The Historian's Craft

As historians we are meant to explore the past with a critical lens, re-interpreting the past for the present. In order to carry out historical research, we need to develop a set of skills to interpret, assess and present this history. This module will introduce you to the practical skills and techniques of historical research.

First, you will develop skills in locating, retrieving and managing a variety of historical material and creating a working bibliography for your own research. Next, you will learn how to contextualise, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources. You will review the historiography of your chosen research topic and critically evaluate this literature in a historiographical essay. Lastly, you will be introduced to a range of qualitative and quantitative software used for organising, accessing and analysing historical data. The skills learned in this module will be used to create a viable dissertation proposal.

This course is a compulsory option for all students following the MA Historical Research and MRes History and is available as an option to all other MA students in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology.

• Learning objectives

On successful completion of this module you will be expected to be able to:

  o Develop a comprehensive bibliography.
  o Interpret and analyse both primary and secondary resources.
  o Evaluate the current debates of your chosen field of historical inquiry.
  o Analyse and critique online source material.
  o Assess current information technology available for managing and analysing text or data.
  o Improve your research, writing and discussion skills.
  o Extend your capacity for critical analysis and reflection.

• Recommended reading

  o Black, Jeremy and MacRaild, Donald M, Studying History (1997; 2000; 2007)
  o Cameron, Sonja and Richardson, Sarah, Using Computers in History (2005)
  o Cannadine, David, Making History Now and Then: Discoveries, Controversies and Explorations (2008)
  o Jordanova, Ludmilla, History in Practice (2000)
- Tosh, John and Lang, Sean *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (2006)