniques and practical exercises intended to cover fundamental elements not only of undergraduate study but also of historians' practice. One of these sessions will be an essay feedback session (tutorial) with your seminar tutor (dates/times/place to be confirmed by each individual seminar tutor). Your seminar tutors will guide you through the following elements:

- summary and note-taking
- true paraphrasing and quotation
- research and time-management
- use of the library and IT
- presentations
- essay writing and examination preparation
- seminar work and group discussion

The course aims to help you to produce the sort of work on which you will be assessed during your degree. You will be assessed on written work for this module but don't be disheartened if things do not go entirely to plan. This semester offers an opportunity to try out things for the first time under the close attention of a tutor. Mistakes and trial and error are part of the learning process. We know that written work, seminars, learning to use the university library and research facilities, and so on, may all make different demands upon you than those you encountered before your degree. That is why the module exists.

If you have any problems or questions concerning the module, please contact the module convenor, Dr Jessica Gibbs (jcg@aber.ac.uk). Further information relating to the Department and the practice of studying history can be found in the **Guide for Students**, which can be viewed and downloaded at the departmental website.

GENERAL POINTS

Please note. Attendance is **obligatory** at all sessions and it will be monitored via the Student Attendance Monitoring System.

There are three pieces of work to be written and submitted in this course:

- 1. a 500 word summary of an excerpt selected by your seminar tutor (25% of the module mark).**
- 2. a bibliographical exercise providing full reference details for 15 to 20 items showing a range of source types and including a discussion explaining how you will use these works for your essay. This should not be more than 1,500 words (25% of the module mark).**
- 3. a short essay of not more than 2,000 words (50% of the module mark).**

This module will introduce you to a wide range of different historical material relating to different periods. You will also be working with a seminar tutor with particular research and teaching interests. Although you may submit your bibliographical exercise and essay on any of the essay questions (selected by the seminar tutors) listed in this handout, you will express your preference for particular pairs of questions at Session One, and I will do my best to allocate students to seminar groups according to these preferences. The groups will be announced at the end of Freshers' week, posted on my office door (C44) and on the First year student notice board, sent round by email and posted on the Blackboard site for this module. The first assignment (the summary) must be written on the excerpt selected by your seminar tutor (all the excerpts will be available via the Blackboard site).

In the free choice of essay question, there is some scope for choice of topic, but please bear in mind that the module is primarily about necessary skills. By the end of this module you should have acquired the basic skills of historical work and have an understanding of the ways those skills contribute to being a good historian.

TIMETABLE OF SESSIONS

- 1. Module Briefing.** Introduction to the department and the module, including assignments, from the module convenor, Dr Jessica Gibbs. Monday 22 September, 9:30 - 10:20 C22.
- 2. Good practice and how to avoid plagiarism.** Tuesday 30 September, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politics Building
- 3. Library resources at Aberystwyth University.** Tuesday 30 September, 12:45 - 13:30 Main Hall, International Politics Building

To be followed by double workshop with seminar tutors on good practice and using the library from 14:00 - 16:30. Hugh Owen offices

- 4. Effective paraphrasing and using the departmental style guide.** Workshop: how and when to paraphrase. How to use the departmental style guide. Tuesday 7 October, 12:10 - 14:00 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn
- 5. Building up a bibliography.** Workshop: classification of secondary sources and the selection of suitable sources for undergraduate study. How and when to use the internet. Tuesday 7 October, 15:00 - 16:50 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

6. **Primary source analysis: documentary sources.** Workshop: source analysis: Tuesday 14 October, 12:10 - 14:00 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn
7. **Primary source analysis: non-documentary sources.** Workshop: non-documentary source analysis. Tuesday 14 October, 15:00 - 16:50 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn
8. **Visit to the National Library of Wales.** Tuesday 21 October. Tours to begin at 14:40, and at 16:00.
9. **Essay preparation and style.** Tuesday 28 October, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politics Building
10. **What is historiography?** Tuesday 28 October, 12:45 - 13:30 Main Hall, International Politics Building

To be followed by double workshop with seminar tutors on essay writing/style and on historiography, using examples of student essays work alongside the department's marking criteria, and contrasting different accounts of the same topic, accounting for differences and creating mini literature reviews from 14:00 - 16:30. Hugh Owen offices.
11. **Essay tutorial:** week beginning Monday 10 November OR week beginning Monday 17 November. Times and details to be confirmed.
12. **Examinations:** Tuesday 11 November, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politics Building
13. **Conclusions:** What is history? Tuesday 11 November, 12:45 - 13:30 Main Hall, International Politics Building

To be followed by double workshop with seminar tutors on exam preparation and on different types of history, using examples of exam essay samples alongside the department's marking criteria and involving small group work from 14:00 to 16:30. Hugh Owen offices.
14. **Careers and wider opportunities.** Workshop: Tuesday 18 November 12:10 - 14:00 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn
15. **Skills identification.** Workshop: Tuesday 18 November, 15:00 - 16:50 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

SESSIONS

SESSION ONE: BRIEFING Monday 22 September, 9:30 - 10:20 C22

I will take you through the module, explaining how teaching will be organized and what you should expect during the workshop sessions. For these workshops you will be organized into a number of smaller groups. This session will also introduce you to the department and the way it works, and to the different kinds of teaching (lectures, seminars, tutorials and so on) you can expect. It will explain who you should contact for different kinds of problems and issues (personal tutor, first year tutor, member of administrative staff etc.), and how to contact them in an appropriate manner. At the end of this session I will introduce the three assignments. **The first assignment is to be submitted electronically by 12:00 noon Tuesday 7 October and the second is to be submitted electronically by 12:00 noon Tuesday 14 October. The essay is due by 12:00 noon Friday 31 October.**

SESSION TWO: GOOD PRACTICE AND HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM Week One, Tuesday 30 September, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politics Building

It is extremely important that you understand what plagiarism is so that you can ensure that you do not make illegitimate use of others' work in your assignments. All the written work that you produce during the next three years (including the essay that you will write for this module) will need to be properly sourced and referenced. In the workshop that follows Sessions Two and Three, you will be introduced to your seminar teacher, who will lead a discussion of different examples of good, bad and unfair practice to make sure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and what strategies you should adopt to avoid it. Your seminar tutor will provide one or more exercises on the theme of good practice.

SESSION THREE: LIBRARY RESOURCES AT ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY, Week One, Tuesday 30 September, 12:45 - 13:30, Main Hall, International Politics Building.

This session will introduce you to the library resources available to history students at Aberystwyth. In the workshop that follows Sessions Two and Three, you will work through exercises designed to familiarise you with these resources. You will also discuss the first assignment (the 500 word summary), and examine a good example of student work for this assignment.

SESSION FOUR: EFFECTIVE PARAPHRASING AND USING THE DEPARTMENTAL STYLE GUIDE, Week Two, Tuesday 7 October, 12:10 - 14:00 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

This session will introduce the **Departmental Style Guide**, which will help you to produce full and accurately formatted footnotes and bibliographies for your written assignments. In the workshop, your seminar tutor will set you one or more exercises on the theme of paraphrasing and referencing sources.

SESSION FIVE: BUILDING UP A BIBLIOGRAPHY, Week Two, Tuesday 7 October, 15:00 - 16:50 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

This session will familiarise you with different kinds of texts and the terms historians use to describe them (primary sources, monographs, surveys and so on), and give you important pointers on how to construct your reading lists for future assignments in history. By the end of the workshop session you should be confident that you are familiar with the main different kinds of academic writing and what you can gain from reading them. You will also discuss the bibliographical exercise, and examine a good example of student work for this assignment.

SESSION SIX: PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: DOCUMENTARY SOURCES, Week Three, Tuesday 14 October, 12:10 - 14:00 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

The first presentation will focus on how historians of different periods approach different types of documentary sources. This will be followed by a workshop in which your seminar tutor will lead you in document analysis of a range of sources.

SESSION SEVEN: PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: NON-DOCUMENTARY SOURCES, Week Three, Tuesday 14 October, 15:00 - 16:50 MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

The second presentation will discuss approaches to non-documentary sources of different kinds. In the workshop, your seminar tutor will lead you in a discussion and in the analysis of sources relevant to their own area of research.

SESSION EIGHT: VISIT TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES. Week Four, Tuesday 21 October, Details to be confirmed.

SESSION NINE: ESSAY PREPARATION AND STYLE. Week Five, Tuesday 28 October, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politics Building

This session will focus upon essay preparation and the development of an appropriate, academic prose style. In the workshop that follows Sessions Eight and Nine, your seminar tutor will discuss with you the key characteristics of good style, working with published examples and with anonymised examples of student work. The workshop will also address the marking criteria for essays at Part One.

SESSION TEN: WHAT IS HISTORIOGRAPHY? Week Five. Tuesday 28 October, 12:45 - 13:30 Main Hall, International Politics Building

For most of your undergraduate assignments in history, you will be expected to show evidence that you have engaged with the existing literature on the question you are considering. This session provides an introduction to historiography (simply put, 'the study of the writing of history and of written histories'). In the workshop that follows Sessions Eight and Nine, you will undertake various exercises on this theme. For example, you might contrast different accounts of the same topic, and think about why these accounts might be different and how you would sum up these differences to create a mini literature review.

SESSION ELEVEN: ESSAY TUTORIAL. Weeks Seven OR Eight. Details on date, time and place to be confirmed individually by your seminar tutor.

You will receive verbal and written feedback on your Introduction to History essay in a one-on-one essay tutorial with your seminar tutor.

SESSION TWELVE: EXAMINATIONS. Week Seven, Tuesday 11 November, 12:10 - 12:45 Main Hall, International Politic Building

Examinations form an extremely important part of the assessment process for most of the modules you will take over the next three years. In order to achieve your potential and give yourself the opportunity to achieve the best degree possible, it is important for you to understand how to prepare yourself well. This session will introduce the marking criteria used for examining in the department and discuss good revision techniques, preparation for examinations, and how to approach questions under exam conditions. In the workshop that follows Sessions Twelve and Thirteen, you will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with exam papers at degree level and 'mark' genuine, anonymised answers to questions on previous papers.

SESSION THIRTEEN: CONCLUSIONS Week Seven, Tuesday 11 November, 12:45 - 13:30, Main Hall, International Politics Building

This session will reflect upon history at university and beyond. The workshop that follows Sessions Twelve and Thirteen will give time for the discussion of different types of history.

SESSION FOURTEEN: THINKING ABOUT CAREERS AND WIDER OPPORTUNITIES: Week Eight, Tuesday 18 November, 12:10 - 14:00, MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

This session focuses upon your preparation for the world beyond the University of Aberystwyth. How can you make yourself stand out from the crowd when you graduate and move on to work or further study? Topics covered in a series of question-and-answer sessions will include study abroad, work placements and work experience, volunteering and possibilities for future directions.

SESSION FIFTEEN: SKILLS IDENTIFICATION: Week Eight, Tuesday 18 November, 15:00 - 16:50, MedRus Mawr, Penbryn

The theme of this session is the identification of useful and transferable skills that you have developed, or will be developing over the next three years, both in the course of your academic studies and in your other activities. Exercises will include a short-listing activity in which you will evaluate several CVs against a list of criteria for a particular post. As a follow-up activity, you will be encouraged to attend one of the Careers

Service Drop-In sessions (held every weekday between 10:30 and 13:00), or to book an appointment if you need longer, to talk about where you are currently, and how you might build up your CV.

WRITTEN WORK

There are three pieces of written work for this module. You should save a copy of the first and second, as they are likely to be of help when you are writing the final assignment (the short essay). All three pieces of work are compulsory and all will be formally assessed. They must be submitted via the Blackboard site. These assignments will be text-matched against a wide variety of sources, and an originality report will be created for each one. Further details of how this process operates will be provided in Session Two.

Due dates for all three pieces of work are given below. Extensions on these dates can only be granted by the Part One Tutor (Dr Michael Roberts, mfr@aber.ac.uk) and only in the most pressing of circumstances. **If there are no valid grounds for late submission, the piece of work will receive a zero.**

1. Précis/ Summary (25% of assessed mark). This should be no more than 500 words and should attempt to summarise the main points of a larger piece of text provided for you by your seminar tutor. This exercise aims to encourage proficiency and economy in note-taking and to guide you away from the sorts of bad practice than can spill over into essay writing. Any brief quotation from the original must be clearly indicated with quotation marks ('We hold these truths to be self-evident') and a page number in brackets. You are not expected to provide footnote references to any quotations, as the source of the material will be obvious from the title you give it (e.g. 'Summary of Vickery, Amanda. *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*. New Haven; London, 1998. pp. 39-52.) **Due date: 12:00 noon Tuesday 7 October**

2. Bibliographical Exercise (25% of assessed mark). You will need to compile a bibliography of between fifteen and twenty pieces of work in preparation for your essay. In most cases your starting point for this will be a mini bibliography provided by your seminar tutor to accompany his/her essay questions, though you may choose an essay question selected by one of the other seminar tutors and use his/her mini bibliography instead. Your bibliographical exercise should include a range of 'types': primary sources; secondary sources, including articles and monographs; websites, where appropriate, and a discussion of these sources. The sources should be cited correctly, as demonstrated in the **Departmental Style Guide** (this will be distributed to HY12120 students at an early session and it is also available on the HY12120 Blackboard site). Your discussion, which may be arranged item by item or placed at the end of your list of sources, should explain how you intend to use these items in writing your essay. **Due date: 12:00 noon Tuesday 14 October**

3. Short essay (50% of assessed mark). Your essay, which should be no more than 2,000 words, should attempt to make use of the material gathered in the bibliographical exercise. You should, of course, also aim to put into practice the skills acquired or developed during the module. **Please note that you must reference all your sources correctly and provide a full bibliography of all sources used at the end of the essay.** **Due date: 12:00 noon Friday 31 October**

Feedback on the preliminary assignments will be provided within the Introduction to History workshops. Feedback on the essay will be given at Session Eleven, an Essay Tutorial in Weeks Seven or Eight, which you are expected to attend.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How far did anti-Semitic violence affect the lives of Jews in medieval England?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using chronicles as a source for medieval history?
3. Assess the ways in which the Black Death affected the nature of women's work in peasant communities.

4. Assess the evidence for the contribution of women's labour to the economy of the peasant household.
5. What do the available primary sources suggest about relationships between parents and children in pre- and post-adolescence in the early modern period (1450-1700), and what are the limitations of such sources?
6. What were the primary factors that affected the characteristics of the English family in the early modern period?
7. How far is it possible to generalise about the lives of women in eighteenth-century England?
8. To what extent did women experience a widening of leisure opportunities in eighteenth-century England?
9. What were the causes of the European Revolutions of 1848?
10. Why did France become a Republic in 1848?
11. To what extent did the acquisition of an overseas empire in the 1890s and early 1900s mark a break with the past for the United States?
12. How convincing is the argument that US expansionism in the 1890s was driven by economic factors?
13. What were the principal causes of fascism's rise to power in Italy?
14. To what extent do scholarly interpretations of the Italian fascist regime differ?
15. 'Great individuals are only important in so far as they reflect wider social forces'. Discuss with reference to EITHER Stalin OR Hitler.
16. 'Do you really think it would be possible to retain power for fourteen years and to have the backing of the masses, millions of people, owing to methods of intimidation and fear? This is impossible.' (Stalin, 1931). Discuss the extent to which the stability of the Soviet regime was based on fear.
17. What are the advantages, and disadvantages, of using the evidence of diaries as source material for the period 1939-1945?
18. Evaluate the social impact of the Second World War in Britain.
19. How did perceptions of British colonialism change throughout the twentieth century?
20. How has our understanding of the Mau Mau in Kenya developed since the colonial era?

MARKING CRITERIA

Class	Mark range	Descriptive equivalent for precis/summary	Descriptive equivalent for bibliographical exercise
First Class Honours – I	80 and above An outstanding first	Stylishly written and impressively mature précis which successfully identifies the key issues and summarises them in a sophisticated and intelligent manner. Concise and economical. Evidence of serious thought and consideration. Well-judged balance of detail and analysis. Well-judged amount of emphasis given to various issues within source.	Extended bibliography of over 20 works, consisting of a variety of different academic formats (i.e. monographs, text-books, edited collections of essays, journal articles, websites). Highly mature and sophisticated analysis of the sources and their place in the wider historiography. Inclusion of unexpected and/or original sources with relevance to the subject under consideration. Excellence sustained throughout.
	75 - 79 A solid first	An excellent précis which is fluently written and which successfully summarises the most important issues. Ability to summarise the meaning of the relevant issues and not merely describe them. Concise.	Lengthy bibliography of 20 or more works with sufficient variety of sources. Mature and often sophisticated analysis. Good awareness of historiography.
	70 - 74 A first which is borderline or just above	Demonstrates a clear awareness of the salient points and an ability to discuss them analytically and incisively. Frequent evidence of undoubted quality but not sustained across the entire range.	Lengthy bibliography characterised by a wide range of different sources and discussed in an intelligent and often sophisticated manner. Evidence of undoubted quality but not sustained across the entire range.
Upper Second Class Honours (II.i)	60 - 69	Main points of argument successfully identified and outlined. Intelligent summary of main points with sufficient emphasis given to most relevant issues. Focused, well balanced and clearly proficient précis but a bit mechanical and/or overly descriptive in places.	Intelligent awareness and cogent discussion of a relatively wide range of sources. Good awareness of wider historiography and some ability to locate various sources within this historiography. Methodical and business-like in approach.
Lower Second Class Honours (II.ii)	50 - 59	Quite competent but either insufficiently concise, too general, or marred by irrelevancy in places. Tendency to oversimplify and neglect central issues. Some obvious derivations, omissions or misconceptions through either hurried or inadequate preparation.	Uneven in its selection of different types of sources due to limited range of reading. Some understanding and insight evident but not sustained.
Third Class Honours (III)	40 – 49	Some understanding evident, but also frequently tangential or irrelevant. Poorly organised and failure to identify most relevant issues. Inability to apportion correct amount of emphasis.	Insufficient number and/or variety of sources. Superficial or misguided discussion of sources and failure to locate them in wider historiography.
Borderline Fail	30 – 39	Some relation to source but too often confused and irrelevant. Inability to identify most relevant issues. Poorly expressed. Elements of unacceptable academic practice.	Very limited number of sources. Poorly written discussion. Confused and superficial. Elements of unacceptable academic practice.
Fail	20-29	Negligible or wholly irrelevant content. Failure to meaningfully summarise the text in question. Elements of unacceptable academic practice. Short measure.	Negligible or wholly irrelevant content. Failure to identify sufficient different categories of relevant work. Discussion of sources unsatisfactory. Short measure. Elements of unacceptable academic practice.
	11-19	Wholly irrelevant content. Failure to summarise the text in question. Significant unacceptable academic practice. Very short measure.	Wholly irrelevant content. Failure to identify different categories of relevant work. Failure to provide a discussion of sources. Significant unacceptable academic practice.
	1-10	Wholly irrelevant content. Substantial unacceptable academic practice	Wholly irrelevant content. Substantial unacceptable academic practice.
	0	No précis submitted. Extensive unacceptable academic practice.	No bibliographical exercise submitted. Extensive unacceptable academic practice.

Class	Mark range	Descriptive equivalent for Part One Option exams	Descriptive equivalent for Part One Core and Option essays
First Class Honours - I	80 and above An outstanding first	Exceptional insight, sophistication and originality. Stylishly written, persuasively argued and impressively mature work that indicates an ability to undertake advanced research with imagination and tenacity.	Intellectually mature, rigorous in argument and sophisticated in exposition, with independence and originality of interpretation. Thoroughly grounded in the literature and alert to wider (e.g. comparative, interdisciplinary, methodological) perspectives. A very discerning historiographical awareness, and sophisticated organisation of material. Clear evidence of the potential to undertake advanced research.
	75 - 79 A solid first	A high level of critical and original thought, with strong evidence of a capacity to pursue independent lines of enquiry and to conduct perceptive and scholarly research.	Demonstrates a high level of critical engagement with historical literature. Clear signs of originality of thought and sophistication in presenting an argument. Firm grasp of historiographical issues, and awareness of wider (e.g. comparative, interdisciplinary, methodological) perspectives. A perceptive and analytical approach sustained across the whole essay. Clearly and elegantly written and presented.
	70 - 74 A first which is borderline or just above	Shows a clear awareness of the salient points and an ability to discuss them analytically and incisively, allied to a capacity for developing independent ideas. Frequent evidence of undoubted quality but not sustained across the entire range.	Identifies the key issues and analyses them critically, with a discerning historiographical awareness. Intelligent structure and persuasive argument. Elements of originality and high quality, but not sustained throughout. Identifies the key issues and analyses them critically, with some awareness of historiographical issues. A clearly structured argument, written readably, clearly and precisely. Some independent ideas expressed, and relevant supporting evidence presented. Draws on a wide range of reading, beyond the course reading lists where necessary, and uses such literature judiciously.
Upper Second Class Honours (II.i)	60 - 69	Thoughtful, discriminating, well informed and cogently argued. Evidence of wide reading and ability to identify key issues. Clearly proficient but a bit mechanical.	Intelligent awareness and cogent discussion of the issues. Clearly focussed, thoroughly and thoughtfully prepared. Judicious and well balanced in its synthesis of conflicting views. Methodical and businesslike in approach.
Lower Second Class Honours (II.ii)	50 - 59	Quite competent overall but may be over reliant on course material and based on limited reading. May suffer from: lack of depth or detail; failure to focus sufficiently on the question; tendency to oversimplify; neglect of central issues	Broadly relevant and competent, but uninspired in approach and pedestrian in structure and argument. May be uneven in its coverage due to limited range of reading. Some obvious derivations, omissions or misconceptions through either hurried or inadequate preparation. Tendency towards over-simplification.
Third Class Honours (III)	40 - 49	Some understanding evident, but also frequently irrelevant or tangential. Inadequately informed or erroneous in matters of fact and interpretation. Poorly organised and/or expressed.	A shallow or misguided response based on little appropriate reading. Thinly expressed and argued, little analytical awareness. Lacking in structure and direction. Some elements of unacceptable academic practice.
Borderline Fail	30 - 39	Signs of some knowledge at a fairly elementary level, but for the most part confused, poorly organised and expressed.	Some ideas on the period but few on the topic. Failure of understanding resulting in superficiality and frequent confusion. Poorly presented and/or organised. Elements of unacceptable academic practice.
Fail	20-29	Patently unprepared. Inability to answer the question. Short measure. Poor standard of literacy.	Negligible or wholly irrelevant content. Failure to answer the question. Elements of unacceptable academic practice. Short measure
	11-19	Failure to address the question. Very short measure. Very poor standard of literacy.	Wholly irrelevant content. Very short measure. Failure to address the question. Significant unacceptable academic practice.
	1-10	Extremely short measure. Complete failure to address the question or anything relevant.	Wholly irrelevant content. Extremely short measure. Substantial unacceptable academic practice.
	0	No answer attempted.	No essay submitted. Extensive unacceptable academic practice.