Module 1: Concepts and Methods of Local History
This module will comprise eight units, making extensive use of original sources and case studies. There will be four written assignments, giving students an opportunity to practise historical skills and to write some local history. The units cover approaches to local history, finding primary and secondary sources, the critical use of evidence, personal testimony as a source, a practical guide to statistics and the use of Excel, record linkage, and effective writing and publication.

0. Introduction: a guide to the course and to its methods

1. Local History: its nature and background
   - Local History: the long tradition – how the subject has developed over the centuries
   - Local history: the ‘state of the art’ – current themes in local history
   - The future of local history – evaluating approaches to local history
   - Local history on the internet - critical use of the internet as a resource

2. The nature of historical evidence (1)
   - Types of evidence – introduction to primary and secondary sources
   - Finding and evaluating evidence – how to assess the reliability and usefulness of sources
   - Historical context – the importance of understanding local evidence in a wider context

3. The nature of historical evidence (2)
   - Introduction to history and theory – familiarisation with the use of theory in historical writing
   - Models of historical causation and process – discussion of the value of theories to local history
   - The use of models in history – looking at models of the nature of the early-modern family
   - The question-led and hypothesis-led approaches to local history – should you start with a source or with a question?

4. Living History: the role of personal testimony
   - Why keep a diary? – the motivations of diarists and how that affects the use of diaries as evidence
   - Testing the evidence – uses three accounts of the Great Fire of London as examples
   - Interpreting the evidence – an eighteenth-century shopkeeper’s diary reveals much
   - Oral tradition and oral history – a brief introduction to oral testimony
5. The relevance of statistics in local history
   - Implicit and explicit quantification – recognising quantification and manipulating simple
   sets of data
   - What statistics can and cannot do – summaries, patterns, structures, relationships
   - Parish registers 1538-1837 – beyond names: identifying mortality crises, seasonality of
   marriages and more
   - Census enumerators' books – the promises and pitfalls: household structure;
   occupations; migration

6. Creating and using a spreadsheet and a database
   - Working with an Excel worksheet – entering, manipulating and analysing data
   - Displaying the products of a worksheet – creating pivot tables and charts
   - Spreadsheet exercises – a series of exercises using real historic data (provided)
   - From spreadsheet to database – converting a spreadsheet into an Access database
   (optional)

7. Record linkage
   - Approaching case studies – learning how linking sources can help build a fuller picture
   - Case study – medieval sources for Middle Barton and Steeple Barton

8. Researching, writing and publishing local history
   - The end product – considering the importance of publishing your work
   - Back to the beginning – guidance on notetaking
   - The interconnectedness of records – sources for English and Welsh local history
   - Into print – things to consider when contemplating publishing your work

Module 2: Databases for Historians
The second module consists of six units and uses data sets for two contrasting communities,
the Lancashire port of Liverpool 1650-1750 and the Oxfordshire market town of Woodstock in
the 17th century. There will be one written assignment and a final project comprising a longer
piece of historical writing using data analysis. Students will explore a database already created
in order to practise different methods of querying, then move on to learn how to design, create
and use their own database for the analysis of historical data. Two further units introduce some
of the exciting ways in which historians are now using databases, with up-to-date examples.

1. Querying databases
   - Introduction to early modern Liverpool – this unit uses a database of Liverpool sources,
     1650-1750
   - Simple queries – how to form, run and save queries on the Liverpool database
   - Creating relationships – defining relationships between tables in the database
   - Handling dates and numbers
2. Designing and creating a database
   - Introduction to Woodstock – you will use Woodstock sources to build your database
   - Database design – basic principles of database design followed by a worked example
   - Creating a database - creating tables, defining relationships, editing field properties
   - Entering data – creating and modifying forms

3. Further queries and data analysis with Access
   - Crosstab queries – using queries for statistical analysis and for comparison
   - Working with money – how to handle money in Access, including converting £ s. d. to decimal
   - Exporting data to Excel – how to export data to Excel for more complex statistical analysis
   - Creating reports – designing and refining reports

4. The uses of databases (1)
   - Nominal linkage and creating life histories – linking records and identifying individuals
   - Preparing your data and standardising surnames – automated systems of record linkage
   - Family reconstitution – ‘reconstituting’ families to study marriage patterns, fertility and mortality
   - Community reconstitution – the ‘total reconstitution’ method of studying communities

5. The uses of databases (2)
   - Occupations – coding and classifying occupations to study communities and economies
   - Prosopography – collective biography of people about whom little is known individually

6. Summary
   - Online research – advice about online research and links to online resources for local history
   - Reviewing your work – check what you have done, build on what you have learnt, plan your future study

Please note that the course units offered may vary slightly from year to year. Details are subject to approval.