

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA Public History and Heritage (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home Department/other teaching departments	School of Historical Studies.
Location of delivery	Central London and Online
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September On Campus, Flexible Learning, Online
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	- TMAPBHIP_C on-campus study - TMAPBHON_C online study - TMAPBHMx_C flexible study
HECoS Code	100302
Start date of programme	Autumn 2017
Date of programme approval	Spring 2017
Date of last programme amendment approval	April 2025
Valid for academic year and cohorts	2025-26
Programme Director	Julia Laite
Date of last revision to document	01/04/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants with a wide range of previous experience and qualifications. A second class honours degree (2.2 or above) in a Humanities subject satisfies the standard requirement, but we do base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience.. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

The practise and importance of public history and heritage has grown significantly in recent years. The School of Historical Studies at Birkbeck is home to several leading public historians and heritage scholars. With expertise in history and policy, creative histories, family history, heritage studies, museums, and archaeology, the programme features an exciting range of Public History and Heritage modules, alongside rigorous training in the fundamentals of the discipline and a chance to undertake their own public history and heritage projects.

An MA in Public History and Heritage is seen as an immensely valuable qualification for employment in the heritage, museum and tourism sectors, in policy and research work, in education, and in media. In addition, more and more academic posts in the field of History ask for an interest or research specialization in public history and heritage. This MA Public History and Heritage provides students with valuable training to pursue work in these sectors or to continue to PhD study in History. The MA provides the critical academic and intellectual skills necessary to assess and create public history projects and interventions, and includes the option of a work placement module to give students hands-on experience in heritage and history organizations. Drawing on the expertise across the School of Historical Studies, this MA aims to give students a sense of the wide range of public history and heritage, the variety of roles played by historians in public, and the importance and impact of public history in politics, culture, and society.

Course structure

NB All core and compulsory taught modules will be delivered using hyflex technology (with live synchronous in-person and online seminars). Each year, there will be a selection of options available in delivery formats that enable students to study either an in-person, online or flexible route through the programme.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	SC03003S7	Public History and Heritage: Ideas, issues, and practice	30	Compulsory	T1
7	SSHC386Z7	Research Skills for Historians	0	Compulsory	T2
7		Option module 1 [NB: at least one option module must be public history/heritage focused]	30	Option	T1,2 or 3
7	(ARVC054S7 SC03004S7)	Option module 2 (Museum and Heritage work placement OR Public History in Practice OR other option)	30	Option	T1,2 or 3
7		Option module 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	SSHC027D7	Research Dissertation	60	Core	T1-3

Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
7	SC03003S7	Public History and Heritage: Ideas, issues, and practice	30	Comp	T1
7	SSHC386Z7	Research Skills for Historians	0	Compulsory	T2
7		Option module 1 [NB: at least one option module must be public history/heritage focused]	30	Option	T2 or 3
7	(ARVC054S7 SC03004S7)	Option module 2 (Museum and Heritage work placement OR Public History in Practice OR other option)	30	Option	T1,2 or 3
Year 2					
7		Option module 3	30	Option	T1
7	SSHC027D7	Research Dissertation	60	Core	T2-3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

Indicative public history/heritage focused options:

SSHC554S7 Archives and Memory
 SSHC513S7 The Politics of the Past: Heritage in a Changing World
 ARVC252S7 The Country House Experience (in-person)
 ARVC004S7 Museums, Memory and National Identity (in-person)
 ARVC257S7 Slavery and its Cultural Legacies
 SC03004S7 Public History in Practice

Indicative options (including public history/heritage focused options)

SSHC513S7: The Politics of the Past: Heritage in a Changing World
 SSHC554S7: Archives and Memory
 ARVC004S7: Museums, Memory and National Identity (in-person)
 ARVC225S7: Art Museums in a Global Age
 ARVC076S7: Exhibiting the Body
 ARVC252S7: The Country House Experience (In Person)
 ARVC257S7 Slavery and its Cultural Legacies
 SC03004S7 Public History in Practice
 ARVC054S7 Museum and Heritage work placement

(Note: Options shown are indicative only and will vary by academic year. A number of options each year are offered using hyflex technology allowing synchronous online and in-person attendance. Core/compulsory modules are offered via hyflex on this programme.)

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

All compulsory/core modules will be delivered Hyflex along with a selection of options, allowing students to learn in person, online, or to move between these modes as part of our Flexible Learning offer.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment: short written exercises, essays which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress through your studies, and/or project-based assessment.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Apply knowledge and skills gained to employment in the media, tourism, heritage, museums, and policy sectors.
- Understand the wide-ranging practise of public history and heritage and be able to comment critically upon existing projects, interventions, and practises.
- Understand the key debates surrounding public history and the role of the public historian and heritage professional.
- Understand the way that history is used and disseminated in the media and on the internet, the way that museums and archives engage in public history and heritage, the role of public history in the heritage and tourism industries, the way in which policy makers engage with history, and the way in which historians have contributed to public policy debates, and the role that history plays in community development and community-based projects.
- Prepare written critiques of existing public history projects and interventions.
- Design a successful and critically engaged public history projects or interventions.
- Engage critically with current historiographical debates about Public History (this means evaluating a range of historical interpretations, as well as arguments about, and critiques of, historical research).
- Gain an awareness of contemporary historical practice.

Intellectual: Students will be able to:

- formulate their own arguments and conclusions about a range of issues.
- Extend analytical, evaluative, critical and reflective capacities.
- Identify, evaluate and critique existing scholarship in the field.
- Interpret and apply knowledge in an original manner.

- Detect problems, assess evidence and reach conclusions consistent with both.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the appropriate methodologies and techniques for study in their field.
- Work as part of a team in seminar discussions.
- Organise their own research methods and workload in order to manage time effectively.
- Improve transferable skills, including the ability to take responsibility for their own learning, making oral presentations, planning and producing written assignments in accord with scholarly standards.

Practical: Students will gain:

- Improved level of IT skills and computer literacy the ability to collate, compare and analyse substantial quantities of data.
- The ability to carry out documentary-based research.
- the ability to present findings both orally and in writing.

Personal and Social : Students will gain

- The ability to work successfully in teams.
- The ability to work successfully on an independent basis.
- Presentation skills.
- Organisational skills.
- Time-management skills.

Careers and further study

You will find Public History and Heritage graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums
- Government Heritage Sites/Projects
- Community-based history and heritage organization and projects
- Journalism, Television, and Media
- Education and Policy
- Research consultancy
- Academia

The programme is specifically designed with training for these jobs in mind, and includes the option of a work placement module in a range of organizations and institutions connected to History and Heritage.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. [You can find out more on the careers pages of our website.](#)

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle. This will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle. Each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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