

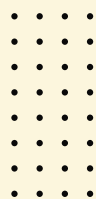


UCU
university college utrecht



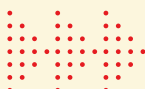
UCU HISTORY TRACK HANDBOOK

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WHY SHOULD I STUDY HISTORY?



History is indispensable for understanding the modern world and in understanding great contemporary public debates, for example on the Cold War, the Middle East, the Holocaust, the decline of the United States, the rise of China, and on the economic crisis in the West.

History provides a critical perspective on the present by contrasting it with the past. To give just one example: one can get a new perspective on democracy by immersing oneself in the history of totalitarian nations like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, or by studying slavery. The contrasts and the sometimes-surprising continuities with the past are crucial in gaining insight in present-day political, intellectual, economic, and social problems. The past is in itself fascinating and at times sheer fun to study. Who can read about the exploits of Alexander the Great, Hannibal or Napoleon without a sense of adventure? A broad interest in the past for its own sake can help avoid the tunnel vision that too much present-mindedness may engender.

Within the many disciplines taught at University College Utrecht, History has a distinctive approach to understanding reality. Comparing the historical approach with other disciplines is essential in coming to grips with the college's Liberal Arts and Sciences philosophy.

History is a valuable track for many future careers, as the skills learned are useful whether as a politician, a journalist, an economist, an international lawyer, a diplomat, a sociologist or even a businessman. They all have to study and interpret the past. History courses help in doing so critically, and in avoiding dogmatism and singlemindedness.

HOW TO INCORPORATE HISTORY IN YOUR CURRICULUM AT UCU?



The History Track at University College Utrecht covers a broad array of historical specialities, from political or economic history, to history and philosophy of science or the study security and conflict. This interdisciplinary nature thus offers the opportunity for many students from different disciplines to include history in their major, or pursue history as a minor. Unique to the History Track at University College Utrecht is the opportunity for students to include their interests in other disciplines into their coursework at University College Utrecht, for example an economics student can take the level 1 course on Middle Ages and write an essay on the feudal economy, then move to the level 2 course on the Cold War and write about economic policy during this period, and then move to the level 3 course on the Origins and Crises of the Global Economy. Economic history could then become the topic in the bachelor thesis. This is just one of the many different options within the History Track at University College Utrecht.

For further information, see the History Track webpage, contact the History Fellow or the History Track Representative:



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COURSE DIAGRAM: LEVEL 1

Level	Fall	Spring
1	UCHUMHIS12: Medieval History: 400-1500	UCHUMHIS13: Early Modern History: 1450 - 1850
	UCHUMHIS14: Modern History	UCHUMHIS14: Modern History
		UCHUMLIT12: Ancient Literature and History
		UCSCIHIS11: History and Philosophy of Science

COURSE DIAGRAM: LEVEL 2

Level	Fall	Spring	Summer
2	UCHUMHIS21: Transatlantic Cold War: Europe and the Superpowers	UCHUMHIS24: Cultural History of Magic and Science	UCINTHIS21: Understanding Conflict
	UCINTHIS23: Black Music and Social Transformation	UCHUMHIS28: Decolonizing Security: the Global Cold War*	
		UCINTHIS22: UN Simulation & Negotiation	

*Now part of the "Reimagining Security" Minor at the UU
(<https://students.uu.nl/onderwijs/minors/re-imagining-security>).

COURSE DIAGRAM: LEVEL 3

Level	Fall	Spring	Summer
3	UCHUMHIS35: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the Modern World	UCINTHIS32: European Conflicts and Security: Ukraine	
	UCHUMHIS36: Origins and Crises of the Global Economy	UCHUMHIS37: Transitional Justice	
		UCINTPOL32: Politics & Religion in the Modern World	

A THESIS IN HISTORY?

Your thesis is the culmination of your studies at UCU. It is your opportunity to dive deeper in a topic that has piqued your interest in one of your courses (or a topic you have not been able to address in any other course) and show off the research and writing skills you have gained in your last three years. If you already know which Master's you want to do, it is advised to do the Bachelor's thesis on a historical topic that is closely related to the subject of the Master's programme. For more information and guidelines on writing your thesis in History at UCU, please see the History Thesis Handbook.

Below, you can read the experiences of some of our current students and alumni who completed a thesis in the field of history. Hopefully, it will give you an idea of how various the topics of a history thesis can be, and how to start thinking about your topic.

Johan Wiersma - Class of 2023 **Major in Politics & History, Minor in China Studies**



My thesis focuses on the war crimes committed by the Netherlands in Indonesia during the Indonesian Independence War, and specifically examines the Dutch government's persistent efforts to conceal and obstruct the truth-seeking processes surrounding these crimes. The Dutch government's attempts to hide and obstruct the war crimes committed in Indonesia have spanned decades, reflecting a national framework and self-image that seeks to distance itself from such atrocities.

Historical records have been withheld or manipulated, testimonies of victims and witnesses suppressed, and a culture of denial and deflection cultivated to preserve the Netherlands' preferred narrative; that there were merely incidental 'excesses' of violence.

The course on transitional justice excellently equipped me for my thesis, as it has provided me with a solid foundation in understanding the complexities of historical injustices, the interplay between politics and accountability, and the significance of uncovering hidden truths, thereby allowing me to find the perfect intersection where my interests in political science and history converge.



Bakir Ovčina – Graduated 2021, Major in History & Philosophy, Minor in Politics

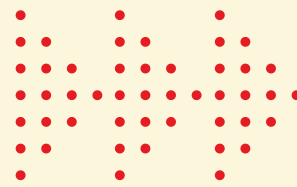
My History Thesis at UCU was on the Bosnian Muslim WWII Resolutions, a set of historical documents dealing with violence during the war. The thesis synthesized the methods and thematic approach to modern history of the UCU curriculum, but also the freedom we had in choosing topics. I decided to explore this topic specifically as it was inadequately explored at the time.



Lydia de Haan Cassetti - Class of 2022 Major in History & Politics

I did my thesis on the use of anti-communist propaganda funded by the CIA in covert operations in Guatemala in 1954 and in Chile in 1964. I always found the role of the US during the Cold War very interesting, as they portrayed themselves as "leader of the free world" and such an advocate for democracy but were at the same time supporting dictators in Latin America, in the name of anti-communism, which did anything but defend democracy. In my Cold War class at UCU, I wrote an essay on how the CIA had organised a propaganda campaign known as the "Scare Campaign" in Chile in 1964, in order to make sure that the Christian democratic candidate Eduardo Frei would win the elections over the socialist candidate Salvador Allende: clearly interfering in the democratic institutions of another country. This essay led me to my thesis idea.

BEYOND UCU: UU COURSES



Although the History track at UCU is quite big compared to other tracks, students may wish to explore historical time periods or topics not included in one of the History courses on offer. Therefore, there are courses offered within the history track at UU that may be complementary to your curriculum! Here you can find potential additions to your curriculum, and some previous student's experiences. This list is not exhaustive, and you are highly encouraged to explore the courses on offer through the UU course planner.



Lieke Speerstra - Class of 2020 **Major in Literature & History**

At UU, I followed two courses: Imperialism and the Middle East and The Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East. These courses are about Middle Eastern history. The first course is about the Middle East before 1945 and how Western imperialism shaped the region. The second course is about the Middle East after 1945. Both were great courses that taught me a lot about Middle Eastern history, which was not included in the history courses at UCU. For me, it was also a great preparation for the Arab-Israeli conflict course at UCU. I really liked these courses; it was very interesting to learn more about Middle Eastern history. Also the workload is quite chill in comparison to UCU courses!

Job de Jager - Class of 2023

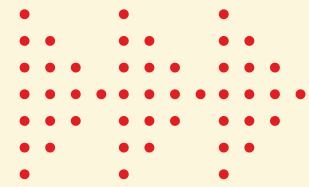
Major in Economics & Politics, Minor in History



During my time at UCU, I took 3 UU courses in History: Blueprints of Modern Society, Thinking about Capitalism and Mythology. What I liked about the UU courses is that they have such a wide variety of courses that you can get away from the basics, and take classes on genuinely interesting, more specific topics. I had mostly positive experiences with the UU. I certainly recommend these courses to any future UCU students!

In Blueprints of Modern Society, we read many political thinkers' best texts. From Frantz Fanon to Joseph de Maistre, to Carl Schmitt, to Naomi Klein. Instead of having the freedom to choose one's own topic, the best texts were chosen for you. This approach was also emblematic for Thinking About Capitalism. We read lots of different views and learned to distil the essence from these together in the classes, often guided by the teacher who was open for new points. However, I did not have the same experience in my Mythology class. The same teaching style was chosen, but there were so many people in the course that nothing really came of the classes. Obviously, this is a drawback of the UU courses.

BEYOND UCU: MASTERS' PROGRAMS



Many students choose to pursue a Master's program after their studies at UCU. The requirements for Master's programs in History vary. Always make sure to check the requirements for any program of interest and discuss with your tutor to plan your curriculum accordingly!

History students from University College Utrecht are almost always accepted to the Master's program in History. Most applicants for a special research Master's program in Utrecht, Leiden and Amsterdam have been accepted. Students have also been accepted at King's College, the London School of Economics and other universities abroad. To give you some idea of the possibilities, and to provide you with a perspective of what a Master's program in History may be like, the following students will share their experiences with you.



Alexei Delanghe - Class of 2022
Major in History & Philosophy, Minor in Politics
MA Genocide & Holocaust Studies, NIOD & UVA, NL

After UCU I decided to pursue an MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam and the Netherlands Institute for War and Genocide Studies (NIOD). I chose the MA because it allows me to pursue my main academic areas of interest: conflict and transitional justice. These are both subjects which I studied as part of the history track at UCU. But I also chose it because it offered a program which extended the manner and level of study I enjoyed in Utrecht. During my studies at the NIOD, I have found that studying history at UCU has not only helped me conduct research but it also helped me position my own research critically within the existing literature. Additionally, I wanted to continue studying in a stimulating and interactive environment, where I would be sure that classes involved discussion and constant interaction with the professors. Engaging in such discussions with professors and peers has very much cultivated a critical slant in my own work and has also provided me with greater confidence in constructing and defending my own arguments.

Bakir Ovčina – Graduated 2021, Major in History & Philosophy, Minor in Politics

Master's Program: RMA History, Utrecht University, NL

PhD: Vanderbilt University, US



After UCU I immediately continued to the UU's two-year RMA History in 2021. UCU helped a great deal in managing the workload, but also when it came to doing research. It helped to have a sense of cognate disciplines like IR, Political Science and Philosophy.

History at UCU helped open the doors to many Graduate History programs – Oxford, Cambridge, LSE etc., but UU offered a better financial package. History at UCU (and the thesis writing sample) also helped me to a full-ride PhD Scholarship and Graduate Fellowship at Vanderbilt University, starting Fall 2023.



Lieke Speerstra - Class of 2020

Major in Literature & History

RMA Global History, VU Amsterdam, NL

I am currently finishing the Humanities Research Master: Global History at the VU. I chose this program because, like UCU, it offers personalised and small-scale education. I also liked the program's research-orientation and the way it prepares its student for a possible PhD position. The program is great if you are interested in environmental and/or digital humanities. UCU's history courses form a great preparation for this program. While UCU courses teach you more about what happened in the past, the RMA program teaches you to reflect on history as a discipline and how you carry out research as a historian.



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