



School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK



Liberal Arts

2018/2019

Disclaimer

This document was published in August 2018 and was correct at that time. The School 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.

NOTE

This Handbook is for all students of Liberal Arts, including those taking Liberal Arts with a Language Year and those taking Liberal Arts with an International Year. It should be read as a supplement to the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures Handbook (available on the School webpages), which provides all general information about the SMLLC, the administrative home of Liberal Arts. Both handbooks should be read carefully at the start of the year and are available via the SMLLC website:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/student-department-information/student-department-information.aspx>

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Introduction to Liberal Arts

Liberal Arts offers you the opportunity to combine study of a number of different disciplines in different proportions, according to your own interests.

At the heart of the programme are core modules that introduce and develop interdisciplinary approaches to a wide range of issues.

You will be able to bring these critical resources to bear on a wide variety of course options offered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, as well as some courses from the Faculty of Management, Economics and Law, and the Faculty of Science.

In addition, you will study a modern foreign language in your first year (either from the beginning or building upon previous competences), which you can pursue throughout your studies if you wish.

Students who continue their study of French, German, Italian or Spanish as part of the four-year degree programme can spend an integrated year abroad developing their language skills at a university, as a teaching assistant or at a work placement. It is also possible to apply for an integral year of study abroad (without a language component) through the 4-year 'Liberal Arts with an International Year' programme.

All Liberal Arts students have a chance to acquire a sound grounding in the skills and knowledge needed to interpret and analyse texts and to be taught by specialists with research expertise in many different fields. By the end of your studies you will leave for the world of work with skills of critical enquiry, discipline, flexibility of thought, and clarity of expression.

This is a challenging degree which will require you to negotiate study in Departments and Schools across the University but you will have an administrative home in the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, in the International Building. The School Office, administrative staff and academic colleagues will offer advice and resources, and you will have dedicated support from your Programme Director.

We look forward to welcoming you to our vibrant community of students and staff.

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Communication

Personal Tutor

The SMLLC handbook gives full information about the Personal Tutor, whose role is to give advice and support at every stage of your undergraduate career.

Each student is assigned a Personal Tutor from academic staff within the SMLLC. In the case of Liberal Arts the Programme Director and one other colleague will serve as Personal Tutor for the students on the degree. This will ensure coherence of advice and optimum resolution of any issues.

Course Choice and Induction

Given the complexity of the degree and range of options available, your personal tutor will help you to select options before the start of each year and build a diet of courses suited to your interests. She or he will assist in building and establishing your timetable, helping you to address clashes and find suitable alternatives.

In induction week the Programme Director will arrange a meeting with the whole cohort and your personal tutor will also meet with each student on a one-to-one basis to address any queries and offer support. Your personal tutor will be available as a first point of contact throughout your first year and you can at any time request to meet with the Programme Director.

Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Liberal Arts degree programme

The **aims** of the Honours Degree programme in Liberal Arts are:

- to engage students imaginatively in the process of reading and analysing different types of texts;
- to develop knowledge and understanding relevant to the chosen fields of study;
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the creation, interpretation, and critical evaluation of knowledge in a range of disciplines;
- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement;
- to prepare students to undertake their own research under appropriate levels of supervision;
- to foster competence in at least one foreign language;
- to explore the delineation of disciplines as well as the value of interdisciplinary work;
- to encourage students to take progressive responsibility for their own study through negotiating subject areas of specialism with each other in seminars, through the informed choice of options, and through an extended piece of writing in the final year;
- to support the development of a range of transferable skills suitable both for further academic study and for a range of future careers.

Teaching and learning in the programmes are closely informed by the active research of staff. The multi-disciplinary nature of the programme encourages the development of a wide range of skills, both discipline-specific and transferable.

The **learning outcomes** of the Honours Degree programme in Liberal Arts are:

Knowledge and understanding

- the distinctive qualities of the concept of 'Liberal Arts';
- the benefits and challenges of comparative approaches to subject areas;
- a range of contemporary critical and theoretical approaches to culture;
- knowledge and understanding relevant to the disciplines chosen by the student.

Skills and other attributes

- critical skills in close reading, including analysis and critical interpretation of text and data;
- the ability to conduct research independently using traditional and electronic resources, and develop habits of reflection on study, reading, learning and research;*
- command of a wide vocabulary and appropriate critical and theoretical terminology;
- planning and execution of essays and project-work, bibliographical skills, developing a reasoned argument;*
- advanced written and oral communication skills, including the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;*
- the ability to organise and interpret complex information in a structured and systematic way, and to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts;*
- the capacity for independent thought and judgement, along with skills in critical reasoning;*
- information technology skills (including word processing, email, WWW, information handling and retrieval), and the ability to engage with the textual use of new media, video, TV, DVD and electronic;*
- interpersonal skills, involving recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others;*
- time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;*
- in addition, this programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthen the graduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity.

* transferable skills

Structure of the Liberal Arts degree programme

Liberal Arts (Y000)

Liberal Arts with a Language Year Abroad (Y002)

Liberal Arts with an International Year (Y001)

Liberal Arts (Y000)

Stage one:

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

LA1000 Liberal Arts 1: Cultural Encounters (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA1000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

A Language Course at a level suitable to the student (i.e. FR1009, GM1009, SN1001, IT1050 at advanced level or FR1010, GM1010, SN1010, IT1000 at beginners' level), equivalent to 1 unit. **[Mandatory, Condonable]**

and choose options equal to the value of **two** units from a list of Stage One courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage two:

Students must take the following **mandatory** course:

LA2000 Liberal Arts 2: Power and Dissent (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA2000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

and choose options equal to the value of **three** units from a list of Stage two courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage three:

Students must take the following **mandatory** course:

LA3000 Liberal Arts Dissertation (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Condonable]**

plus choose options equal to the value of **three** units from a list of Stage two and three courses offered on the Programme.

Liberal Arts with a Language Year Abroad (Y002)

Stage one:

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

LA1000 Liberal Arts 1: Cultural Encounters (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA1000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

A Language Course at a level suitable to the student (i.e. FR1009, GM1009, SN1001, IT1050 at advanced level or FR1010, GM1010, SN1010, IT1000 at beginners' level), equivalent to 1 unit **[Mandatory, Non-Condonable - must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

and choose options equal to the value of **two** units from a list of Stage One courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage two:

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

LA2000 Liberal Arts 2: Power and Dissent (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA2000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

A Language course at the suitable progression level (i.e. FR2009, GM2009, SN2001, IT2050 at advanced level or GM2010, SN2010, IT2000 at post-beginners' level), equivalent to 1 unit **[Mandatory, Non-Condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

and choose options equal to the value of **two** units from a list of Stage two courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage three: (Language Year Abroad)

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

FR/GM/IT/SN2501 Oral Examination in their chosen language (1 unit)

plus either:

Work Placement Project (1 unit) OR

Study Abroad (courses to the equivalent of 1 unit)

Stage four:

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

LA3000 Liberal Arts Dissertation (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Condonable]**

A language course at the suitable completion level (i.e. FR3009, GM3009, SN3001, IT3009) (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-Condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

plus options equal to the value of **two** units from a list of Stage two and three courses offered on the Programme.

Liberal Arts with an International Year (Y001)

Stage one:

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

LA1000 Liberal Arts 1: Cultural Encounters (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA1000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

A Language Course at a level suitable to the student (i.e. FR1009, GM1009, SN1001, IT1050 at advanced level or FR1010, GM1010, SN1010, IT1000 at beginners' level) (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Condonable]**

and choose options equal to the value of **two** units from a list of Stage One courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage two:

Students must take the following **mandatory** course:

LA2000 Liberal Arts 2: Power and Dissent (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Non-condonable – must be passed in order to progress to the next stage]**

LA2000 must be passed in order to progress to the next stage.

and choose options equal to the value of **three** units from a list of Stage two courses offered on the Programme, to be chosen from at least two academic disciplines.

Stage three (International Year):

Study Abroad (courses to the equivalent of 1 unit)

Stage four:

Students must take the following **mandatory** course:

LA3000 Liberal Arts Dissertation (1 unit) **[Mandatory, Condonable]**

plus choose options equal to the value of **three** full units from a list of Stage two and three courses offered on the Programme.

Building your Degree

The Liberal Arts degree programme is designed to be as flexible as possible, offering you the chance to construct a degree programme that works for you and offers you courses that interest you. We will offer you guidance in this process, to make sure you make the choices that are right for you both in the short and longer term. Please ensure that you attend all induction meetings at the start of the year.

In each year of study you will take a core unit designed for Liberal Arts students, and will build your degree around this. In the first year, you will also take a full unit in a Modern Foreign Language. You must continue this throughout the programme if you are taking a Language Year Abroad. Otherwise you can elect whether to continue or not with your study of a language. You will choose the remaining two or three units of study from the courses available, **ensuring that your courses cover at AT LEAST TWO areas of academic study in years 1 and 2**. Note that you may combine courses from different disciplines that are taught within the same department (so e.g. courses in Comparative Literature and Culture can be combined with courses in French or German). If you are in doubt please contact your personal tutor or the Programme Director.

Pathways and Specialisation

You may find it helps to think of your Liberal Arts degree in terms of distinct pathways – areas of particular interest which you would like to pursue through each year of study. This will not necessarily become a formal part of your programme of study, and you can of course decide during your first year whether a particular course or subject area excites you enough to want to take it further during the next year.

In Royal Holloway's Liberal Arts programme, unlike in some others (such as those in the USA), there is NO obligation to declare a particular subject as your 'major.' However, it IS possible for you to study towards a specialisation that will form part of your eventual degree title from a recognised degree discipline taught at Royal Holloway—e.g. Liberal Arts (History). In order to do this you must complete at least three full units (90 credits) in your chosen area. 30 of these credits may derive from the mandatory Dissertation, so long as it falls within the area of specialisation.

Please note that the decision to pursue a specialisation is NOT compulsory, and there is no expectation that students should specify one. If you do think you might wish to specialise, you do not need to change degree programme at any stage. You may express the intention to specialise at the start of your first year, or may prefer to wait. However, you should consider that if you choose **not** to study a unit within a particular subject in your first year, it may not be possible to specialise in this subject even if you choose it at subsequent stages.

Students who have fulfilled the conditions for specialisation a particular subject will be asked whether they wish to graduate with a specialisation. The specialisation will be awarded, once agreed, as an 'exit award' at the end of the programme and will appear on your degree certificate. Please note that specialisation pathways may be subject to restrictions, such as availability of courses, prior experience or qualifications.

Course Descriptions

For each course unit there is a Course Description. These set out:

- the coverage and content
- methods of assessment
- details of key texts, viewing and recommended reading

On the SMLLC web-pages you can find up-to-date details of:

- the mandatory Liberal Arts core courses (LA1000, LA2000, LA3000)
- our language courses (French, German, Italian, Spanish). These are mandatory in year one for Liberal Arts students (Y000) and optional in years two and three; mandatory throughout for Liberal Arts with a Language Year (Y002)
- all options (or 'content') courses run within the SMLLC i.e. those beginning FR, GM, IT, HS, ML.

For all other options courses you should consult the appropriate department or School.

Liberal Arts Course Units

As set out in the programme structure (above) you will take a mandatory full course unit in each of your three years of study.

These form the backbone of your programme and are devised specifically for Liberal Arts students. They are designed to introduce and establish the concept of Liberal Arts and to foster and develop interdisciplinary approaches. Taught by academic staff from different departments and Schools, they will help you to develop the analytical skills required to approach different disciplines. In years 1 and 2 two hour-long sessions also ensure that Liberal Arts students meet and study together regularly as a single cohort. In year 3 a dissertation allows you to choose an area of special interest to you.

Options Courses

The Departments and Schools offering selected options courses to Liberal Arts students in 2018-19 are:

- Biology
- Classics
- Drama
- Economics
- English
- Geography
- History
- Law, Criminology and Sociology
- Mathematics
- Media Arts
- Music
- Politics and International Relations
- School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures

The list of options courses available to you in the first year has been specified on your pre-registration form. This form contained the latest information at the time it was sent to you.

Please note that this list is subject to change year on year, as well as subject to availability.

Please be aware that:

- not all courses will run each year
- choices cannot always be accommodated in the timetable
- courses are subject to availability
- some courses will have prerequisites.

Each student will be able to develop a unique programme, depending upon his or her interests. Your personal tutor will advise and guide you in putting together your options each year.

Teaching and learning methods

A wide variety of **learning and teaching methods** are in use across the College consistent with the nature and demands of exceptionally wide-ranging disciplines. Learning and teaching methods include lectures, seminars, tutorials, guided independent reading and research, small group work, and self-study on Moodle. The choice of method depends on the nature of the subject-matter and group size.

Individual Course Specifications give further information, and students are encouraged to consult these both before choosing their course options and during their study. The different teaching methods also promote different transferable skills. Seminars, for example, are highly useful for the development of non-subject specific skills such as leadership, negotiation and presentation, in addition to a range of subject-specific skills.

The structure of **assessment** is designed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the intended outcomes in knowledge, understanding and skills (including transferable skills). Assessment forms include written examinations, coursework essays, assessed class work, oral presentations in class, Moodle tests, wikis and forums and dissertations/long essays. All coursework is returned with comments by the markers to provide formative assistance. Assessment criteria for those courses taught within the SMLLC are included in the SMLLC Handbook. Students should consult the relevant Handbooks for courses studied in other Departments or Schools.

Teaching will **normally** take the form of one hour per week for each half-unit course, that is two hours per week for full-unit courses, but some courses – including language classes – have more contact hours. Students are required to participate in classes, most of which tend to combine a formal lecturing element with seminar or tutorial groups.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend **all classes**. Failure to attend without good cause will normally result in disciplinary action. Students may not miss more than a total of **two classes** in succession or one week of work without submitting **written medical evidence**. Please see the SMLLC Handbook for further details.

Progression and award requirements

In all cases, the normal College progression regulations apply. Students must pass units to the value of **at least** 90 credits on each stage of the programme, and a minimum threshold applies even in the case where a fail may be allowed. Please check the undergraduate regulations for full details:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx>

In addition all students must pass the designated 'Mandatory' units each year in order to qualify for an award in the final year of study.

Students must pass LA1000 (Liberal Arts I: Cultural Encounters) to progress to stage two and LA2000 (Liberal Arts II: Power and Dissent) to progress to stage three. Students taking the Language Year must pass the language component in each year of study in order to progress. Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three (or four, if a Language Year Abroad or International Year has been taken), and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in the final stage. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%. Please refer to the programme specification for more detail on weightings for the Language Year and International Year respectively.

If students wish to specify a specialisation in their degree title—e.g. Liberal Arts (History)—they must complete at least 90 credits in their chosen area. 30 of these credits may derive from the Dissertation, so long as it falls within the area of specialisation.

The SMLLC sub-board of examiners will be responsible for scrutinising the results of candidates pursuing Liberal Arts degree programmes.

n.b. It is vital that you commit to all the course units you are taking, even if you do not plan to continue that discipline the following year. Your progress is at risk if you do not submit coursework and attend examinations and if you do not meet the minimum requirements sets out by the university. As soon as you encounter any problems please seek advice from your personal tutor.