

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	MA in the History of the Americas
5	Programme Code	4079
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Last updated	11/05/12

10 Programme Aims

- 1.To provide students with a range of learning opportunities, in relation to analytical, research, and subject-specific skill, within the field of the History of the Americas.
- 2.To provide a curriculum that is responsive to the research training requirements of the AHRC and the ESRC;
- 3.To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for, or as part of, continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning;
- 4.To provide access to Higher Education to students from a variety of educational backgrounds, and to provide a bridge to further postgraduate qualifications;
- 5.To provide students with the opportunity to gain the basic skills and knowledge required to continue with academic research in History at PhD level, or to enter the workplace in a variety of professions requiring high levels of skill such as literacy, research, and project management;
- 6.To ensure that the programme meets the requirements of a Master's level qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
- 7.To ensure that the programme conforms to University policies and to QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

Intellectual Skills

Practical Skills

Transferable/Key Skills.

The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for History.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1. Acquire knowledge and understanding of the history of the Americas in a wide chronological span and thematic perspective.
- A2. Acquire knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and analytical frameworks that historians of the Americas bring to their subject.
- A3. Acquire knowledge and understanding of the methodologies and sources which are used by specialists in the field.

A4. Acquire knowledge and understanding of the analytical skills required from undertaking a sustained original piece of historical research (dissertation).

Teaching and Learning Methods

Group seminars, individual tutorials for the return of coursework, and self-directed learning. Structured interactions (email, phone, skype) will be used to support students who will carry out dissertation work remotely.

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars, supplemented by occasional lectures, individual tutorials for the return of coursework, and self-directed learning (to facilitate the development of a comprehensive understanding and critical awareness of current research and advanced scholarship).

Throughout the programme students are encouraged to read widely and bibliographies are supplied. Students make use of a wide range of learning resources, including books and journal articles in the Robinson Library and at Durham University Library, primary sources held at Newcastle, Durham or in other libraries, online resources and databases available via the Robinson Library.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are assessed through written essays or research assignments for each module, and through the final dissertation. Marks will be awarded for evidence of knowledge attained, as well as evidence that the student has achieved an appropriate level of understanding of the methodologies and sources used by specialists in this field.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Apply critical reasoning;
- B2 Gather and use information;
- B3 Apply concepts;
- B4 Evaluate and analyse.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Modules are taught by a number of professional historians who research in the area about which they teach. Group work provides the students with the opportunity to develop and practice their subject specific and generic skills.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment of knowledge and understanding is by use of coursework (including essays, bibliographical assessments, in-course tests, research project work and dissertation, oral or poster presentations), including essay questions and commentary on primary sources as appropriate to the module. The mix of coursework varies as appropriate to the module but most modules include some aspect of formative assessment during the module in addition to the summative assessment.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Acquire subject-specific skills through training and research experience and develop an ability to evaluate, analyse and interpret different sources of evidence relating to the History of the Americas;
- C2 Undertake higher degree research through completion of short pieces of written work and a dissertation;
- C3 Practice a wide range of subject-specific skills such as the marshalling of evidence, presenting a balanced written argument, and a critical analysis of historical and bibliographic evidence;

C4 Develop an in-depth understanding of their dissertation topic.

Teaching and Learning Methods

All taught historical modules include seminars, lectures and tutorials delivered by professional historians and practitioners who research and work in the subjects on which they lecture. These will provide an advanced survey of the state of knowledge and enable students to develop a comprehensive understanding and critical awareness of specific topics relating to current research and advanced scholarship. All contributors use a wide range of examples from their own fields of expertise.

Group work related to lectures provides students with the opportunity to develop and practise their subject-specific and generic skills through, for example, preparation for and oral contribution to seminars and presentations.

Research training, tutorials, guided reading, feedback on outline proposals, and continuous supervision provide the basis for students to complete their dissertations.

Assessment Strategy

All historical assignments include an element of assessment related to the understanding of subject-specific skills. Students are encouraged through the research logs compiled for training modules to reflect on their own research in relation to the attainment of transferable skills, in either the pursuit of further postgraduate research or in the wider workplace.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 demonstrate a high level of skill in written communication;
- D2 demonstrate a high level of skill in interpersonal/oral communication;
- D3 demonstrate a high level of skill in teamwork;
- D4 demonstrate a high level of skill in planning and organisation.

Teaching and Learning Methods

In specific research training modules, students will be introduced to the following skills: how to plan and execute a piece of historical research; effective oral communication techniques; team working; keeping to programme deadlines.

Assessment Strategy

Written communication is assessed in each of the modules on this programme. Assignments will be mostly essay-based, reflecting the dominance of this form of writing within the discipline, but other written work may be set, such as writing a research log, or compiling an annotated bibliography as part of a research assignment.

Interpersonal/oral communication, individually and as part of a team is a critical part of the teaching and learning experience for this programme, e.g. during group seminars and in individual feedback sessions.

Planning and organization is practised throughout the programme through the student's ability to meet deadlines and successfully complete the programme.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme may be taken on a full time (1 year) or part time (2 years) basis. All students must take a total of 120 credits of taught modules, which are offered in Semesters 1 and 2, and 60 credits from the dissertation. A part-time route through the programme will be decided on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Degree Programme Director.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The programme is designed to utilise the research interests of all the historians of the Americas in the School, offer routes to both AHRC and ESRC funding, incorporate a full training programme, including IT skills, and lead to a substantial research-based dissertation.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

Candidates should normally hold a first degree in History, or a Joint or Combined Honours degree with History, and shall normally hold at least a 2:1 (Upper Second Class) degree. Other degree qualifications may be considered where appropriate, especially where essay-based work formed the written component of the undergraduate programme (e.g. in English).

Admissions policy/selection tools

We actively encourage applications from overseas and domestic students. All overseas students have to satisfy the University's language requirements and obtain a minimum of 6.5 IELTS or equivalent. All applications are seen by the DPD and, where deemed appropriate, another member of staff. All borderline or unusual applicants are contacted by letter, email, or phone and further information solicited.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Candidates who have followed a non-traditional route into Higher Education will also be considered eligible, according to the Faculty Admissions Policy.

Level of English Language capability

IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent).

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee. The FTLSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every six years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a one-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50%

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40% is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

<50	Fail
50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- i. See and approve assessment papers
- ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
- iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
- iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

The School Brochure

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold)
A1	ABC1001 , XYZ2002
A2	
A3	
A4	
B1	
B2	
B3	
B4	
C1	
C2	
C3	
C4	
D1	
D2	
D3	
D4	

Or

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
HIS8061	Compulsory	1,2,3	2, 3	1,2,3,4	1,2
HIS8098	Compulsory	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	2	1
HIS8031	Compulsory	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,4
HIS8064		1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,4
HIS8063		1,2,3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,4
HIS8107		1, 2, 3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1, 2
HIS8106		1, 2, 3	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1, 2
HIS8023	Compulsory	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4	1, 2