

Welcome to UPHPGN-30-2!

UPHPGN-30-2, The Theory & Practice of History (popularly known as 'T&P') is the Level 2 core course designed to develop your historical skills. These skills, already introduced at a basic level in Year 1, develop by exploring historical practice and the ways historians think.

Level 2 modules stretch your ability to analyse **historical methods** (what historians do) and use **historical theories** (how historians think). The work on this module is all linked to your other Level 2 modules, and requires you to think about the theories and practices that you find in those modules.

Next year, you will be **writing a dissertation** (or you're thinking about writing one next year, if you're a joint honours student).



Dissertation work involves doing some practical research: formulating a question, deciding how to answer it, and locating & using primary sources (method); it also involves working out how your research relates to other investigations into your topic, and how your ideas relate to other ideas (theory). So, as well as deepening your understanding of the work on your L2 modules, this module explicitly prepares you for writing a dissertation.

How this module works

The module does not work in the same way as your other modules. The main work on T&P involves (a) analysing the theory and practice of the Historians who produced the research underpinning the History you're studying on other modules and (b) developing your own research skills based on the insights you derive from these reflections.

These are the things that are different in the way that T&P works:

1. In all the work you do in your seminars, you will **work in a sub-group** of between three to five other people, who are taking one of the other History modules that you are also taking.
2. At regular stages – starting off weekly, then becoming more widely spaced – you will have to **submit work online**, onto the Blackboard site.
3. Your online submissions build up your **T&P portfolio**, which carries 75% of the marks on this module. It is essential that you submit this work, and that you don't miss out on any submissions. If you **submit work conscientiously** for your entire portfolio, then you *will* get a pass mark for your portfolio. The experience of working through the portfolio conscientiously is fundamental to the learning process on T&P.
4. You will also have to **fill out logs** as you work through the portfolio, recording your thoughts about the work you've been doing and what you've learned. This will provide the basis for a piece of **self-reflective work** at the end of the year.
5. By the end of T&P, you will have had the opportunity to **practice the key skills that you need** in order to write a dissertation.

Assessment on T&P.

1. The portfolio, due 7th May, minimum 7,500 words, 75%

All through the year you will have to contribute items to the T&P portfolio on the uweonline site. The portfolio has 6 sections:

- using primary sources,
- theories of history,
- using secondary sources,
- methods of accessing and assessing primary data [project],
- planning and writing up a dissertation, and
- self reflection.

Note that the final part of the portfolio, the self-reflection, depends upon you filling in your logs as you go along. We will not read your logs, but we will be able to check whether or not you have filled them in.

Marking the portfolio:

1. You only have limited time to submit each piece of work to your portfolio. At the end of that time, you will no longer be able to make a submission. All entries have to be submitted by **11.55pm** on the deadline day for that item of work. Normally, the deadline day will be a Sunday.
2. There are two sets of marks for your portfolio: submission points and quality marks. Submission points are awarded for conscientious submission of work. You will see your submission points building up as you work through the portfolio. When your portfolio is complete, your submission points will make a total of 400. If you have a total of 400 for submission, you will have a mark of at least 40% for your portfolio. Quality marks are awarded at the end of the module, for the entire portfolio, and will take into account evidence of progress and response to feedback. Although you won't get the quality mark until the entire portfolio is complete, you will get feedback on the work you've submitted, as the module progresses.
3. Opportunity to respond to feedback. On 16th April, the entire portfolio to date will reopen. You will have a second opportunity to submit work to the portfolio, revising your entries on the basis of the feedback you have received. All revisions must be submitted by **2pm** on 7th May.
4. Penalties for missed submissions
 - If you did not submit work at the correct time, you may still submit entries for your missing items between 16th April and 7th May. However, there will be a 20% penalty subtracted from the quality marks for each of those entries. This penalty applies only to the quality marks for the affected entries. So an entry earning 55% in quality marks will be reduced to 44%, but no other marks will be affected. Full submission points will be awarded.
 - If, after 2pm on 7th May, you have a total of fewer than 400 submission points, then 10% of your missing submission points will be subtracted from the mark for the portfolio. So, if your quality mark for your portfolio is 54%, but you have a submission total of only 350, then 5% will be deducted from the quality mark, giving you 49% for your portfolio. Penalties for missing submission points after 7th May apply to the entire portfolio.
 - If you have a total of 400 in submission points, you will not get a mark of less than 40% for the portfolio.

2. Primary sources essay, due 11th December, 1,000 words, 10%

The primary sources essay brings together the work you will have been doing during the term (a) on ways of using primary sources, and (b) on theories of History. In this essay, you will be asked to demonstrate that you understand how to use primary sources effectively.

- Locate and analyse a historical primary source - a document or visual image – from the library. You are advised not to use the internet to locate your source. If you do use the internet, you may only choose facsimile items from the approved sites listed for seminar 2.
- Your primary source should be no longer than 2 sides of A4 (if a printed document or written text) OR one visual image or illustration.
- You MUST acquire a copy of the source and submit it with your analysis.
- Write a 1000-word analysis (plus or minus 10%) demonstrating how you can use the source as a piece of primary evidence to understand more about the past.

There are examples of good primary sources essays available on the uweonline site, plus additional advice about how to use your source.

You are **strongly advised** to look at all this advice before writing your essay.

We do not want you to progress to dissertation work without having satisfied us – and yourself – that you know how to use primary sources effectively.

When you start on your dissertation work next year, you will need to be able to hit the ground running: identifying the archives you will be using, and going straight into locating and using your primary data. So it is important that you engage conscientiously with this assignment.

You will receive feedback on this assignment that will help you to improve your abilities to use primary data for Historical research.

3. Secondary sources essay, due 5th March, 1,500 words, 15%

This assignment is about **surveying the literature** (ie the work of academic Historians) to produce a summary of the 'state of the field'. *It is not a book review, and it is not a specific answer to an essay question.*

For this essay, you will have to:

- Survey the secondary literature on a topic in History.
- Write a 1,500-word report (plus or minus 10%) on the literature on your topic.
- The report is not written like a standard essay. It should be written to maximise communication of information, so that an intelligent lay reader could quickly learn the essentials about the important writers, themes and debates on that topic.
- Marks will be allocated for presentation as well as for content.

This exercise develops two important skills, which are essential to historians, and will also be very useful in most employment situations:

- *Processing a large amount of research information.*
- *Presenting data in a clear and easily-accessible format*

It is sensible to combine your work on the secondary sources essay with another piece of work you are doing at this point in the term: either on your linked module, or on another module where, for example, you have to give a presentation at about the time that this work is due in.

There are examples of good secondary sources essays available on the uweonline site, plus additional advice about how to use your source.

You are **strongly advised** to look at all this advice before writing your essay.

You will receive feedback on this assignment that will help you to improve your abilities to use secondary data for Historical research.

For general reading relevant to this module, see the 'Getting Started' section of the uweonline site. You will also find more information about the aims and objectives of the module there, plus specific reading for most of the seminars.

Full contact details for the tutors on this module are also on the uweonline site.

This handbook concentrates on the work you will be doing in the seminars, and on the submissions you need to make to your portfolio, based on your seminar work.

1. Introductions seminar

In this seminar, you'll meet each other and form into your sub-groups, based on your linked module.

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log before you start the primary sources work.

Primary Sources work

Most of you are familiar with using primary sources to support and illuminate the History that you've been reading in books and journals. When you come to do your own Historical research for your dissertation, however, that relationship is reversed: you use books and journals to support and illuminate what you've been reading in primary sources.

So the first thing you'll be working on in T&P is how to make effective use of primary sources.

Bias in primary sources

You may find that you need to unlearn some bad habits. The most widespread of these bad habits is looking for 'bias' in primary sources. Most students' first approach to a piece of primary evidence is to work out which bits of it are 'true' and which bits are 'biased'. The implication is that, where there is bias, the historical source is in some way unreliable.

Your work will be much stronger if you stop thinking about bias as an indicator of unreliability. All sources are biased in one way or another. Our job as historians is to ask what we can learn about the past from the primary sources - and one of the things that we can learn is how different interest groups had different ways of interpreting events around them.

In other words, 'bias' is not an indicator of unreliability, but a vital piece of historical evidence.

Different ways of reading

The simplest way of reading a primary source is to look for information in it about something that happened in the past. However, there are other ways of reading the source, which can reveal information that isn't immediately obvious on the surface.

By reading sources in different ways, it's possible to find out not just about what happened, but also about how people perceived their world, constructed power relationships, or excluded other groups from power.

Over the next few weeks, you'll practice different ways of reading sources, to enrich the way you use them.

Primary Sources work seminars

2. Library seminar

This seminar happens in the library. Meet with your tutor in the library entrance and sign in for your seminar before going into the library.

With the other people from your linked module, you need to find primary materials in the library. These are mostly available on microfilm/microfiche.

You will get a useful list indicating *some* of the primary material available in the library by going to the History School pages at <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/hlss/history/index.shtml>, and then clicking on the 'research collections' link.

Each person in your group should identify and choose **one** textual source (four pages at most) and **one** visual source. These will be the basis for your work over the next three weeks. You will need to make a copy of each of your sources.

Primary material – especially visual sources - are difficult to reference properly, but it is essential that you are very precise in your referencing in your dissertation. Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is simply to reference your two sources. It is **due in by 15th October**.

3. Empirical readings seminar

In this seminar, discuss with the other members of your linked-module group what empirical data you can identify in your two sources. Don't worry if you're not sure what empirical means - that's part of what you can discuss.

You should think about these questions:

- What did Ranke add to the study of the past?
- What types of history focus on events, dates, and other empirically-verifiable data?
- What sort of history do the defenders of empiricism tend to write? What sort of questions do they ask?
- Why does empirical data matter?
- Which linked module makes the most use of empirical approaches in your seminar group?

Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is to draw out the data that you can derive from empirical readings of your two sources. It is **due in by 22nd October**.

4. Readings against the grain seminar

To read 'against the grain', you need to decide, first of all, what a reading 'with the grain' would entail. Then you can start to think about 'unwitting' testimony – what can you find in the source that wasn't intended by the person who produced it? Reading 'against the grain' not only looks at 'unwitting' testimony, but also consciously tries to resist the worldview of the person who produced the source, and look at things from another perspective.

In the seminar, discuss with other members of your linked-module group what information you can get out of your sources from reading them against the grain. You could think about these questions:

- What can an account of a Cabinet meeting tell you about social class? What can a court case for theft tell you about religion? What can a painting of a landscape tell you about politics?
- What do the words used, and the ways that people write, tell you about their view of the world? Their moral values? Their view of others? Their beliefs about how the world works

(scientifically, religiously, politically...)? What, in brief, can we learn about 'discourse'? What are the comparable questions that we can ask about the underlying discourses of visual images?

- What sort of history do those who read sources against the grain tend to write? What sort of questions do they ask?
- When did historians begin to think it was important to start doing this?
- How is reading against the grain different from reading empirically?
- Which linked module is closest to using this approach in your seminar group?

Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is to draw out the data that you can derive from reading your two sources against the grain. It is **due in by 29th October**.

5. Reading silences seminar

Reading 'silences' is not the same as noticing absences. If something is notably not in a source when you might expect it to be relevant (eg the destitution of a man accused of theft; women's perspectives on prostitution), then you can ask questions about why/how those issues have been silenced.

In the seminar, discuss with other members of your linked-module group what information you can get out of your sources from reading silences in them. You should think about these questions:

- What is noticeable by its absence in your source? Are women's perspectives absent? Or the voices of the poor?
- *Why* are those things absent? What do the absences tell you about the society/people who produced the source?
- What sort of history do those who read 'silences' tend to write? What sort of questions do they ask?
- When did historians begin to think it was important to start doing this?
- How is reading the absences in a source different from reading against the grain or reading empirically?
- Which linked module is closest to using this approach in your seminar group?

Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is to draw out the data that you can derive from reading the silences in your two sources. It is **due in by 5th November**.

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log now you've completed the primary sources work.

Theories of History seminars

A 'theory of History' is a theory about what causal factor is the most important in explaining why things happened in the past.

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log before you start the Theory of History work.

Your **portfolio work** is to answer these questions. You can ATTEMPT as many of the 'theories of history' exercises as you wish, but you SUBMIT only 3 out of the 7.

For Seminars 6-9, you must complete and submit by **17th December**.

For Seminars 10-12, you must complete and submit by **7th January**.

6. Nations and Statesmen

In this seminar, you need to think about these questions with your linked-module group:

- Which are the important states in the period and geographical region covered by your linked module?
- Who made the important decisions that affected what happened to those nations?
- What impact did those decision-makers have on the period covered by your linked module? In particular, think about how they might have influenced relationships with other states - international and diplomatic relations, wars etc.
- What sources (or types of sources) would you want to study to understand their impact on your period?
- What questions would you want to ask of these primary sources?
- How would you write the histories of these states, having studied those sources?

You can find some readings to help you think about these issues on the uweonline site.

7. Food, clothing and shelter

In this seminar, you need to think about these questions with your linked-module group:

How do basic human needs - food, clothing & shelter - affect 'what happened' in the past? Go carefully & thoughtfully through each of these questions for the period and place covered by your linked module:

- In their everyday lives, how important were food, clothing & shelter to people?
- Who produced most of the food, clothing & shelter? Who consumed most of the food, clothing & shelter?
- What were the most important resources for the production of food, clothing & shelter? eg land, human labour, timber, tools, livestock, machinery, oil, coal, water etc?
- Did those people who produced most of the food, clothing & shelter, own the land, tools or other resources they needed in order to make the food, clothing & shelter? Did they control the process of producing these basics?
- Who owned what was produced? Why? And how did everyone else get to own, or have access to, the food, clothes & shelter they needed to survive?
- How did those who controlled the production of basics manage to keep control over them? What institutions/ tactics/ systems did they develop to maintain (or extend) their control over the production of food, clothing & shelter? Who challenged those arrangements?
- So how did all the people, simply trying to ensure their routine daily access to food, clothing & shelter, affect what happened in society more widely? How are these issues of everyday access to food, clothing & shelter relevant to the 'headline' issues covered in your linked module?

8. Households, Firms, States, Markets

In this seminar, you need to think about these questions with your linked-module group:

- What were the important economic relationships in the period and geographical region covered by your linked module? (Think about economies in various ways: households, firms, markets, state).
- Who made the important decisions that affected these economic relationships? (Bear in mind that economic decisions are made by people who are actively involved in business and the economy.)
- What impact, if any, did economic decisions and decision-makers have on the period covered by your linked module? In particular, think about how they might have influenced the behaviour of other economic actors: local, regional, national and international; in peace, in war, and in revolution etc.
- So how does an examination of economic activity influence the questions you ask about the past and the issues that seem relevant to explaining the past?

Methodology

- What sources (or types of sources) would you want to study to identify and understand the impact of economic change during your period?
- What questions would you want to ask of these primary sources?

Finally, the historiographic questions:

- Can you identify different approaches to economic history in the journals, monographs, and textbooks you've been reading?
- Who are the historians, economic historians and economists who have played a prominent role in the definition of these different approaches?
- When were they published?

You can find some readings to help you think about these issues on the uweonline site.

9. Women in the Past

In this seminar, you need to think about these questions with your linked-module group:

What sort of history do you get when you ask questions about how women influenced 'what happened' in the past? Go carefully & thoughtfully through each of these questions for the period and place covered by your linked module:

- How visible are women in the history covered by your module?
- Are there important/powerful women? What do you know about them? What was their power based on? Does it make a difference if the person wielding power was a woman?
- Apart from the specific women identified in (b), do you know what part women played in the events and issues covered by your module? *If not, why? If so, how?*

To unpack those last two questions, think about:

- What do you want to know about women in the past? Why?
- Why is it hard to see what role women played in the events and issues covered by your module? (There are several ways of thinking about this question.)
- How would you find out what role women played in the events and issues covered by your module? What sources would you use? How would you use those sources?
- Are there any struggles or social movements in which women were particularly involved?

Finally, the historiographic question:

- In which texts do you find more information about women in historical analysis? When were they published?

You can find some readings to help you think about these issues on the uweonline site.

10. Construction of identities: gender

This week, you're going to be thinking about a view of history that asks questions about how identities are socially constructed. This moves a long way away from a theory of history that assumes that the historical actors - eg statesmen; nations; people - can be taken as given. In this session, we begin to ask basic questions about how people's identities are formed by the historical moments that they live in. Historians can question many forms of identity, but one of the most fundamental is gender.

In this seminar, you need to think about these questions with your linked-module group:

Start with a simple thought experiment:

Think about what you know about **ancient Mayan culture**. Could you tell the difference between men and women? Could you say what behaviour would be deemed appropriate for men and women?

What does that tell you about the difference between sex and gender?

Now try to apply a gender analysis to your linked module:

- What was considered to be appropriate work for women? for men?
- How were households gendered? Who managed households? Who worked within the household? How were household heads defined?
- What was considered to be appropriate sexual behaviour for women? for men? (remember to think about sexuality as well as libido and fidelity)
- What was considered to be appropriate personal behaviour for women? for men? (think about emotions; attitudes towards children; consumption patterns; relationships with relatives and inlaws)
- What were the external markers of a masculine man? A feminine woman? (Think about clothing; hair styles; tattoos; make-up; body language; manners; consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; social status)
- How were gender roles policed? What were the sanctions for violating gender roles?
- How was appropriate gendered behaviour learned? How was it challenged?

How are these gender constructions altered by other factors? eg:

Class; nationality (eg German, Russian, British, French, Spanish); religion (eg Catholic; Calvinist); race (eg Zulu; Negro; white); age.

Methodology

- What sources (or types of sources) would you want to study to identify and understand the construction of gendered identities for the time and place of your linked module?
- What questions would you want to ask of these primary sources?

Finally, the historiographic questions:

- In which texts do you find more information about gender and identity in historical analysis?
- When were they published?
- What intellectual currents were they influenced by?

You can find some readings to help you think about these issues on the uweonline site.

11. Seas, Lands & Mountains

This seminar tries to develop a 'total history', building up from the physical environment as its starting point. The key questions are here, but there are plenty of additional questions, to help you to think through this, on the uweonline site. There is also relevant reading on the site.

Firstly, think about the physical environment

- Most historical work is still written within the context of the nation state. Is this an adequate unit to assess men and women's experience of their wider environment?
- How useful is the (alternative) category "Region" for a historical analysis? What constitutes a "region"?
- How important are categories such as climate, mode of production (in agriculture, trade and industry) to constitute identity?
- How important is the interaction between the physical and the social world in people's lives?

To examine this:

- Go to Google world, or, if you don't have Google world, try <http://maps.google.co.uk> or <http://maps.google.com>. Choose the 'satellite' option. Use the arrows to find the bit of the world that's relevant to your linked module. Zoom in to learn about the physical environment.
- Where are the seas? the rivers? the mountains? the towns? the roads?
- Now think about the long-term impact of that physical environment on historical change.

Secondly, think about how a focus on the physical environment changes your analytical priorities.

- If the physical environment is the most important influence in what happens in the past, what comes next in importance?
- What do the maps tell you about human relationships? What do they tell you about demography? What do they tell you about economics? What do they tell you about politics? And what do they tell you about *events*?
- How much of what you study is about long-term, slow processes of change in human societies, and how much is about short-term issues that have no long-term impact on human societies?

Thirdly, think about how a focus on the physical environment changes your sense of significant time-scales.

Do dates matter? Or do historians achieve a better understanding of changes over time through a study of long-term trends in demographics and mentalities?

Methodology questions:

Agents of history. With long-term historical changes, what/who are the *agents* of history?

Data. To write a history of long-term trends historians need serial data over a long time. What kind of sources can we use for this kind of analysis? What kind of questions can we ask – and answer?

Disciplines. How can methods and approaches of other disciplines such as Geography, Sociology and Economics help historians' understanding of past societies?

Finally, the historiographic question:

When did these ways of analysing history emerge? What intellectual currents might have influenced this way of analysing the past?

Seminar 12: Habits, Customs and Rituals

The key questions are here, but there are some additional questions, to help you to think through this, on the uweonline site. There is also relevant reading on the site.

The first set of questions is about habits, customs & rituals.

- Think about habits, customs, ideas, beliefs and rituals that typify the place and period of your linked module. Remember that 'ritual' need not be to do with religion: it can be to do with the state, or the household, or the nation.
- Are these everyday rituals and habits, or are they special ceremonies?
- What are these habits and rituals for? What do they symbolise/enact/affirm? How do they relate to power relationships; class; gender; the creation of heroes and villains?
- Do people 'perform' before others? (eg speaking in a particular way; walking in a particular order; carrying out a ritual – 'performance' is anything that involves an action as part of an interaction between people, rather than just a text) Why is 'performance' important in thinking about culture?
- What habits, customs, ideas, beliefs and rituals do you think were so taken for granted by the people of the time that they did not need to be stated? How, then, can you find them in the historical sources?

Sources as culture

Cultural History thinks about sources as *manifestations* of culture. So questions about sources and how to read them are particularly important here.

To do a cultural history analysis of the sources used, ask the following questions:

- What can you glean from the source about contemporary value-systems? What values do you think were most important to the author or the contemporary reader?
- To what extent do sources deploy obvious symbolism, ie things that you can easily identify as coded imagery or language. How might you decode such symbolism?
- Is it possible to use the sources to learn something about unconscious assumptions and everyday thought?
- What do these sources indicate about the mind-set – the *mentalité* - of both the author(s) and the contemporary recipient(s) or reader(s)?
- Do the sources convey anything about emotions? Is it possible to think about the emotions and passions of people in the past? Is it possible to do so dispassionately? Is such a study desirable? What do we gain from it?

Methodology questions: *how* do you read the sources for what they tell you about the cultures that produced them?

Finally, the historiographic questions:

In which history books do you find this kind of cultural analysis? When were they published? What intellectual currents were they influenced by?

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log now you've completed the Theories of History work.

Secondary Sources Seminars

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log before you start the Secondary Sources work.

In this section, you concentrate on secondary sources: books, essays and journal articles. You have been used to receiving reading lists to work from. However, when you write a dissertation, you compile your own list of things to read.

You will need to know how to select relevant work to read, how to assess it and how to use it in context.

Some general points about secondary sources:

Building a bibliography

An essential part of carrying out historical research is having an overview of what has already been written on your topic. So you have to read everything and assess it. The first task is to identify everything that might be relevant to your topic and make a reading list. So you need to know how to build a bibliography.

Accuracy of the facts in the texts

It is unlikely that any source you're asked to read will have inaccurate empirical data. If you think that any data is inaccurate, then obviously it's important to point this out. But that's very rare.

The important question in assessing secondary sources is not whether the empirical data is 'accurate', but how appropriately it has been used. So you need to think about how the data is used, and whether it is an effective use - in other words, whether it actually supports the argument being made.

Of course, you also need to consider whether there is other data which would (a) be better or (b) would provide a more powerful counter-argument, which hasn't been taken into account, or hasn't been used appropriately.

'Bias'

This leads on to the question of 'biased views'.

To worry about 'bias' is misleading. All historians are defending a viewpoint and making an argument about how they have interpreted the data. (If they're not, then they're writing a textbook, not a piece of original history.) So all secondary sources should have a 'bias' towards one interpretation rather than another. This is not a weakness, but a strength: good history has a strong voice and a strong position to defend.

The issue is not whether views are 'biased', but whether the position is well supported by the primary evidence used.

'Balance'

It is also misleading to seek a 'balanced' position towards the secondary sources. In assessing the debates and disagreements between historians in secondary data, the point is not to seek a mid-way position, but to decide which historian has the strongest argument.

This will depend on whether an historian has an internally-consistent and coherent argument; whether the evidence used to support the argument does actually support it; and whether other key evidence has been omitted which, had it been included, would have undermined the argument.

Often historians differ because they used different sources; or were writing from different worldviews; or were interested in different questions/debates from each other. Finding a 'balance' in these cases would be meaningless.

13. Building a bibliography

In this seminar, you focus on how to select relevant work to read for your dissertation:

- Discuss what a bibliographic list is for - why do you need to compile one?
- Discuss what sorts of items (monographs, edited collections, journal articles, anything else) you'd want in your list, and why.
- Identify various ways of finding bibliographic information.
- If you have the resources in your seminar room, use the internet to find some relevant bibliographic information

Think about:

- the easiest way to start
- the differences between different collections of bibliographic information
- the best sources of bibliographic information
- how to tell whether something is worth adding to your list or not
- where to go for help and advice

Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is based on the work in your linked module. Choose three different types of bibliographic item (eg monograph; chapter in edited collection; journal article; unpublished paper), derived from three different sources (eg UWE library catalogue; JSTOR; footnote in a journal article).

Explain why you would use them if you were choosing items for your dissertation.

See whether you can actually find them.

This is **due in by 12th February**.

14. Critical analysis

In this seminar, you focus on how to assess items in a bibliography. A bibliography is no use unless you know what's significant about the secondary texts that you've got in your bibliography - which are the canonical texts, how they relate to each other, what you can use them for, what their strengths and weaknesses are.

Use your reading for your linked module this week to practice on.

- Think about what 'critical assessment' of a secondary text means. Look at the 'general points about secondary sources' above for some guidance to what it *doesn't* mean.
- Draw up a list of the sorts of things you want to do with a text when you're 'critically assessing' it
- Critically assess AT LEAST two of the readings for your linked module this week

Your **portfolio work** for this seminar is based on your readings in your linked module.

From the discussion in the seminar, write down three key things to bear in mind when making a critical assessment of a secondary source.

Explain why you think they are important, and show how they can be applied to three of the texts that you are required to read for your linked module this week.

This is **due in by 19th February**.

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log now you've completed the Secondary Sources work.

Project: Research Methods for Accessing and Assessing Primary Data

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log before you start the Project work.

You have already worked on accessing primary data in textual and visual form from the library books and microfilm collections.

However, there are other ways of accessing original data for use in your dissertation. For the rest of this term, you will work on a project that uses a specific research method.

You can choose from: statistical analysis; oral history; and internet-based research.

The purpose of this work is for you to use, and reflect upon, the research method. What you find out is less important than what you learn about the method by using it.

Aims of the projects:

- To give you a chance to try out **one** of the methods you may want to use next year
- To give you the opportunity to reflect on the experience of using that method - what was good about it?; what was difficult about it?; what is it good for?

What we expect of you:

- Not a huge amount of writing! This is not an essay project. It is all about you *doing* the project.
- Your portfolio entry for this project is worth 75 submission points. As a rule of thumb, therefore, you could expect to *write* about 50% more than you wrote for the 'theories of history' entries. Don't get hung up on word counts, though. This is about the *experience* of doing the project and reflecting on it. If you want to write extensively, because it will be useful to you to write down all your thoughts, then feel free to do so. But it is not a *requirement*.

What you should put in your portfolio entry:

- A very brief description of what you did [NB for the internet project, this should include an accurate set of citations for the sites you used.]
- A brief account of what you learned/found out about the past.
- A slightly longer consideration of what you learned/found out about your chosen method of accessing and using data.

15. Statistical analysis

In this seminar, you will, with luck, get to see a demonstration of the HIST package. This is a piece of software specially designed to help historians make use of numerical data.

1. Before the seminar

- Dig out the last piece of work that you submitted for any of your modules. Bring it to the seminar. Consider on how much use you made of number/statistics in that work. Remember that 'most of'; 'many'; 'the majority of'; 'only a small proportion of' are all statistical claims.
- Find a set of statistics – or even better, some numerical data – in one of the secondary sources that you're reading in your linked module. (Do you know what's the difference between numerical data and statistics?)

2. In the seminar

- If HIST is available, input someone's data into it to see how it works.
- As a group, discuss how you'd locate statistical data.
- Look at some numerical data together – this may be supplied by the seminar tutor. What questions would you ask? how do the data themselves help you to decide what it's appropriate to ask?

Portfolio work

Locate and analyse some numerical data, using HIST or some other form of statistical analysis. You will need to formulate an appropriate question to ask of the data, and see whether the statistical analysis helps you to answer it.

You will then need to reflect on what you've learned about statistical analysis as a research method, as a result of doing this project.

There is reading on uweonline to help you with thinking about the project.

You don't have to choose this research method for your project, but, if you do, it will be **due in by 15th April**.

16. Oral history

Seminar work

For this seminar, you need to READ the oral history transcript: 'Extract from an interview with an unmarried woman born 1904 from County Durham' which is available on uweonline.

Look at the questions on the transcript, and use them to think about:

- whether oral history is particularly suited to some types of history rather than others
- which theory/theories of history are likely to inform the use of oral history
- the strengths and weaknesses of oral history

Come to the seminar armed with three questions about their life history to ask someone else in your group. Take it in turns to interview each other.

What do you conclude about the types of History that oral history methods can reveal?

Portfolio work

Carry out an interview (or interviews) in order to find out something about the past. For this project, you will try to *interview* effectively and then *use* your interview data to answer a question.

- Identify friends or family that you can interview, and get their agreement. DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TRY TO INTERVIEW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO ARE NOT ALREADY YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY. DO NOT. AT ALL. EVEN THINK ABOUT IT. (There are legal issues).
- Don't be over-ambitious. Simply finding your interviewee(s), doing the interview(s), selecting, organising and analysing your data will all take time. Don't try to process too much data. Rather, choose your topic and your material carefully and keep the objectives of your project relatively simple.
- You will then need to reflect on what you've learned about oral interview as a research method, as a result of doing this project.

For full instructions, see the uweonline site. There is also reading on uweonline to help you with the project.

You don't have to choose this research method for your project, but, if you do, it will be **due in by 15th April**.

17. Internet-based research

This is rather different from the other two projects. It involves using the internet to find materials for research based on each of the different theories of History that you studied last term.

There are various things you need to think about when using the internet. All of them are related to knowing how to search efficiently, and assess the reliability of the data you find. The internet is not like a library. There is no quality control about what goes onto it. You can use it to:

- find primary sources
- find secondary sources.
- check bibliographic data.
- find out simple empirical data

but in every case, you need to be able to assess whether it's accurate and reliable.

Seminar work

Go to Google. Put in a search topic relevant to your linked module. Take the first five things that come up. Assess their usefulness and reliability for historical research.

Concentrate on

- how to make searches more likely to produce helpful data
- how to assess the reliability of the material you find.

Portfolio work

For your portfolio project, you will be practising the skills you will need if you are going to use the internet as part of the research for your dissertation. These involve:

- effective searching
- assessing usefulness
- assessing reliability
- transferring data from the internet into a Word document
- referencing accurately.

Don't be over-ambitious. Simply finding, selecting, organising your data and analysing your process will all take time. Search for material that is useable and useful for research on a topic relevant to your linked module, using each of the following:

- diplomatic/military/political approaches
- Marxist analysis
- Women's History approaches
- Economic history
- Gendered or Identity-based approaches
- Cultural analysis
- Annales analysis

You will then need to reflect on what you've learned about using the internet as a research method, as a result of doing this project.

For full instructions, see the uweonline site. There is also reading on uweonline to help you with the project.

You don't have to choose this research method for your project, but, if you do, it will be **due in by 15th April.**

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log when you've completed the Project work.

Planning and writing up a dissertation

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log before you start the Planning and writing up work.

All the work for these seminars will contribute towards the penultimate submission to your portfolio, which is also the submission carrying the most weighting. This is the dissertation plan.

18. Formulating questions

It is surprisingly difficult to come up with a good question to address in a dissertation. You need to consider

- whether it has already been done to death, so there is nothing new for you to say;
- whether there are primary sources available in the UK, and in a language in which you are fluent, to base your research on
- whether it is appropriate for the word limit of 10k words – is it too limited, or too ambitious?
- Whether there is a body of secondary literature to support your research, in a language in which you are fluent.

In this seminar, you will each try to formulate a dissertation question. This can either be a question for the dissertation work you are intending to do next year, or a question based on your linked module from this year. Try to explain why you think it would be a good question. Then we will – very supportively! – discuss everyone's question in turn, considering its strengths and weaknesses.

19. Agents of history

Your dissertation will necessarily focus on a person/set of people/things that you think are the main agents (or 'causers') of historical change. It is very helpful, in planning a dissertation, to define your agents of history before you start.

In your linked module/secondary sources essay groups, discuss

- What is an *agent* of history?
- why writers have chosen specific protagonists
- what difference it makes to the account if you change the protagonists
- whether texts organised around structural themes can be said to have protagonists.

As a seminar group:

- discuss whether some protagonists/agents of history suit some approaches to history/theories of history better than others
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of using particular protagonists
- consider who/what would be your agents of history, if you were to write your dissertation on the topic covered by your secondary sources essay
- keep a note of what other issues this conversation gives rise to.

20. Structure or Narrative?

You can write your dissertation as a narrative – as series of events – or as a thematic (or 'structural') study.

Before the seminar

Choose four books that are relevant to your linked module, or to your secondary sources essay topic.

TWO of these should be narratives.

TWO of them should be structural accounts

Bring them to the seminar with you

In the seminar

In your linked module or secondary sources essay groups, discuss

- what makes each text you've chosen a narrative or structural account. What are the shortcuts to working this out?
- why the writer chose that format
- why the dates for the start and end of the narratives
- why the themes for the structural analysis

As a seminar group:

- discuss whether some forms of organising work suit some approaches to history/theories of history better than others
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of each approach
- consider whether narrative or structure would be your preferred form, if you were to write your dissertation on the topic covered by your secondary sources essay
- keep a note of what other issues this conversation gives rise to.

Portfolio work, Seminars 18-20

The dissertation plan is due in on **4th May**, and no feedback on online submissions will be given after that date. **Note that this is a Friday, not a Sunday.** Your dissertation supervisor next year may be in a position to give you feedback on this work.

Remember to fill out your self-reflective log when you've completed the planning and writing up work.

Your self-reflective submission is due in at 2pm on the MONDAY AFTER the dissertation plan. This is the final deadline for the entire portfolio.

Make sure that you organise your time to account for this.

AND FINALLY,

Make sure that you complete and submit the 'confirmation of submission' form in your portfolio before the deadline.