

Programme details

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.

1. Local History: its nature and background
 - Local History: the long tradition
 - Local history: the state of the art
 - Local history on the Internet
2. The nature of historical evidence I
 - Types of evidence
 - Finding and selecting evidence
 - Presenting evidence
 - Historical context
 - Critical evaluation of primary sources
3. The nature of historical evidence II
 - Introduction to history and theory
 - Models of historical causation and process
 - The use of models in history
 - the question-led and hypothesis-led approaches to local history
4. Living History: the role of personal testimony
 - Why keep a diary?
 - Testing the evidence
 - Interpreting the evidence
5. The relevance of statistics in local history
 - Implicit and explicit quantification
 - What statistics can and cannot do
 - Parish registers 1538-1837
 - Census enumerators' books
6. Creating and using a spreadsheet and a database
 - Working an Excel worksheet
 - Displaying the products of a worksheet
 - Spreadsheet exercises
 - From spreadsheet to database
7. Record linkage
8. Researching, writing and publishing local history
 - The end product
 - The interconnectedness of records
 - Into print

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
 - Simple queries
 - Handling dates and numbers
 - Crosstab queries
2. Designing and creating a database
 - Introduction to Woodstock
 - Database design
 - Entering data
3. Presenting the results and exporting data
 - Using forms for data entry
 - Creating reports
 - Exporting data to Excel
4. The uses of databases I
 - Nominal linkage and creating life histories
 - Family and community reconstitution
5. The uses of databases II
 - Coding and the classification of occupations
 - Prosopography (collective biography)
6. Summary
 - Online research
 - Reviewing your progress

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