

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA History and Language (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese) - BA History and French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese OR - BA History with French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	Historical Studies (home) Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years) / Part-time (4 years) / Full-time with Foundation Year (4 years) / Part-time with Foundation Year (6 years) / October
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) <u>Higher Education Credit Framework for England</u>	History Languages, Cultures and Societies
UCAS code	VV15, VV16 (with Foundation Year)
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBAHILN_C (full-time, 3 years) UBAHILNG_C (part-time, 4 years) UUBFHILN_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFHILNG_C (part-time with FY, 6 years)
HECoS Code	100302 100329 (100322) French studies 100324) German studies (100327) Italian studies (101143) Brazilian studies (100765) Iberian studies (101168) Japanese studies (101212) Korean studies (101164) Chinese studies
Start date of programme	October 2011
Date of programme approval	Summer 2010
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2024
Valid for academic entry year	2026-27
Date of last revision to document	01/12/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we 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.

UCAS tariff: 112 (48 for Foundation Year entry)

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

Course aims

The BA History and Language will take you through a structured program designed to immerse you in the latest historical research on the ancient to contemporary past in conjunction with rigorous study in modern languages, and to train you as a skilled historian.

History is not only about how people lived, acted and thought in the past. It is also about how the past relates to the present. Developing an understanding of this relationship is a particular hallmark of the department's work and during your degree you will have the opportunity to explore the multiple ways in which history shapes our contemporary world, as well as reading the histories of people in their own idiom. In addition to the modules you take, you will be warmly invited to the vibrant, publicly facing programme of events organised by the department and its associated research centres. These provide further opportunities to meet others from across our diverse community, to see history in the making and to explore the ways in which it matters now. We begin from the premise that we have much to learn from each other and you will be encouraged to express your ideas in the supportive and respectful environment we have sought to foster.

Our expertise underpins our teaching. We are one of the very few history departments in the UK to include archaeologists, classicists and historians working on every period from prehistoric humans to Ancient Greece to medieval, early modern and modern societies. Our expertise encompasses much of the globe from Ancient Rome, medieval Armenia, modern China, India and Africa to Tudor London and Nazi Germany and more. In addition to pursuing interests in British, Irish, European and global history, and to exploring themes within histories of 'race', migration, gender and sexuality, students have the opportunity to take modules from allied disciplines like Politics and Geography.

The BA History and Language offers temporal and geographical breadth in a carefully structured programme combining history, culture and language study. It gives you the opportunity to develop analytical skills and critical approaches that will enable you to assess historical evidence, consider cultural context, and question accepted wisdoms about the past. Your career prospects will be enhanced by developing the ability to formulate and communicate your own ideas effectively in English and your chosen language of study.

At each level along the journey to your degree, our curriculum combines hub modules geared to hone your skills with specialist options exploring the diverse worlds of the past. Hub skills will build from critical analysis, to collaborative discussion and debate, to deep research and writing of the dissertation. Every year, as you build your studies and progress towards your degree, you will take one of these modules, helping you to develop your own perspective on the past.

Language - aims and distinctive features:

The aims of the Language component of the programmes are:

- to allow students to reach a reasonable to high level of competence in a modern foreign language (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean or Mandarin Chinese).

- to study the associated culture(s) of the language.
- to acquire advanced knowledge of a range of comparative cultural topics.

The distinctive nature of the languages component of the programmes lies in the flexibility of our languages offering, which extends to the full range of languages taught at Birkbeck (currently French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and Mandarin Chinese) and allows entry at a variety of levels of language competence.

- For the European languages included in this programme, language entry levels are at one of five levels, as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Level A1 (Beginners); Level A2 (GCSE or equivalent); Level B1 (AS/A level or equivalent); Level B2 (A level + or equivalent); Level C1 (Proficiency).
- For Japanese there are four basic entry levels, all pegged to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT): Beginners, Upper Beginner, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate.
- For Korean, there are three levels, pegged towards the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK): Beginners for Korean 1, Post-beginners for Korean 2 (entry with just under TOPIK 1), and Pre-intermediate for Korean 3 (entry with post-TOPIK 1 but under TOPIK 2).
- For Mandarin Chinese, there are three levels, pegged towards the Chinese proficiency test Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK): HSK1 for Chinese 1, HSK2 for Chinese 2, HSK3 for Chinese 3.
- After three years (full-time), students who start at approximately A-level standard language competence will attain a level which conforms to the 'typical' exit level equivalent to CEFR Level C1/C2, as defined in the QAA benchmark statement for 'Languages, Cultures and Societies', or JLPT Level N2.
- Those full-time or part-time students who start at CEFR A1 or JLPT N5 (Language 1) or fulltime students who start with CEFR A2 or JLPT N5 (Language 2) will exit with either CEFR B2 or JLPT N4-N3 (Language 3) or CEFR C1 or JLPT N3-N2 (Language 4).
- For Korean, students will start from beginners and exit after three years with close to TOPIK 2 (entry to Korean 1, exit with Korean 3).
- For Mandarin Chinese, students will start from beginners and exit after three years with close to HSK3 proficiency (entry to Chinese 1, exit with Chinese 3).
- PLEASE NOTE: All Language modules are taken over three terms (10+10+4 weeks, 2.5 hours per week)
- Students complete 180-210 (normally 210) credits on the History side of the programme and 150-180 (normally 150) credits on the Language side of the programme.
- If a student achieves the exit level of CEFR C2 (European Language 5) or JLPT Level N3 or above (Japanese 4/5) in their language, and has 150 credits on the Language side of the programme, the eventual award title is:
 - BA History and French
 - BA History and German
 - BA History and Italian
 - BA History and Japanese

OR

 - BA History and Spanish
- If a student completes at least 150 credits on the Language side but does not achieve CEFR C2 (European Language 5) or JLPT Level N3 or above (Japanese 4/5), the degree awarded is BA History with Language (either French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese).
- If a student completes fewer than 150 (but at least 90) credits on the Language side, this constitutes a 'Minor' pathway, and the award title becomes, e.g., History **with** French, etc. Please note for the award of a language minor degree with 90 credits of language, ie History with Language (either French / German / Italian / Spanish / Japanese / Korean / Chinese), students must achieve a language level of at least 3.

- For Korean and Mandarin Chinese, **only the ‘with Korean/Chinese’ award title is currently available**, because we currently do not offer levels beyond Korean 3 or Chinese 3 for an exit level Korean/Chinese proficiency.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	T1-3
4		Language 1, 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
4		History Option (Listed below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
4		Language culture or history option (see below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 2					
5	SSHC407S5	Exploring the Past	30	Compulsory	T1-3
5		Language 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
6		OR Language 5			
5		History Option (Listed below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
5	Various	Language-specific survey module OR Comparative Themes in the Novel/Themes in European and Japanese Cinema OR Comparative culture module e.g. ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 3					
6	SSHC408D6	Writing the Past/Dissertation	60	Compulsory	T1-3
6		Language 3, 4, or 5	30	Core	T1-3
5		OR Language culture module if Language 5 taken in year 2		Option	T1 or 2
6		Language ‘culture’ module(s)	30 or 15+15	Option	T1 or 2
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	HICL200S4	Approaching the Past	30	Compulsory	T1-3
4		Language 1, 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
4		History Option (see below)	30	Option	T 2 or 3
Year 2					
4		Language culture or history option (see below)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
5		Language 2, 3 or 4	30	Core	T1-3
6		OR Language 5			
5		History Option (Listed below)	30	Option	1, 2, 3

Year 3 (Students must take 30 credits at Level 6)					
5	SSHC407S5	Exploring the Past	30	Compulsory	T1-3
5	Various	Language-specific survey module OR Comparative Themes in the Novel/Themes in European and Japanese Cinema OR Comparative culture module e.g. ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
6		Language 3, 4 (must be taken at Level 6 if final stage in pathway) OR Language 5 OR Language 'culture' module(s) if Language 5 taken in Year 2)	30	Core Core Option	T1-T3 T1-3 T1 or 2
Year 4					
6	SSHC08D6	Writing the Past/Dissertation	60	Compulsory	T1-3
6		Language 3, 4 or 5 Or Language 'culture' module (if language pathway completed)	30	Core option	T1-3 T1 or 2
Full-time with Foundation Year - 4 years					
Foundation Year (0)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study: Learning through the Global City	30	Core	T1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	T2
3	SC03015S3	London: Places, Objects, Ideas	30	Core	T1
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective OR Level 4 Language options	30	Option	T2
Years 1-3 as full-time route above					
Part-time with Foundation Year - 6 years					
Foundation Year (0a)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study: Learning through the Global City	30	Core	T1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	T2
Foundation Year (0b)					
3	SC03015S3	London: Places, Objects, Ideas	30	Core	T1
3	SC04048S3	The Humanities and Social Sciences: Global Issues in Historical Perspective OR Level 4 Language options	30	Option	T2
Years 1-4 as part-time route above					

Note: the pathways shown in the structure above are indicative for the BA History AND Language joint awards. Students who choose to follow a minor award in language (BA History WITH Language) might replace some language culture or survey optional modules with history,

or other modules from the college, at the appropriate level as approved by the course director, provided they pass at least 90 credits of Language core modules and achieve a minimum language level of 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 list of History options

Indicative options for Level 4:

SSHC406S4 Discovering Archaeology: From Field to Finds Room
SSHC409S4 The Medieval World: From Constantine to the Khans
SSHC419H4 The Early Modern World, 1500-1800: Reformations and Revolutions
SSHC411S4 The Modern World
SSHC404S4 The Ancient World

Indicative options for Level 5:

SSHC499S5 Border Crossings: Histories of Migration, Documents and the State
SC03049S5 Ending Empires and Remaking the World: Decolonisation in Global History
SSHC553S5 The Birth of a Superpower: China from 1900 to the Present Day
SSHC520S5 Histories of Magic and Witchcraft
SSHC410S5 Journeys to the Underworld in Classical Literature and Culture

Indicative options for Level 6:

HICL086S6 Late Medieval and Early Modern London: Community, Politics and Religion
SSHC493S6 Failed states? Ancient to Present in Europe, Asia and Africa
HICL203S6 The Empire of Letters: Correspondence in the Roman World

Indicative list of Language survey/culture options:

Indicative options for Level 5:

ARLL010S4 Culture and Text
ARLL009S4 Culture and Image
LNLN023S4 Rethinking Japan

Indicative options for Level 5:

ARLL011S5 Themes in European and Japanese Cinema
ARLL007S5 Contemporary Literature in French
ARLL031S5 German and Italian Fascism: History, Culture and Memory (Level 5)
ARMC145S5 Popular Culture of East Asia
ARLL005S5 Word and Image: Constructing the Other in the Hispanic World
ARCL022S5 Reading Transnational Cultures
LNLN024S5 Representations of Love, Desire and Sexuality

Options for level 6 currently include:

ARMC187S6 Manga and Anime
AREL003H6 Sensibility and Sociability in the Eighteenth-Century French Novel
AREL049H6 The French Novel of Disillusionment
ARCL054H6 The Twentieth-Century German Novel
AREL086H6 Culture in the Weimar Republic
ARCL078S6 Sex, survival and la dolce vita: Neorealist to Contemporary Italian Film
ARCL057H6 The Spanish Noir: Crime and Detection in Contemporary Fiction

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.

From the outset, you will work with us to design a degree path which is tuned to your interests and goals. You can choose between French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean or Mandarin Chinese, starting at the level of language learning that suits you, whether you are a complete beginner or a native speaker. Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures and seminars. Lectures from our nationally top-ranking staff will introduce you to the critical ideas, debates and figures of the past, while seminars will train you in the construction of collaborative knowledge alongside the diverse community of your fellow students. Modules at all levels include the analysis of primary and secondary text sources, as well as images, material culture, music and film.

Language classes are normally 2.5 hours long. Activities are varied; the Languages department pioneered the use of learning software for languages, and this has now been extended to Moodle, which allows access to additional targeted language learning materials. Regular homework is given and returned to students, with extensive feedback, usually within a week. All classes are conducted in the target language.

How we will assess you

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 types of assessment outlined in the paragraphs below.

Your degree award will be built from diverse forms of assessment—including source analyses, quizzes, oral presentations, and research essays—across hub and option modules. These assessments are designed to build your skills cumulatively across the program. To complete the degree, you may design, research, and write a dissertation.

Assessment methods in Languages include a variety of exercises testing skills in writing, reading, speaking and listening, including (but not limited to) short coursework assignments, in-class written tests, oral and listening comprehension tests; at Level 5 students complete a self-reflexive essay; and at Level 6 they undertake a short project.

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.

On successful completion of the foundation year, you will be able to:

- Articulate at a foundational level key concepts in some of the disciplines offered by the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy.

- Undertake academic reading, writing, research and assessment skills appropriate to the study of those disciplines
- Understand other key learning skills required for university-level study and know of how to access support at Birkbeck to develop these.

On successful completion of the BA programme you will be able to:

- Critically analyse narratives about the past and its role in the present across a range of contexts
- Understand and interrogate primary sources (from the past) and secondary sources (about the past) in discussion and writing
- Read and use historical scholarship at a high academic level
- Discuss texts, objects and diverse media with a group of your peers
- Present your own research and arguments orally
- Design your own research questions and program of research
- Navigate archives, collections, oral history sources, and libraries
- Carry out research and writing at multiple scales: response essay, research essay, dissertation
- Engage with communities of historians, from academic workshops and conferences to public historians to your local community
- Design and create disseminations of your research in multiple forms, from article to podcast to public lecture

Additionally, on successful completion of the Language component of this programme a student will be expected to be able to:

French, German, Italian, Spanish:

A. Use of the target language

- Demonstrate appropriate use of the French, German, Italian and/or Spanish language. Our courses have been mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as follows:
 - Stage 1 A1-A2
 - Stage 2 B1
 - Stage 3 B2
 - Stage 4 C1
 - Stage 5 C1/C2
 The aims and objectives for each of these stages can be found in each corresponding module proposal.
- Communicate fluently and appropriately, maintaining a high degree of grammatical accuracy, in the target language (TL), with competent or native speakers of the TL, to a level approximately equivalent to CEFR level B2 to C2, depending on starting level.
- Be able to exploit for a variety of purposes and, as appropriate, to contextualise a broad range of materials in written or spoken TL appropriate to the level attained.
- Be able to apply effectively and appropriately language skills in a professional context.

B. Explicit knowledge of language

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the structures, registers and, as appropriate, varieties of TL.
- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the linguistic principles required to analyse TL. (This aim applies to certain modules only.)

C. Knowledge of related studies

- Demonstrate an ability critically to evaluate through appropriate methodologies one or more aspects of the arts, cultures, histories, institutions or linguistic situation of the societies in which TL is spoken.
- Demonstrate a broad knowledge and, using appropriate methodologies, a critical understanding of the cultures and societies of countries in which TL is spoken gained through one or more of the creative media of TL.

D. Intercultural awareness and understanding

- Demonstrate a reasoned awareness and critical understanding of one or more cultures and societies, other than the student's own.

Japanese:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Japanese at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences, and in-depth reading; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness registers; to begin to acquire academic-level verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations; to write substantial reports and short essays based on texts read and discussed in class, using their knowledge of between 800-1,000 kanji characters and of appropriate compositional structure.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Japanese.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the key moments and concepts in the cultural/social history of modern Japan.

Korean:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Korean at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness registers; to begin to acquire verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Korean.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the modern Korean society and culture.

Mandarin Chinese:

A. Use of the target language

- With a focus especially on advancing students' reception skills, to demonstrate experience at comprehending Mandarin Chinese at natural speed using audio-visual materials; to use original texts from a variety of sources and subject fields to develop their reading techniques including scanning and skimming for key information, reading extended paragraphs and complex sentences; to sustain complex conversations in social, cultural, and business situations using appropriate speech forms and politeness

registers; to begin to acquire verbal communication skills, including participation in discussions, and preparing and delivering presentations.

- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in communicative exchanges in Mandarin Chinese.

B-D. As above, and:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the modern Sinophone societies and cultures.

Careers and further study

A degree in History and Language prepares you for any role which benefits from skills in research, communication and engagement. Graduates of our program work across professions and disciplines, from education to business to the arts, from museums and galleries to the heritage sector, social work and government.

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 and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

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 and 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 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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