



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ERASMUS Student Handbook

**Courses and degree transfer regulations for visiting
Erasmus students from the European Union**

2010-11

**A handbook for incoming ERASMUS students
taking courses in the History Department**

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Histry Department Webpage

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/>

This *Guide* should be read in conjunction with the most recent edition of the Department of History's *Undergraduate Student Handbook* which is available from the Department's web site.

Disclaimer

This document was published in January 2011 and was correct at that time. The Department reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, make variations to the content or methods of delivery of programmes of study, to discontinue programmes, or merge or combine programmes if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the College. Every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

Welcome to the History Department

Royal Holloway's History Department is the largest in the University of London and one of the biggest in the country. It is rated in the top categories for both teaching and research. Although we already attract a wide range of students to our degree programmes, we welcome and value the visiting students who come for a year to take our courses. We hope you will enjoy your stay at Royal Holloway. The purpose of this Handbook is to outline how we teach and what we expect of you.

The History Department is housed on the top floor of the McCrea building (indicated by the letter C before the room number). Being on the third floor, the room numbers of the departmental and staff offices start with 3**. The Student Common Room where you can sit, relax and meet your friends is C323 (off the foyer).

Communication

There are notice boards in C323 and at the top of the stairs. Written messages and notices to students are placed in pigeon holes in C323. Please note that some staff use their office doors as notice boards and will expect to communicate with you by **email at your RHUL address**.

All students are automatically allocated an email address on arrival at College. There are computer terminals in the two College libraries, in the Computer Centre, and in C323.

You should make a point of regularly checking the notice boards, your pigeon hole, and your RHUL email.

The History Department only accepts incoming ERASMUS students studying History from universities with which the History Department has a student mobility agreement, and only those students who at the time of their arrival are sufficiently proficient in the English language to pursue university studies in that language. It is the responsibility of the home university and of the students themselves to ensure that no other candidates will be put forward. Insufficient proficiency in English is likely to affect academic performance and may make it impossible for the student to complete some parts or all of their programme of study.

These institutions are:

France

Université Francois Rabelais, Tours
Paris X Nanterre

Prof. Bruno Judic
Prof A. Bellavitis

Germany

Freie Universität Berlin
Universität Heidelberg

Dr. Sigrid Borm
Prof. Dr. Thomas Maissen

Italy

Università degli Studi di Firenze [Florence]
Università degli Studi di Roma, La Sapienza

Prof. G. Vannini
Prof. R. Ago

Spain

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Prof. J. Amelang

Our Degrees

The Department teaches courses mainly for two full-time undergraduate degree programmes. The majority of our students are registered for *History*. A sizeable minority take *Modern History and Politics*. These are 3-year degrees.

At postgraduate level we teach one-year MA programmes (which can be taken over two years part time). We supervise MPhil and PhD research degrees (two and three years respectively full time or longer part time) which are examined by dissertation. For further information on postgraduate courses ask Marie-Christine Ockenden in C319.

All our degrees are of the University of London.

Administration

The degrees are administered from the Departmental Office (McCrea 315) which is run by the Departmental Administrator, Ms Penelope Mullens (penelope.mullens@rhul.ac.uk 01784 276371), with the assistance of the department's administrative staff. Please see the department's website for contact details. The office staff will keep you informed of the administrative aspects of your stay in the department. They are very keen to help you, but do remember that during term-time they are often working under considerable pressure.

Registration

All ERASMUS students register for the courses approved by their home universities via Royal Holloway International before they arrive at the university.

A meeting will be held to introduce students to the Department and to confirm their registration.

If you wish to change a course you should

- first check that it would conform with your home university's requirements
- then see the department's Undergraduate co-ordinator, Dr Alex Windscheffel in his office hours.
- finally confirm all changes with Dr Florian Schui

If you wish to have the option at the end of your ERASMUS year to stay at Royal Holloway in order to complete your degree at the University of London, please check with the UG co-ordinator that you are registered for the appropriate range of courses.

Courses

An incoming ERASMUS student is required to register for **at least two courses** in the History Department. You may not register for more than four units (60 ECTS). ERASMUS students must normally take a minimum of three units (45 ECTS) in addition to courses in the Language Centre. If you will also be working in the first or second term on a dissertation for your home university, we suggest you register for only two units (15 or 30 ECTS). There is time in the summer examination term for research.

Information about **English language courses** can be found on the website of Royal Holloway International:

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/international/support/home.aspx>

Course Availability

Normally only Group 1 and 2 courses (those starting HS2----) taught at Royal Holloway may be taken by incoming ERASMUS students (i.e. not those taught in central London or at other Colleges of the University of London). Some courses may be full, have prerequisites or be taught at the same time. You may also take HS2300, a separate 5,000-word assessed essay (equivalent to 7.5 ECTS). The list of second year courses is available on the department's website. The timetable is displayed in C323 and posted on the website of the history department.

At the discretion of the department Erasmus students may be allowed to take other undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Please contact the Erasmus coordinator with any queries.

Group 2 are full-year courses (1 unit, equivalent to 15 ECTS) taught from September to June.

Group 1 are half-unit courses ($\frac{1}{2}$ unit, equivalent to 7.5 ECTS) taught either in the Autumn Term (September-December) or in the Spring Term only (January-March). They are examined in May and June.

Other level two (second-year) half-unit courses are

Latin courses ($\frac{1}{2}$ unit, equivalent to 7.5 ECTS)

HS1111 *Introductory Latin for Historians*

HS2111 *Further Latin for Historians*

Assessable Coursework Option ($\frac{1}{2}$ unit, equivalent to 7.5 ECTS)

HS2300 *Independent Essay* (5,000 words)

Detailed course descriptions are to be found on the department's website. Please note that the selection of courses offered may change and are subject to availability.

Types of second-year courses

Group 1 courses

cover a relatively long chronological span and/or broad geographical spread. Taught by reference to big themes, illustrated through selected examples. Delivered by ten or eleven hour-long lectures, usually by the course leader, and ten hour-long tutorials, often by a separate tutor. Four essays (of 2,000 to 2,500 words) are to be written per course. There are two modes of assessment used in the department: (1) best coursework essay (30%) and two-hour examination (70%) **or** (2) two-hour exam (100%) (two questions to be answered in two hours). In both cases the value is 0.5 unit [equivalent to 7½ ECTS]

Group 2 courses

are more limited in chronological/geographical range. Normally a broad theme studied relatively intensively from a variety of angles. Delivered by twenty-one informal lecture/seminar sessions of two hours each. Requirements may vary, but as a rule four essays (of 2,000 to 2,500 words each) will have to be written per course. Assessment: best two formative essays (30%) and by written examination (70%) **or** written examination (100 %) (three questions to be answered in three hours).

Value: 1 unit [equivalent to 15 ECTS]

Assessed Essay

An additional half-unit [7½ ECTS] can be submitted in the form of coursework as an essay of 5,000 words (HS2300).

Dissertation study for home university

If you wish to be guided in your research whilst at Royal Holloway for a dissertation which will be assessed at your home university, please inform the department's ERASMUS coordinator, Dr Florian Schui. He will try to identify an appropriate staff member to advise you on the primary and secondary sources available in London for study.

Course Requirements

Study at British universities is normally full time. At Royal Holloway you are expected to be at the College **throughout** the teaching terms and to participate in **every** aspect of the teaching programme. You are required to attend **all lectures, seminars and tutorials** which form part of the course, to make oral presentations when requested, and to submit essays by the dates determined by the Department. If for any reason you are unable to attend or consign essays on time, you should request your tutor's permission beforehand. If you cannot do so, please notify the Department Office by e-mailing sandra.walton@rhul.ac.uk or by phoning 01784-443314.

Absence or late consignment will normally be condoned for 'good reason', such as illness or exceptional family circumstances. These will be determined in the first instance by the course tutor, who will require medical or other written documentation in support. If you are absent from lectures, tutorials or seminars for more than five days, or if coursework is handed in late for 'good reason', an *Extenuating Circumstances Form* (found on the department wepages and linked at the end of the handbook) should be completed and submitted with medical or other written documentation to the Departmental Office (McCrea 315).

It is departmental policy that all students submit essays in word-processed form.

If this is a skill you have not yet acquired, take the word processing courses organised by the Computer Centre <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Information-Services/Computer-Centre/training/student/index.html> . Please note that computer failure cannot be accepted as a reason for late submission. You must leave enough time to print your work before handing it in, and you should make allowances for the fact that personal or College computers and printers sometimes perform erratically. In particular, if you do not back up your work onto a USB memory stick and the College server or your computer fails or is stolen, the Department will be sympathetic, but will not accept this as a reason for a late submission.

Plagiarism

Definition of plagiarism

'Plagiarism' means the presentation of another person's work in any quantity without adequately identifying it and citing its source in a way which is consistent with good scholarly practice in the discipline and commensurate with the level of professional conduct expected from the student. The source which is plagiarised may take any form (including words, graphs and images, musical texts, data, source code, ideas or judgements) and may exist in any published or unpublished medium, including the internet.

Plagiarism may occur in any piece of work presented by a student, including examination scripts, although standards for citation of sources may vary

dependent on the method of assessment. Group working would constitute plagiarism where the discipline or the method of assessment emphasises independent study and collective ideas are presented as uniquely those of the individual submitting the work.

An allegation of plagiarism does not necessarily imply an allegation of intent on the part of the student to cheat. Situations which may, however, imply cheating in this context include: the use of sources which would not normally be available to the student, such as work submitted by others in previous years; an attempt to dismiss the plagiarism when presented with material evidence; collusion with another person; a repeat offence.

To identify plagiarism is an academic judgement, based on a comparison across the student's work in general, and/or on knowledge of the sources, of practice in the discipline and of expectations for professional conduct. Academic staff may therefore determine that plagiarism has taken place even if the source has not been identified.

Assessment offences

The College has regulations governing assessment offences which can found on the following website:

http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Registry/academic_regulations/Examination_Assessment_Offences.html#Plagiarism.

Offences include plagiarism, duplication of work, falsification, collusion, failure to comply with the rules governing assessment (including those set out in the 'Instructions to candidates'). The regulations set out the procedures for investigation into allegations of an offence and the penalties for such offences.

Modes Of Teaching And Learning

Reading time

Many students on arriving at a British university to take history courses are surprised to discover how much work they must do by themselves. It is rare for a student to have more than ten formal teaching hours in a week. At a university you are exploring knowledge for yourself within frameworks of guidance offered by your tutors. It is up to you to make sure that you use your time as constructively as possible. **We expect you to study about 35 hours per week, seven of which may be spent in classes and the remainder reading and working on essays.** As a student reading and writing in a foreign language, you may - at least at first - need to devote much more time. In fact, many English students use the vacations to catch up with their reading. If you cannot complete the required reading, ask your tutor to indicate a shorter selection for you.

Evaluation of Student Work and Assessment

There are two main types of assessment

- formative assessment (usually essays), which seeks to evaluate your coursework and to point the ways forward for your further development
- summative assessment, which provides an official grading of your achievement for the purpose of a final course result

Essays submitted on time and as part of formative assessment should be returned within two weeks with written feedback. At the start of the third term you should be able to collect your final report from your Personal Adviser.

ERASMUS students are bound by European Union rules, which require that they be assessed the *same* way as students graduating with a Royal Holloway degree. As most of our courses are taught over the first two terms and examined in the third term, **we only accept incoming ERASMUS students who register for the whole year. Satisfactory completion of the course requirements for each course unit is a mandatory prerequisite in order for your examination grades to be credited.** Non-attendance (except for documented *Extenuating Circumstances* (see course requirements) at all relevant lectures, classes and tutorials for the course and/or non-submission of all required pieces of coursework is likely to result in an award of 'Incomplete' being given for the course.

Summative grades (i.e. the final marks) and attestations of course participation and of the time spent at Royal Holloway are issued by the College Registry by the end of July direct to your home university (and not by the Department nor by tutors). Ask your home department's coordinator (listed in Contacts) or your university's ERASMUS or ERASMUS office for your marks. If they have not got them, please enquire with Ms Valentina Seravalle at Royal Holloway International. The essay cover sheets and final course report are composed only for your formative guidance and have no legal standing.

Examination Material And Appeals

All examination material is the property of the College and will not be returned to students or former students. All examination scripts are subject to the rigorous academic procedures of the examination process, and there is therefore no provision for the consideration of appeals against the results of examinations on academic grounds. However, representations may be considered on the grounds of administrative error, or where there is concern that an examination may not have been conducted in accordance with the relevant instructions and/or regulations. Any formal representations on these matters should be addressed to the Academic Registrar of the College, not to a member of staff in the History Department. **However, if a zero mark is recorded for a course you completed or if the course is not recorded on the transcript issued by the College, please contact in the first instance the departmental ERASMUS coordinator, Dr Florian Schui, informing him of the code and title of the course and the name(s) of the course leader and tutor who taught you.**

Student Evaluation Of Courses

Towards the end of each course unit you may be asked by your tutor to fill in an anonymous questionnaire giving your evaluation of the teaching you have received, the effectiveness of library provision, the overall quality of the course, and your satisfaction with the Department. These are used to monitor and improve courses.

Student Facilities And Rights

For further information on these (including the *Complaints procedure*), please consult the College web site

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/complaintsprocedure.aspx>.

Personal Adviser

Each student taking a degree programme in the Department is assigned to a personal adviser, who will see you at least in the first week of each term, and from whom you can collect your Final Course Reports in the summer term. The Personal Adviser can be seen in her or his office hours or by appointment. Your personal adviser is concerned to offer you advice about your work, to help you overcome any difficulties, and to discuss with you your academic work. **The departmental ERASMUS coordinator, Dr Florian Schui, is the personal adviser for ERASMUS students taking courses in the History Department.**

Uk University Marking System

Degrees are classified in the UK in bands: fail, pass, third class, second class, and first class. The second class is divided into upper and lower. Third class, second class, and first class are Honours degrees. Most of our History students achieve second class honours degrees. First class is exceptional. Here is a rough guide to the criteria by which a piece of work is assigned to a particular class band. For more detail, see the History Department's undergraduate guide via <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/history/informationforcurrentstudents/assessment.aspx>

a low third (40-42%): evidence of **some knowledge of the basic aspects** of a topic; perhaps contains irrelevant or muddled materials; confusion of theoretical positions; little evidence of reading or the use of conceptual models; descriptive, not analytical or evaluative.

a third (43-49%): a **grasp of the basic issues** demonstrated; attempt to relate the material to the essay question; largely descriptive but some evidence of reading; some understanding of relevant theory, but perhaps some main points missed out, or interpreted inaccurately.

a lower second [=2.2] (50-59%): a good **description** of the topic, perhaps without much analysis or critical thinking; an adequate structure; an evaluative conclusion; question analysed and most material relevant to the question; use of some appropriate theoretical models.

an upper second [=2.1] (60-69%): demonstration of **knowledge across substantive areas** and **fluent use of theory and concepts**; evidence of background knowledge and reading; sound structure and cohesive (a good 'flow'); some critical evaluation.

a first (>70%): as well as a good grasp of all the relevant facts and analysis or critical thinking (as described for a 2.1), a first-class essay puts ideas into a **context**, can be **self-evaluative and self-critical**, and will have some **original thinking** in it. It will be very clearly structured and completely relevant to the question.

Although there will be some differences from subject to subject, the main difference is between the ability to 'regurgitate' information (which probably will not earn you above a 2.2), and the ability to analyse your knowledge, to put it into context, and to see the implications of your argument (which are the expectations of a piece of work gaining a 2.1 or a first).

Transfer To History Degrees

Because some ERASMUS students have at the end of their year at Royal Holloway requested to transfer to undergraduate degrees taught in the Department, the College has approved a formal route to facilitate such transfers.

If you have already passed the equivalent of at least three units (i.e. at least 45 ECTS [60 European credits are considered a year's academic work]) in *History* or *Modern History and Politics* at your home university and

- complete for the whole of the academic year at Royal Holloway

- pass the number of second-year courses required by the *History* or *Modern History and Politics* degree programme (see the Department's Student Handbook

- <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/history/informationforcurrentstudents/home.aspx>.)

- have a satisfactory record of attendance, essay writing and seminar/tutorial participation in all these courses taken at Royal Holloway, and

- have completed an appropriate Language Centre course,

you may apply to transfer at the end of your ERASMUS year at Royal Holloway to the final year of the *History* or *Modern History and Politics* degree programme in order to complete a year later a University of London BA degree.

Determination of eligibility

You should indicate on your arrival at the College your intention to transfer. Potential transferring students will then attend a separate session with the departmental ERASMUS coordinator and be required to register for all the four units of the second year of the *History* or *Modern History and Politics* degree programme. The course units already taken at the home university will be examined in the first instance by the coordinator to establish that:

- they are units appropriate to the degree programme

- the number taken correspond to 45 ECTS.

The coordinator will present this information with the proposal, or intention, to transfer to the departmental Director of Undergraduate Studies for approval.

The Department intends to complete this stage of the procedure within the first half of the first term in order that the student would know as soon as possible whether or not he or she be eligible.

Pastoral care

The student will be assigned a personal adviser, normally the coordinator or a staff member who has experience of continental Europe or a particular interest in the specific university exchange; and will attend the normal departmental induction procedures for choosing final-year courses.

Decision to transfer

The student will confirm by the end of the second term her or his attention to transfer. At the start of the third term, the coordinator will make a recommendation to the departmental Director of Undergraduate Studies based on the final course reports of the *History* or *Modern History and Politics*

units taken and on the report from the Language Centre. The Director will decide subject to the rules of progression (i.e. passing a minimum of three second-year courses) and inform the student and the Registry, if possible in the first half of the third term.

Alternatively, ERASMUS students may apply at the end of their year at the College to transfer to the second year of the *History* or *Modern History and Politics* degree programmes and thus to take the University of London BA degree two years later.

Forms

Copies of the [Extenuating Circumstance](#) form and the Undergraduate [Essay Report](#) form forms can be downloaded from:

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/history/documents/pdf/extenuatingcircumstancesform.pdf>

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/history/documents/pdf/undergraduateessayreportform.pdf>