

## Revised undergraduate programme specification

### School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

#### CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	BA History
Final award	BA
Intermediate awards	n/a
Mode of attendance	Full time (3 years)
UCAS code	V100 BA/H
Professional body accreditation	n/a
Date specification created/updated	January 2016

#### WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

Why study at SOAS?	SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community. <b>Click here for more information.</b>
What is special about this programme?	Studying History in general allows students to acquire a range of skills across a number of fields, which foster the ability to think critically and to analyze complex problems. Studying History at SOAS also makes it possible to acquire a global perspective on how the world got to where it is today, and to develop an in-depth knowledge of particular regions and countries in Africa, the Near and Middle East, and Asia, which are becoming increasingly prominent in today's world.

Who would it suit?	<p>Studying history can lead to a wide range of careers, including but not limited to: commercial, industrial and public service management; business and finance professions; marketing, sales and public relations; teaching and lecturing, librarianship, and archive and museum work. Recent graduates have found positions as analysts, executive assistants, librarians, managers, and teachers, in a variety of organisations, ranging from the House of Lords and Embassies, through schools, universities, and research institutes, to the public sector and private companies. Undergraduate work in history is also an excellent foundation for postgraduate study, in history or related disciplines. Recent academic destinations have included Cambridge, Exeter, King's, LSE, Oxford, and Sussex, as well as top-ranked universities in Europe, North America, and elsewhere.</p>
Programme structure	<p>Students take the equivalent of four units a year, of which at least three should be in History.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the first year, students take: H101 Approaching History, which provides an introduction to the study of history at the university level; H102 The History of the World, which provides a global framework and comparative perspective with which to study more focused subjects; and one or two more 100-level modules, which provide introductions to the different regions we study at SOAS.</li> <li>• In the second year, students take: H201, an introduction to historical research, which provides the foundation for the final-year dissertation; one unit of thematic modules, providing an opportunity to place the study of particular regions in comparative context; and one or two units of regional modules.</li> <li>• In the third year, as the culmination of their degree, students write a 10,000-word dissertation. For some, this will take the form of an H500 Independent Study Project. For others, it will be an H400-level 'long essay', linked to an H300-level taught module. All students take</li> </ul>

	one of the latter (H300-level) modules, focusing on the analysis of primary sources. Students also take an additional module, providing an opportunity to acquire context and/or comparative material for their own research.
Assessment summary	All undergraduate history modules, with the exception of H101, H201, and the final-year dissertation, are assessed by a combination of coursework essays and timed exams. Some modules include presentations and/or participation as an assessed element. The weighting between the different kinds of assessment varies by course. With the exception of the core modules, noted above, first-year courses are all assessed by 50% exam and 50% coursework essays. Thereafter, exams account for between 40 and 60% of the final mark.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree. These can be viewed at:

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/>.

The specific requirements for history are currently ABB at A-level or 33 (5/5/5) on the International Baccalaureate. Candidates with 'non-standard' qualifications are usually invited for interview.

## PROGRAMME AIMS

What will this programme give the student an opportunity to achieve?

- The programme will allow the student to cultivate their awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures and societies in the world today, the historical processes that have produced this diversity and continue to unfold, and the importance of historical context in understanding past and present.
- The programme will allow the student to gain an understanding of one or more of the following regions covered at SOAS: Africa, the Near and Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.
- The programme will allow the student to develop their skills in accessing and acquiring data, including texts and other sources, in using a variety of theories and methods in order to evaluate and interpret these, in marshalling an argument and in presenting their results, in both oral and written form.

## **PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

What will the student learn?

### **Knowledge**

- Students will gain an outline knowledge of the history of one or more of the five main regions, together with the ability to relate these to the broad outlines of world history.
- Students will gain an in-depth knowledge of one or more topics within these regional histories, involving the intensive study of historical sources.
- Students will learn about a variety of historical approaches to the interpretation and understanding of the past, applying these on both large and small scales, in diverse historical locations.

### **Intellectual (thinking) skills**

- Students will learn to acknowledge and respect the contingency and complexity of different historical contexts, together with the limits that this places on reductionist accounts of human activity and experience.
- Students will develop an ability to understand and assess concepts, theories and arguments and to specify their strengths, weaknesses, and the limits of their applicability.
- Students will learn how to assess data and evidence critically, from both historical sources and contemporary accounts, and how to resolve problems of conflicting sources and interpretations.
- Students will learn how to synthesize their findings in order to advance firmly-substantiated arguments, which acknowledge both the limits of the evidence and the contingency of the conclusions.

### **Subject-based practical skills**

- Students will develop an ability to read and analyze a variety of texts and other sources, including both historical materials and academic writing, ranging across a number of fields.
- Students will learn how to cope with the fragmentary nature of the historical record and to operate according to rules of evidence, which demand the use of a range of sources and encourage reflexivity in the use to which they are put.
- Students will learn how to design and execute a substantial, multi-stage research project, including preliminary formulation, project proposal, execution, modification and final presentation.

### Transferable skills

- Students will learn how to access and evaluate data from a range of sources effectively and efficiently, including the informed use of electronic databases and other online media.
- Students will learn how to be precise and cautious in their use of evidence and how to integrate data from multiple sources.
- Students will learn how to solve complex problems of analysis and synthesis in and among a number of fields, ranging from economics and politics to culture and belief.
- Students will learn how to participate effectively in argument and debate and to communicate their position and findings in oral and written form.

### PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

How will the student's study be structured? How will they achieve an award?

**Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award.** SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes. Details can be found at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreetregulations/file60378.pdf>

**Programme structure diagram.** Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
1	1	tbd	H101 Approaching History	30	Core	
1	1	tbd	H102 The History of the World	30	Compulsory	
1	1	n/a	n/a	30	Compulsory	One of the H100-level regional introductions as listed below
1	1	n/a	n/a	30		<i>Either</i> one of the H100-level regional introductions as listed below <i>or</i> an open option.
2	2	tbd	H201 Historical Research	30	Core	
2	2	tbd	n/a	30	Compulsory	One unit of second year thematic modules as listed below
2	2	n/a	n/a	30	Compulsory	One unit of second year regional modules as listed below.

2	2	n/a	n/a	30		<i>Either one further unit of second year regional modules as listed below or an open option in another department.</i>
3	3	n/a	n/a	30	Core	One of the H300-level modules listed below.
3	3	n/a	n/a	30	Core	<i>Either the H400-level module ('long essay'), linked to the above H200-level module or the H500 Independent Study Project.</i>
3	3	n/a	n/a	30	Compulsory	One further unit of second year regional modules as listed below
3	3	n/a	n/a	30		<i>Either one further unit of second year regional modules as listed below or an open option in another department.</i>

NB. Students should note that with the exception of the H100-level introductory modules and H201, it is not always possible to offer all modules listed every year. Students will be informed which modules are running in advance of course sign-up in the spring.

### 100-level modules

#### *Core module:*

H101 Approaching History – 154800292

#### *Compulsory module:*

H102 The History of the World – 154800293

#### *Regional introductions:*

H110 Introduction to the History of Africa - 154800228

H120 Introduction to the History of East Asia - 154800229

H130 Introduction to the History of the Near and Middle East - 154800230

H140 Introduction to the History of South Asia - 154800231

H150 Introduction to the History of South East Asia - 154800232

### 200-level modules

#### *Core module:*

H201 Historical Research: Approaches, Methods, Design – module code tbd

#### *Thematic modules:*

H211 Cities in History – module code tbd

H212 Frontiers in History – module code tbd

H213 Gender in History – module code tbd

H214 Violence in History – module code tbd

*Regional modules:*

H234 Culture and Identity in Modern South Asia 1800-2000 - 154800264

H235 Gandhi and Gandhism - 154800103

H236 State and Society in Mughal India

H241 The Middle East in the Period of the Crusades, 1050-1291 - 154800254

H246 Cities of Paradise and Empire - 154800211

H247 Turks, Mongols and Mamluks 1054-1500 - 154800222

H248 The Making of the Modern Middle East - 154800227

H253 Islamic Reformism in South East Asia 1760s - 1960s - 154800212

H254 Indigenous Warfare & Society in Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1300-1830 - 154800240

H270 Society and Culture in Twentieth-Century Africa - 154800244

H275 Race, Class and Culture in the History of Southern Africa – 154800221

H278 Muslim Societies in West Africa

H280 Atlantic Slavery and Its Legacies: Western Africa Ca 1500-2000 - 154800247

H283 Modern Japan - 154800233

H297 Modern China - 154800281

**300-, 400- and 500-level modules**

H333 Urban Modern Eastern Asia (I)

H334 The Mongols and the Islamic World (I)

H337 Histories of Partition: India and Palestine (I) - 154800276

H343 Reform, Resistance and Revolution: the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909 (I) – 154800197

H348 Rulers, Rebels and Scholars in Early Islam, 600-1200 - (1.0 Unit)

H353 The Creation of Modern Burma 1852-C.1941 (I) - 154800252

H378 Violence, Identity & Politics in Modern East and Northeast Africa (I) - 154800262

H379 Asante, the Gold Coast and the British, 1807-1935 (I) - 154800217

H382 Opium and Empires, 1773 to 1919: China, India and Britain (I) - 154800192

H433 Urban Modern Eastern Asia (II)

H434 The Mongols and the Islamic World (II)

H437 Histories of Partition: India and Palestine (II) - 154800279

H443 Reform, Resistance and Revolution: the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909 (II) – 154800198

H448 Rulers, Rebels and Scholars in Early Islam (II) - 154800280

H453 The Creation of Modern Burma 1852-C.1941 (II) - 154800253

H478 Violence, Identity & Politics in Modern East and Northeast Africa (II) - 154800263

H479 Asante, the Gold Coast and the British, 1807-1935 (II) - 154800218

H483 Opium and Empires, 1773 to 1919: China, India and Britain (II) - 154800193

## **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

### **Knowledge**

- Students gain an outline knowledge of world history and of one or more regions in introductory courses in the first year.
- Students develop an in-depth knowledge of topics within the regions through intermediate and advanced courses in the second and third year.
- Students begin to learn about approaches to history in H101 in their first year and explore the variety of such approaches throughout the course of study.
- In all courses, students acquire this knowledge through lectures and tutorial, essays and exams, culminating in the design and execution of a substantial research project in their final year.

### **Intellectual (thinking) skills**

- Students will develop their understanding of both the historical past and historiographical approaches to history through directed reading, participation in tutorial discussion and presentations, essay-writing and exams.
- Students will learn how to assess data and synthesize findings in presentations, essay-writing and exams, culminating in their final-year research project.

### **Subject-based practical skills**

- Students will develop their ability to work with a range of academic material throughout the course of study, through tutorial discussion and essay-writing.
- Students will learn how to read and evaluate historical sources particularly in their final year, through the research project and exams.

### **Transferable skills**

- Students will learn how to access data in the core first-year courses and throughout the course in preparing coursework essays and presentations.
- Students will develop their ability to deploy evidence, synthesize findings and construct arguments in tutorial discussion, essay-writing and exams.
- Students will learn how to design and execute a research project during their



## REFERENCE POINTS

What has been the basis for the design of this programme?

The programme has been designed with reference to the QAA subject benchmark statement for History, as well as specifications and/or curricula for comparable programmes in the UK, as well as leading universities in the USA. The basis for the programme is a determination to provide a disciplined and structured training in history generally, which will allow students to develop a wide range of transferable skills. It does this by encouraging them to sustain a breadth of interest across regions, to develop their ability to compare between different times and places, and to cultivate their own regional and thematic interests in the history of Africa, the Near and Middle East and Asia, allowing them to choose among the widest variety of courses on these regions available in UK universities. The programme has been run successfully over a number of years, as attested to by student satisfaction surveys, external examiners' comments and regular programme reviews, as well as student success in finding postgraduate employment and being accepted to advanced degree programmes.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School's Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/>).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:

- a regular History Department staff-student forum, in which student representatives can communicate feedback to the programme convenor and undergraduate personal tutors;
- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students' Union) where many relevant issues are discussed;

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Add in links to other relevant information, both internal and external, including:

- [SOAS Department of History](#)
- [SOAS BA History](#)
- [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate](#) Handbooks;
- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#);
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#).