



St Hilda's College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

June 2025

History and Politics - History

I am enclosing information about the History and Politics course at Oxford. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to email me – hannah.smith@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk

You will see that you have to choose the two papers which you will take together with Political Theory, Introduction to the Practice of Politics, and Political Analysis in your first year: a period of British Isles History **or** European and World History, and a methods paper chosen from Approaches/Historiography/Foreign Texts/Quantification in History/Optional Subject.

There is a course requirement that everyone should take at least one course on British Isles or European and World History covering a period before 1800, and we advise students to consider satisfying that requirement in their first year by taking (for example) British Isles History 1500-1700 or British Isles History 1688-1848.

If you aren't sure in which area of history you would like to specialise, then Approaches to History provides an excellent introduction to the methods and theories that historians use. We believe it provides a strong foundation for the other papers you will choose to study. In particular, we recommend the 'Gender' component to the Approaches to History course, which we teach in College during your first term. Studying this can also provide a way for all our First Year historians to get to know one another. If you wish to study the 'Gender' component, please let me know.

If you want to keep open the option of specialising in medieval European history, or in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin American, or Russian history, you may consider offering a Foreign Language Text. These papers are designed to be accessible to anyone with an 'A' at GCSE or equivalent in the appropriate language. 'Arabic for Historians' is also available. If you wish to begin or continue to learn a language, the University's Language Centre offers a range of courses that you can undertake alongside your degree studies. These include classes for History students who wish to take specialist papers in that language during their degree.

Please let me know via the email address above by **the end of July** which papers you would like to offer.

Best wishes,

Dr Hannah Smith



Introductory Reading Lists for the History Preliminary Examination

A. History of the British Isles

1. 300-1100

- J. Campbell, ed. *The Anglo-Saxons* (good and well-illustrated)
M. Alexander (trans.), *Beowulf* (Penguin ed., for the flavour of the period)
P. Strafford, *Unification and Conquest*
H. R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*
C. Brooks, *The Saxon and Norman Kings*

2. 1000-1330

- N. Saul (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England* (1997)
D. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain, 1066-1284* (2004)
R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (2000)
M. T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066-1272* (2nd edn, 1998)
R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093-1343* (2000)

3. 1330-1550

- M. H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* 2nd edn. (2003)
W. M. Ormrod, *Political Life in Late Medieval England, 1300-1450* (1995)
G. L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation. England, 1360-1461* (2005)
R. H. Britnell, *Britain and Ireland, 1050-1530: Economy and Society* (2004)
C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages. The People of Britain 850-1520* (2002)

4. 1500-1700

- J. Guy, *Tudor England* (1994)
D. L. Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1603-1707* (1998)
B. Coward, *The Stuart Age* (1994)
T. Harris, *Restoration. Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660-1685* (2005)
T. Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720* (2006)
M. Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: the Untold Story* (2017)
K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (various editions)

5. 1688-1848

- P. Langford, *The Eighteenth Century: A Very Short Introduction* (2000)
J. Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1688-1727* (2000)
P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People. England 1727-1783* (1989)
B. Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? 1784-1846* (2006)
P. Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (new ed 2010)
D. Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (2016)
J. Uglow, *In These Times: Living in Britain through Napoleon's Wars 1793-1815* (2014)
A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (1998)

6. 1830-1951

- P. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism* (Vol. 1) (1992).
A. Calder, *The People's War* (1968 or any other edn)

P. Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (new ed 2010)
 V. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree* (1994).
 K. Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (2001)
 P. Johnson (ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain* (1992)
 D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain* (2007).
 D. Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (2016)
 L. Raw, *Striking a Light* (2009).
 P. Thane, *Divided Kingdom* (2018).
 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963 or any other edn)
 S. Todd, *The People: the rise and fall of the Working Class* (2014)

B. European and World History

1. The Transformation of the Ancient World, 370-900

P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 2nd edition (2003)
 J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (1987)
 M. Innes, *Introduction to Early Medieval Europe, 300-900: The Sword, the Plough and the Book* (2007)
 C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (2009)

2. Medieval Christendom and its Neighbours, 1000–1300

R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (1994)
 P. A. Linehan & J. L. Nelson, eds., *The Medieval World* (2001)
 D. Power, ed., *The Central Middle Ages. Europe 950-1320* (2006)

3. Renaissance, Recovery and Reform, 1400–1650

D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (2003)
 R. Mackenney, *Sixteenth-Century Europe. Expansion and Conflict* (1993)
 T. Munck, *Seventeenth-Century Europe, 1598–1700* (1990)
 B. Kümin, *The European World 1500-1800: An Introduction to Early Modern European History* (2009)
 U. Rublack, *Reformation Europe* (2005)

4. Society, Nation and Empire, 1815-1914

M. S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914* (2nd ed. 1988)
 R. Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800-1914* (2nd ed. 1996)
 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (1962)
 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (1975)
 E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (1987)
 K. Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950* (2000)

C. Approaches to History, Historiography, Foreign Texts, Quantification

These papers will be taught in lectures and fortnightly tutorials during the first two terms of the first year.

1. Approaches to History

In this paper undergraduates study ways in which the writing of history has been influenced by other disciplines. There will be a choice of themes: anthropology, archaeology, art, economics, gender and sexuality, race, and sociology. The following books are useful by way of introduction:

M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (1994, or any other edition)

S. Berger, H. Feldner, and K. Passmore, *Writing History: Theory and Practice* (2010 edn)
O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her* (1997)
S. Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream* (2000).
R. Shoemaker and M. Vincent (eds.) *Gender and History in Western Europe* (1997)
A. Sullivan and S. Todd, *Sex and Gender: A Contemporary Reader* (2023)
J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (fifth edition, 2010)

2. Historiography: Tacitus to Weber

John Burrow, *A History of Histories* (2007)

3. Foreign Texts

This paper is based on a text or texts in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Latin or Classical Greek. The options are:

- a) A.de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (Gallimard paperback).
- b) F.Meinecke, *Die Deutsche Katastrophe, Betrachtungen Und Erinnerungen* (Brockhaus Verlag, Wiesbaden. 4th ed. 1949) pp. 5-86, and E.Kehr, *Der Primat den Innenpolitik, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur preussisch-deutschen Sozialgeschichte im 19 und 20 Jahrhundert* (Gruyter/Berlin, 1965) pp.87-129 and 149-183.
- c) Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, Book 1.
- d) J. Vicens Vives, *Aproximación a la historia de España* (1960, 2nd ed.).
- e) Leon Trotsky, 1905.
- f) Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni Imperatoris*, ed. L.Halphen, and Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Aelfredi*, ed. W.H.Stevenson, c.1 to contexitur, cc.10-25, cc.73-81, cc.87-106 (excluding 106B).
- g) *Herodotus* (Oxford Classical Texts, ed. C.Hude) v.26-vi.131.

It is essential to acquire and read the texts themselves in the original language.

4. Quantification

P. Hudson and M. Ishizu, *History by Numbers*, 2ed., Bloomsbury, 2016.

You might also be interested in these as fun history reading:

T. C. W. Blanning, *The Triumph of Music: Composers, Musicians, and their Audiences, 1700 to the Present* (2008).
Inga Clendinnen, *Dancing with Strangers* (2007)
Angela Davis, *An Autobiography* (1988)
Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1985)
John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (1928)
Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (2004)
Selina Todd, *Tastes of Honey: The Making of Shelagh Delaney and a Cultural Revolution* (2019)