History - Undergraduate Chat - Find out more about studying History at Warwick

Chat with Professor Rebecca Earle, Head of History, as she answers your questions on studying opportunities for History at Warwick.

Hello! I'm delighted to welcome you to this Warwick History Department live chat. What would you like to talk about?

Are you interested in particular sorts of history?

Hello! I still have two years to go before entering university, but I am already considering studying History. However I am a bit confused with all the courses offered, such as History and Philosophy or Politics... What are the advantages of focusing solely on History and of taking a double course?

That is a good question. Taking a joint degree such as history and politics has advantages and limitations.

I must say I prefer more modern History, from the XVIth century onwards... I have seen there are modules to choose. How is the choice made? Based on personal interests? Or is there an advised combination?

Joint degree courses usually guarantee you access to the full range of modules in each department, and may give you a higher chance of getting onto those modules, compared to students who are not in that department and want to take, say, a politics module.

On the other hand, taking a joint degree gives you less flexibility, as you need to fulfill the requirements for 2 different departments, and that limits you ability to selection optional modules.

Is there a joint module that is particularly popular amongst the students?

At Warwick much of the choice of what modules you follow is up to you--there are relatively few required modules. Over your second and final year 70% of the modules are ones that you choose, rather than required ones. So how do you chose? That can change over your studies.

As you study from year to year you will discover new things that excite you in history, and you can follow these interests.

The Warwick prospectus mentions that there a year can be spent abroad. Anywhere?

The most popular joint degree is history-politics.
Sorry to be so slow in typing! There are a number of exchange partners across the world, but the precise selection varies from year to year. We also have a programme in Venice, whereby you spend part of your final year studying in Venice, taught by Warwick historians.

I am studying in the French system, and will be taking an OIB baccalaureat.

What are the grades required?

Which topics are you enjoying most? (And I will just check the OIB offer.)

Well I enjoy French literature, Philosophy, English, and History has always been my main interest, especially outside school...

What topics will be covered in history?

IB: 38 with at least a 6 in Higher Level History—but that is something we’d be very happy to have a discussion about if you thought you were near but not quite certain.

Are the history modules more Morden or ancient?

Aha—maybe you are also interested in a History and Philosophy joint degree? Or English and history?

We are a very global department, and cover much of the world, from about 1500 to the present. So you can study the history of the English Reformation, but also the politics of modern Kenya, or human rights in Latin America, or the history of China.

Sorry, I meant the "Option Internationale of the Bac", which means I have extra English and History and Geography in English... I am unsure if my level of English matches the philosophy requirements, as I already notice how demanding this subject in French is.

I will check but I would expect that it does match.

How important are extra-curricular activities in the personal statement?

The important thing is to show that you are interested in the subject— that you have a passion for the topics you’re applying to study. It’s also an opportunity for you to show you are an elegant writer. If your extra-curricular activities help show your passion, help show what fascinates you, then it’s a fine idea to mention them. If they are not really part of that story, then you don’t need to mention them, at least as far as Warwick’s history dept. is concerned.
What else would you like to discuss?

Would it be possible to visit Warwick in February, since I have holidays then?

Absolutely. There are open days during the spring term—I will post the link in a moment—but you can also contact me (r.earle@warwick.ac.uk) any time if you cannot attend an open day and would like to arrange an individual visit.

I would also like to know how the atmosphere is... are students stressed/overwhelmed with work?

Well, there is a very large Wellbeing Centre, to help ensure that students are coping well with stress...! The university is in a fairly calming part of the Warwickshire (or actually, West Midlands) countryside, and so has its own, very focused, campus atmosphere. It’s also in close links with other local towns and cities, and about 1 hour from London by train.

Do you feel that a lot of students where you are suffer from stress?

And I know this is a hard question to answer, but why would I choose Warwick? I am overwhelmed with the number of universities there are, and they all offer similar courses?

Here is a link to the university open days. I am not sure if the History days are listed yet but do let me know if you would like to come at whatever time suits.

and the link: https://warwick.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/visits/opendays

Open Days at the University of Warwick

Booking for Undergraduate Open Days 2019 at the University of Warwick.

Well I am considering joining a French prepa otherwise = two intensive years of studying, with a lot of stress, so I am trying to assess both opportunities...

That is the most important question. I will try to answer a bit about what makes our dept. distinctive.

We are a very global department in terms of what we cover. We prefer to see things from different perspectives, to look at what might seem familiar questions and topics from different angles. These usually reveal different things.

I will most probably come in February, since application forms have to be submitted later in the year, until January 2021, is that right?
The dept. is also famous for being the home to some really important historians, people whose work has shaped the whole field of history—people like EP Thompson—and their commitment to history as a discipline that can transform how we see today’s world is still really important.

Fundamentally I think we see history as having a deep potential to transform how we think about ourselves—so history, our history, is also always connected to the questions of today.

and yes—that is exactly right about the dates.

It seems so exciting!! But how am I supposed to choose between all the courses? I also really like languages...

Can a apply for different courses at Warwick at once? Or do I apply for one course only?

So about the department, in summary, we have a very strong reputation for innovative, important research with social relevance, and for taking a very global approach to viewing both today’s world and the world of times gone by. It’s an exciting place to work.

Coming back to the year abroad: is the studying in a local university in another language, if I decide to study a language besides History?

You can apply for several, and you can also change your mind if you are filled with doubt after sending in the application. But how to choose? Think what you are most passionate about: is it really getting to the historical contexts behind the novels you love, that really, really lies behind your love of literature? Or is your interest as much about the beauty of how a poem is constructed, just as much as it is about the context in which it was written?

I must admit I am always more fascinated by the context :)

In the first case you might prefer to focus on history—in the second, you might prefer to study literature. If you are inspired by both, you can consider a joint degree...

It’s also true that studying one thing does not mean you can never pursue your other interests. You don’t need to give everything else up entirely.

What are the job opportunities after a History degree? I have the feeling that nowadays, it’s all about engineering!

You will learn excellent transferrable skills in virtually any degree in the arts—that is the first thing to say. You should study history, in particular, because you have a passion for history, but you can do this confident that you can get a good job.
People with degrees in history from Warwick have done things ranging from being the country head of a major international charity, to writing for television, to working in museums, in law firms, with computer games design....the challenge is to figure out what you want to do!

That sounds great... Another of my options would be to study an International relations. Does it overlap with History?

To help you do that there is a good careers service, and lots of opportunities to meet potential employers, etc.

Yes--there is a degree in history with politics and international studies.

Do you have any idea yet of the prices for EU students with (if) Brexit?

I am afraid I don't--yet another of the many, many things that remain very unclear if Brexit.

I know that Warwick is deeply, deeply committed to ensuring that students from the EU continue to be able to study at Warwick, where they form an integral part of our academic community.

How are the scholarships awarded?

These are done by a team connected with the international office, I believe--there are different criteria for different awards.

Is the student community a multicultural one?

very! I can check the figures but both the student community and the academic staff are very international. Further supporting internationalisation is a key university goal, as well--it's something the university sees as important to creating a strong academic space.

Well, I must say I now have answers to all my questions! Thank you very much, and I will probably email you as soon as I organise my university visits in the UK...

It was a very great pleasure to talk! Please don't hesitate to email me if you have the slightest additional question.

Thank you! Have a nice evening!

and you--very best.