

Programme Specification

BA History and Politics

For students entering Part 1 in September 2025

UCAS Code: VLD2

UFHSXPO

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This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	3 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	BA History and Politics with Placement Experience - 4 years (internal transfer only) BA History and Politics with Year Abroad - 4 years (internal transfer only)
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	History; Politics and International Relations

Programme information and content

Studying History and Politics at the University of Reading will provide you with a deep understanding of the world and its transformation over time. Research-led teaching introduces students to academics of international standing and access to cutting-edge scholarship: you will meet the people who write the books and publish the articles. You will learn how to analyse social and political issues from both contemporary and historical perspectives and explore the historical roots of current political events. Interactive small group teaching is central to the programme. Through discussion and debate, you will extend your knowledge and gain an appreciation of the complex and contested nature of historical and political problems.

In History, a range of options is available, running from the medieval to the modern period and traversing the globe through Africa, America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. You can explore a variety of historical and theoretical approaches, including but not exclusive to cultural, economic, political, religious and social history, developing in the process a knowledge of textual analysis, theory and methodology. The degree engages with questions of class, race, gender, sexuality, theology, ideology and power, interrogating various perspectives to enable students to navigate differences of opinion and perspective.

The Politics programme will give you the tools to understand and assess how political processes shape our lives. You will study the dynamics of political decision-making and explore how the global context influences national politics. Throughout the programme you will connect the academic study of politics to contemporary issues, such as climate change and populism. You will learn to think critically and independently about a wide range of

political ideas, institutions, and events: from debates about equality and social justice, to referendums and nuclear weapons.

As your degree progresses, you will move from learning to mastering your subject, intervening in debates whilst also gaining such transferable skills as:

- critical thinking;
- information collation and evaluation;
- developing sustained arguments and analysis based on evidence;
- collaborative work and presentation;
- public speaking;
- oral and written communication;
- problem solving;
- time management;
- assuming individual responsibility.

The departments anticipate students will be intellectually curious and engaged. In return, we'll empower you to realise your intellectual ambitions and gain the necessary experience to follow the career or life path of your choosing.

Part 1:	<p>Students experience a range of topics in History and develop such core skills as evaluating primary sources and communicating sustained arguments underpinned by referenced research. Compulsory modules are designed to provide students with the broad knowledge necessary to develop their studies into the second year. Optional modules allow students to experiment with and explore their historical curiosity.</p> <p>In Politics, you will study central concepts and theories in government and political theory. You will have the opportunity to apply your knowledge to some of the major issues facing contemporary societies, such as climate change and challenges to democracy.</p>
Part 2:	<p>In History, second-year students refine their interests through a further choice of optional courses. These introduce students to ongoing debates and enable them to intervene in questions of historical and contemporary pertinence. The Going Public optional module gives students the experience of working with external partners, thereby gaining skills in group work and communicating ideas about the past to different forms of audience. HS2PFD Preparing for your Dissertation should be taken as one of their options by students intending to write their dissertation in History.</p> <p>In Politics, you will build on the foundations established at Part 1, extending your knowledge within government or political theory. You will receive skills-based training to enable you to evaluate existing research in politics, and to conduct original research. You will also have the opportunity to select a specialist optional module offered by the Politics and International Relations Department.</p>

Placement/Study abroad year:	<p>Study abroad helps broaden student horizons, enabling them to gain valuable experience and enhance employment prospects through streamlined Study Abroad opportunities. Students may spend two weeks, a term or an academic year abroad. This can be part of a standard three-year degree, an extended four-year degree, or a shorter length of time such as a summer school.</p> <p>Alternatively, students may choose to undertake a Work Experience Year between their second and third years, building on the skills acquired in their first two years of study while further developing a wide range of intrapersonal, interpersonal, problem-solving and team-working skills to enhance their Part 3 performance and graduate employment prospects.</p>
Part 3:	<p>At Part 3 students enjoy greater specialisation, completing the transition from student to expert. The dissertation allows students to devise and undertake an extended research project of their choosing in either subject that brings to fruition the archival, data, writing, referencing and analytical skills developed previously. In Politics, you will tailor the degree to your own interests, choosing from a wide range of research-led modules that reflect the expertise of our members of staff. In History, optional modules continue to widen student horizons through focused and source-based analysis of a particular period or theme. In addition, placement modules allow students to experience pathways to future careers and employment.</p>

Programme Learning Outcomes - BA History and Politics

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

Learning outcomes	
1	Gain extensive subject knowledge across a wide range of subjects and themes.
2	Become capable of contextualising historical knowledge and responding to ongoing global affairs from an informed historical perspective.
3	Develop the capacity to devise and pursue cogent and focused research questions; students will be able to apply academically rigorous approaches to their future studies or profession.
4	Assemble the analytical tools to develop critical and empathetic interpretations of material, with an appreciation of genre, perspective, content and purpose.
5	Understand and apply qualitative and quantitative data relating to political phenomena.
6	Gain an understanding of where to locate and access information, evaluating sources and thereby recognise that not all statements of information or arguments/opinions are of equal validity.
7	Learn to construct evidence-based, logically structured and persuasive arguments.

8	Describe, compare and analyse political systems within different countries.
9	Develop written and oral communication skills in different styles and formats.
10	Become capable of creating and communicating digital content in various formats (video/audio, visual, textual) and for different audiences.
11	Learn to interpret and respond to feedback, identifying objectives and means for improvement.
12	Think critically and independently about political and historical events, ideas and institutions; and identify potential solutions to questions of public and policy concern.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
Study Abroad	
By the end of the Study Abroad Programme, students will have adapted to international study contexts in order to achieve the required academic outcomes determined by the host institution.	
Placement	
By the end of the Placement Year Programme, students will have explored and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.	

Module information

Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Part 1 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
HS1MH	Making History and You: Practices and Possibilities	20	4
HS1PIH	Perspectives in History	20	4
PO1ICD	Introduction to Contemporary Democracy	20	4
PO1IPI	Introduction to Political Ideas	20	4
PO1PCC	Politics of Climate Change	20	4

In addition to compulsory modules, students may choose one 20-credit option from a selection of History Option modules which will be offered in the spring semester. All modules are 20 credits.

Students may replace 20 credits of optional modules with modules from an approved list.

Please note: the various History Options will be selected from an evolving range of modules reflecting the research interests of the department and the availability of staff in relation to workload, research priorities, contracted hours and various forms of leave.

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO2SOP	The Study of Politics	20	5

All modules are 20 credits. Students select two optional modules in Politics and three in History.

Students must take at least ONE of PO2PHC or PO2CGP.

Students intending to write their dissertation in History should select HS2PFD Preparing for your Dissertation as one of their options in History.

Students may replace 20 credits of optional modules with modules from an approved list.

Please note: the various History Options will be selected from an evolving range of modules reflecting the research interests of the department and the availability of staff in relation to workload, research priorities, contracted hours and various forms of leave.

Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable):

Students on one of the four-year programmes will take one 120 credit module in either Work Experience Year (HS2WEY) or Study Abroad Year (HS2SAY).

Students may be permitted to undertake a placement year or a study abroad year between Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme. In such cases students will transfer to a 4-year programme. The placement or study abroad year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Students may write their 40-credit dissertation in either History or Politics.

In addition, they should take 40 credits of optional modules in Politics and 40 credits of optional modules in History.

Students may replace 20 credits of optional modules with modules from an approved list.

Please note: the various History options will be selected from an evolving range of modules reflecting the research interests of the department and the availability of staff in relation to workload, research priorities, contracted hours and various forms of leave.

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University.

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

Our teaching and learning strategies revolve around enabling academic success through a variety of assessments. In terms of teaching, lectures are delivered to offer contextual and informative content, providing students with a basic understanding of core subjects and approaches. Seminars enable deeper discussion, allowing students in groups and individually to explore and debate questions relevant to their module. Supervisions are then held to guide students (both individually and in groups), explaining the feedback provided on work submitted and advising on assessments.

History and Politics encourage independent study: we expect students to become historians and political scientists, moving on from simply learning in the classroom towards gaining

their own critical voices and developing their own evidence-based or intellectual interpretations. At all stages, digital resources are provided to allow access to relevant materials, while digitally enhanced learning techniques (vlogs, screencasts, discussion boards etc.) are embedded into the department's practice. Learning visits and placements are arranged to encourage students to enhance their experience beyond the classroom.

Such an approach provides students with the toolset to research and communicate evidence-based analysis, while also allowing flexibility and variety in the delivery of learning and assessment. Our degree enables inclusivity, encouraging students to collaborate and develop their own research interests and approaches. Small group seminar teaching and close supervision are integral to this, wherein staff adapt their teaching to suit group dynamics and the individual needs of students. Assessments, in the form of essays but also preliminary plans, textual analysis (gobbets), oral presentations, vlogs, reflective reports, portfolios, quizzes and creative tasks such as counterfactual writing and documentary plans, are designed to measure an array of talents and demonstrate the transferrable and sustainable skills inherent to the study of History and Politics.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

The programme will be assessed through a combination of written examinations, coursework (including class tests) and oral examinations. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions and include: group work, source analysis, portfolios and creative assessments (maps, fanzines, vlogs etc). Our assessment is designed to introduce (I) students to History and Politics related skills and understanding. These are then demonstrated (D), ensuring that students master (M) their application in preparation for a career beyond (and sometimes inside) academia. Detailed and constructive feedback will be provided on submitted work and offered to students individually.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits.

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance;

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students on Joint Honours programmes who achieve the University threshold standard for progression at Part 1 may transfer to a Single Honours degree in one of their joint subject areas if they have achieved at least 40% in 40 or more credits (i.e. 2 x 20 credit modules) of modules in the programme they wish to transfer. In addition, students must also have met any programme specific requirements on the Single Honours programme to which they may wish to transfer. Students should seek advice about the titles of programmes they may be eligible to transfer to.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits, except that a mark below 30% may be condoned in no more than 20 credits of modules owned by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance;

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class
35% - 39% Below Honours Standard
0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including placement/study abroad

Part 2: one-third

Placement/Study abroad: not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

The classification method is given in detail in Section 17 of the Assessment Handbook.

Additional costs of the programme

Students may choose to buy text-books and key texts for the various modules. Access to fieldtrips and placements may also require further costs.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2024.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BA History and Politics for students entering Part 1 in session 2025/26
5 July 2024

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