



Studying History at Durham

June 2025



A quick reminder of the schedule:

This session: History at Durham

10.50 – 11.50: Why we study history

13.30 – 14.30: Why we study history



Every university offers something different.

You have to choose which university is right for you.

The History Department

43-46 North Bailey and Cosin's Hall (Palace Green)

4th for History in Complete University Guide, 2025

5th for History in Times University Rankings, 2025



**Breadth and depth:
range of options and
ability to specialise**

**Progression and
independence**



Progression

First year is 'preliminary'

Degree classification: 40% from second year marks; 60% from third year marks

Fewer, more intensive, contact hours by third year

From lectures to seminars

Lecture

a large group of students (maybe 150 + in first year; 40-60 in second year)

Seminar

a smaller group focussed on discussing ideas

First year is lecture-heavy: four lectures a week in terms 1 and 2

Third year: almost no lectures, teaching very largely through seminars

Ways of studying History at Durham

Single Honours (V100)

Joint Honours

- Classics
- English
- Modern Languages and Cultures

Combined Honours

- Liberal Arts
- Combined Social Sciences

Modules: there is some change from year to year,
and we cannot guarantee that any individual
module mentioned here will be available in a future
year . . .

. . . but we will make sure that you will study different
periods and different parts of the world – and that you will
have the opportunity to encounter different approaches to
history

Single Honours First Year

1 Core Module:
Making History
(double weighted)

4 Option Modules

Making history is taught by 'strands'
Examples from 2025-26 include:

- Mary, Queen of Scots
- Autumn-tide of the Middle Ages
- Race and land in 20th c. South Africa
- The lives of women in the medieval Middle East
- America in the 1990s: the road to Trump

In 2025-26, students will choose 4 modules from a list of 9, including

- Modern Times: A Cultural History of Europe, c. 1860-1960
- The Rise and Fall of American Slavery, 1607-1865
- Transformations in the Late Antique Mediterranean, c. 300- c. 700
- Decline and Crisis? Europe 1300-1500
- South Asia: Texts, Artefacts, Empires

'Making History' Strand: God's Chinese son and the Taiping rebellion

- What was the 'Taiping rebellion'? – a civil war? A new bureaucratic system?
- How have historians studied it – what sources have they used, and how?
- What does this tell us about 'modernity' in Chinese history?



Level 1 Option Module: Power in Africa

- Sub-Saharan Africa: manmade and natural disasters or human resilience and resistance?
- Partition of Africa and colonial rule
- Decolonization
- African initiatives and responses

Sample essay questions:

- Was medicine a tool of empire?
- Were young Africans drawn to the city to escape the traditions of the village?



Single Honours Second Year

1 Core Module:
Conversations
with History
(doubled weighted)

4 Option Modules

Examples running in 2025-6 include:

- American environmental history
- Decolonizing Africa
- Nixon, Kissinger and US foreign policy
- Constantinople: birth of a Late Antique mega-city
- Monarchy, magic and democracy: the United Kingdom since 1837

2 modules in first term; and 2 in second term. Some examples from the 28 modules running in 2025-26:

- Political Authority and Community in Medieval Egypt c. 900-1500
- Records, Archives and Power in the Middle Ages
- The Superconducting Super Collider: The Politics of Science in 20th c. America
- Modern China's Transformations
- Crime and Culture in Early Modern Europe
- Gender and Sexuality during Britain's Long Twentieth Century
- The Nazi Dictatorship: Culture and Society
- A 'Pure' Land? Gender, Caste and Community in South Asia, c. 1750-1950

Single Honours Third Year

Special Subject
(triple weighted)

3 hour seminar
Every week
Primary sources

Dissertation
(double weighted)

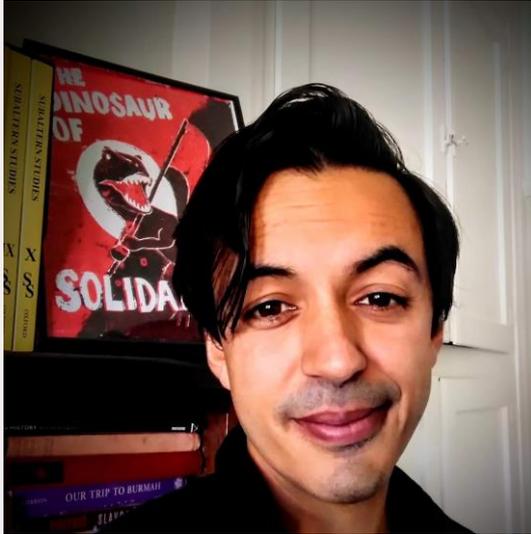
Independent study
Your ideas
Your questions
Your research
Breadth of expertise
for supervision

Option Module
(single module)

Significant historical
questions and
debates, e.g.:

Third Year Special Subjects

An animal history of colonial Asia



Succession: family, power and identity in the late medieval city



Re-writing Queen Elizabeth

Module Assessments

Coursework predominates: around 70% of classification

Currently also have exams in each year

The details: Joint Honours

LEVEL 1

- Three modules in History

LEVEL 2 & 3 (Ancient, Medieval and Modern)

- Between 5 and 7 modules in History across the 2 years

LEVEL 2 & 3 (History and English)

- Minimum of 40 credits per year in each department
- Between 100 and 140 credit in each department across the two years
- Usually: Special subject in History OR Dissertation and Single module

For History and Modern Languages, level 3 is spent abroad, so your final year is level 4

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/history/undergraduate/courses/>

Liberal Arts

LEVEL 1

- Up to three modules in History

LEVEL 2

- Up to four modules in History

LEVEL 3

- Up to 80 credits
in History

Subjects you can study in Liberal Arts

Department of Classics
and Ancient History



Department of English
Studies



Department
of History



Department
of Music



Department of
Philosophy



Department of
Theology and Religion



Modern Languages
and Cultures



History of
Art





East China Normal University

Shanghai, China



Chinese University of Hong Kong

Shatin, Hong Kong



University of Hong Kong

Pokfulam, Hong Kong



Kumamoto University

Kumamoto, Japan



Kyoto University

Kyoto, Japan



Nagoya University

Nagoya, Japan



National University of Singapore

Singapore



National Taiwan Normal University

Taipei, Taiwan



Osaka University

Osaka, Japan



Peking University

Beijing, China



University of Tokyo

Tokyo, Japan



Tsinghua University

Beijing, China



Waseda University

Waseda, Japan



Yonsei University

Seoul, South Korea



Zhejiang University

Hangzhou, China

Placement Year/ Year Abroad

- Students may take a placement year between years 2 and 3
- 40 weeks paid work experience – do not have to be history related
- A wide range of international partners for study abroad

Employability

Transferable skills:

- Independence
- Identification of sources/information
- Interpretation of sources/divergent opinions: critical evaluation of information
- Formation and defence of arguments
- Communication: structuring an argument
writing a report; oral presentations

Student Support

Pastoral care provided by seventeen distinct colleges

- Most colleges have a principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, support officer, student experience officer

Central student support and wellbeing services

- Including student safety, diversity and equality, counselling service, disability support, community engagement

Department support



History: 'standard' offer

A level offer - A*AA including History

Cambridge Pre-U - D2D3D3 including History

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma/OCR Cambridge Technical Extended Diploma – D*DD and History A level at grade A (or equivalent) is required

IB Diploma score - 38 with 666 at Higher Level including History

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/study/courses/v100/#entry-requirements-927478>

Contextual offers may be made – these involve lower grades

History: assessment of applications

Applications via UCAS

Our approach to the assessment of applications is ‘holistic’, considering:

- Evidence of attainment (results and predictions)
- Personal statement
- Reference

We often wait until the UCAS equal consideration deadline to get a sense of the strength of the cohort, meaning large numbers of offers granted in **February and March**. So, don't be discouraged if you don't hear from us immediately!

College Allocation Update

We have 17 colleges for undergraduate students. Once you receive an academic offer from Durham you will shortly afterwards be given the opportunity to list your college preferences.

Currently the intention is that you will be able to list your top three preferences, and you will also be able to indicate whether you would prefer a catered or a self-catered college; we will confirm this nearer the time. We will do our best to allocate you a place in one of your preferred colleges, although this cannot be guaranteed since every college has limited spaces. If you do not state a preference, then we will allocate you a college at random.

Get in Touch

- Ask Us:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/study/ask-us/>

- Unibuddy:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/study/student-connect/>



**Unibuddy
UK**

Chat with a UK
student



**Unibuddy
International**

Chat with an
international student

Open Live Chat

Talk with our Admissions
Enquiries team