MA in Garden and Landscape History

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About the course

The MA in Garden and Landscape History brings together the disciplines of history, horticulture, architecture, and archaeology to help students gain an appreciation of the study of garden history as a cultural discipline. Students will learn how to distinguish different types of garden-making over time and in different countries, from the sixteenth century to the present day in Britain, Europe and America.

The programme emphasises design and management, ownership and the cultural contexts of gardens and landscapes. Students learn a range of research and writing skills. Teaching is provided by the Institute of Historical Studies, with a strong emphasis on tutor-student interaction in class. The programme features visits to gardens throughout London, along with practical sessions at museums and libraries. Students can participate in an optional field trip to Italy in the spring.
Course structure

The programme can be completed in one year (full time) or two years (part time). Teaching takes place on Thursdays from 10:00 to 17:00 and is divided between two terms. The third term is dedicated to writing the dissertation.

Students must complete core module 1, core module 2 (selecting three options from the six provided) and core module 3 (a 15,000-word dissertation) to be awarded the MA. However, there are a range of options available for flexible study.

- Those wishing to pursue this course on a part-time basis can complete modules 1 and 2 (the taught elements) in their first year and module 3, the dissertation, in their second year.
- Module 1 can be undertaken as a stand-alone unit leading to a PGCert; modules 1 and 2 can be taken as stand-alone units leading to a PGDip. In either of the options, the credits can be banked should the student wish to complete the MA at a later date (within a prescribed time frame). Please enquire for further details.

Modules

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Module 1: Researching Garden History (60 credits)

The first term will showcase the huge variety of resources available to study garden and landscape history from archaeology, architecture, cartography, horticulture, manuscripts, paintings and other works of art, from the sixteenth century to the present day.

Sessions include:
- Early maps of gardens (British Library)
- Garden archaeology (Hampton Court)
- Gardens- and architecture-referencing drawings collections at the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Victoria and Albert Museum
- The Italian Renaissance and English gardens
- The eighteenth-century garden, with a visit to Chiswick House
- Gardening and photographic images

This module is assessed by a 5,000-word report on the history of a garden chosen by the student and an accompanying presentation.
Module 2: Culture and Politics of Gardens (60 credits)
This module consists of six optional units; students choose three.

These sessions aim to:
- Develop students’ knowledge and understanding of gardens and landscapes in different countries
- Develop students’ critical analysis and judgement
- Demonstrate the importance of context and the relationship of garden and landscape history to other disciplines such as literature, social history, film and visual media, and the history of ideas

This module addresses historiography, theory, and the connection between culture and politics in landscape-making. Students will expand skills developed in the first term by considering gardens and landscapes across regional boundaries.

Representative topics include the influence in Britain of the Italian Renaissance’s new ideas on garden making, including architecture, sculpture and hydraulic engineering; iconography in gardens and landscapes; formality in garden-making as an indicator of the power of the owner, from the sixteenth century onwards, as in France; different aspects of the ‘natural’ garden from the eighteenth century onwards; conflict between the ‘natural’ and the formal in the nineteenth century, including the approaches of William Robinson and Reginald Blomfield in Britain; gender and garden making; and the shifting boundaries between architect, landscape architect and plantsman relating to the status of those designing gardens and landscapes in the 21st century.

Students will choose one unit from each group:

**Group A**
- The evolution of the English garden in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries
- French and English gardens of the later seventeenth century

**Group B**
- The eighteenth-century garden
- American gardens, 1800 to the present day

**Group C**
- Nineteenth-century gardens
- Twentieth- and twenty-first-century gardens

Please note that optional units are subject to change and depend on a minimum number of students expressing an interest. Please consider the list above a guide only.

This module is assessed by a 5,000-word essay on one of the three options taken. For students completing module 3, an assessed written proposal for the dissertation of 1,500 words must also be submitted.

Module 3: Supervised Dissertation of 15,000 words (60 credits)

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How you study

The programme is designed to be completed over one year (full time) or two years (part time). The programme is modular; to earn the MA, students must complete modules 1 and 2 plus a dissertation of 15,000 words. The Institute welcomes applications from part-time students and has ensured that the degree is accessible to those who are working and/or able to study only part time. All teaching of the core modules is done on a single day of the week, and supervision for the dissertation can be arranged to suit the student’s schedule.

Students who successfully complete the course are awarded their degree from the University of London.

Course summary

Degree structure
Two compulsory taught modules plus a dissertation of 15,000 words

Mode of study
12 months full time or 24 months part time. Part-time students complete the two core modules in the first year of study and the dissertation in the second year. Courses are taught on Thursdays.

Fees 2017–18
Home and EU students: full-time, £6,240 | £3,440
Overseas students: full-time, £14,465

For further details, visit history.ac.uk/study/ma-garden-history

Please note that the information in this leaflet is correct at the time of its production in January 2017 but that the School of Advanced Study, University of London, reserves the right to alter or withdraw courses and amend other details without prior notice.
Learn more

For details of entry requirements, tuition fees, funding opportunities, English language requirements, disability support, accommodation and how to apply, please consult the School graduate study webpages. Detailed course descriptions and information about assessment are available on the Institute’s graduate study webpages.

School graduate study webpages: sas.ac.uk/graduate-study
Institute graduate study webpages: history.ac.uk/study/ma-garden-history
Why study at the IHR?

- Specialist provider of history programmes
- Tuition and research supervision by leading historians
- Small-group teaching
- Access to a dedicated history research library

Location

- Prime location in Bloomsbury in central London with close proximity to the British Museum, British Library, Theatreland, the restaurants of Fitzrovia and shopping in Oxford and Regent Streets
- Central London transport links make us easy to reach
- The Institute is located in the University of London’s Senate House within walking distance of other Colleges of the Federation (e.g., SOAS, Birkbeck, UCL, Institute of Education)

Facilities

- The IHR is housed in its own building, comprising its library, teaching space, research training room and the IHR common room
- The IHR Library has more than 180,000 history books and periodicals, including a wide range of material covering garden history
- Free access to the University of London’s Senate House Library with more than one million books
- Join us for a huge range of weekly events celebrating history in both the IHR and the School of Advanced Study
- Enjoy the largest programme of history seminars in the UK, including a fortnightly History of Gardens and Landscapes seminar
- Extend your learning by undertaking one of our numerous specialist history research training programmes
- Take advantage of the IHR’s unique position at the forefront of digital and online resources in history
- Be supported by the School of Advanced Study’s student support services
- Seek assistance with career advice and guidance from the University of London’s specialist careers support service
- Use Student Central (formerly the University of London’s Union) with the latest sports facilities
- Work alongside two of the most well-established research centres in historical research – the Centre for Metropolitan History and the Victoria County History

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Founded in 1921, the **Institute of Historical Research (IHR)** is at the centre of the study of academic history. It provides a stimulating research environment supported by the IHR’s two research centres: the Centre for Metropolitan History and the Victoria County History. It is home to an outstanding open access library, hosts events and seminars, has a dedicated programme of research training and is at the forefront of developing a range of digital resources for historians. The Institute is a member institute of the University of London's School of Advanced Study.

The **School of Advanced Study** is the UK’s national centre for the support and promotion of research in the humanities. Located at the heart of the University of London in Bloomsbury, the School provides an unrivalled scholarly community in which to pursue postgraduate study and research. Students learn from leading specialists in their fields, hone their research skills in highly regarded training programmes, expand their knowledge through an extensive calendar of events, and become part of a worldwide network of humanities scholars. Funding opportunities include AHRC-sponsored London Arts and Humanities Partnership studentships, SAS studentships, and a number of subject-specific bursaries and awards.

For further information on the range of programmes we offer, please visit our website or contact us at:

School of Advanced Study  
Senate House  
Malet Street  
London WC1E 7HU  
United Kingdom

E: sas.registry@sas.ac.uk  
T: +44 (0)20 7862 8663  
sas.ac.uk

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