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# HISTORY SUMMER SCHOOL 2012

## 6th August – 10<sup>th</sup> August

### Day 1:

10.30 – 10.45: Welcome and Introduction

10.45 – 12.00: The Purpose of Historical Study

Students will be asked to reflect on the reasons for studying history, and given the opportunity to engage critically with four key historical thinkers on this topic: Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Robin Collingwood and Leopold von Ranke. They will also be introduced to the differing ways in which historians have conceived of the problem of historical 'truth', charting vital 20<sup>th</sup> Century debates between empiricists, relativists and postmodernists, and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of different positions.

12.00 – 1.00: History in the Classical Era

This session introduces students to the practice of history in the classical era. The Ancient Greek concepts of Forensic, Deliberative and Epideictic Rhetoric will be outlined, and the explicit practice of using history to inform political decision-making, and Ancient Greek theories of constitutional cycles, will also be discussed. Students will then get to engage directly with a piece of classical history through an examination of Thucydides' famous historical narration of the 'Melian Dialogue'.

1.00 – 1.45: Lunch

1.45 – 3.00: British History and the Whig Tradition

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, history in Britain flourished, and was dominated by empiricist methods and the 'Whig Tradition'. Students will examine this much criticised period in historical practice, and discuss both its strengths and weaknesses. They will then critically reflect on whether this tradition continues to exert some influence today, by examining the place of history in modern British politics and the media.

3.00 – 4.30: The Marxist and Annaliste Approaches to History

Karl Marx's contributions to historical, political and economic theory remain deeply controversial, but few figures have had such a powerful influence on the study of history in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Students will be introduced to Marx's major ideas about historical change and development, and will examine the work of some leading Marxist historians. They will then consider the theoretical contributions of another major 20<sup>th</sup> Century movement – the French Annalists. Students will experiment with these approaches through engagement with a concrete historical problem – the decline of the power of the Tokugawa Shoguns over Japan in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In doing so, students will be introduced to an important but potentially



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unfamiliar period of history, and assess the problems and advantages of Marxist and Annaliste historical methods.

**Day 2:**

10.30 – 12.00: Narrative and Biographical History

How should historical studies be written? This is a continuing controversy within historical practice, and several historians defend the value of ‘narrative history’: the re-telling of historical periods through story-like renditions, which remains particularly favoured in historical biography. How does this technique compare against the traditional preference for analytical explanation? Students will be introduced to this debate and analyse core examples of narrative historical writing, like Simon Sebag-Montefiore’s work, *The Court of the Red Tsar*.

12.00 – 1.00: History Without Writing – Oral History and Alternative Sources

If historians are to rely only on traditional textual evidence, large sweeps of human history become inaccessible. This session examines cultural practices of oral history, such as those predominant in Mali and Zulu culture, and encourages students to think about why such practices develop, and who sustains them. Students will then consider the reasons for and against historians relying on these and other forms of non-conventional historical sources, such as visual sources and archaeological evidence.

1.00 – 1.45: Lunch

1.45 – 4.30: Structure, Agency and the Cuban Missile Crisis

An eternal challenge for historians is to theorise the role of large social ‘structures’ in historical change, as opposed to individual ‘agents’. Students will be introduced to this ‘structure-agency’ problem through a large exercise on the Cuban Missile Crisis. By examining original historical documents from the crisis, video footage, and the work of leading historians, students will grapple with the problem of balancing causal and agential factors in key moments of historical importance.

**Day 3:**

10.30 – 11.30: Introduction to Intellectual History

The History of Ideas looms large as one of the oldest and most developed specialist sub-disciplines in history. Students will be introduced to this field by examining the writings of some of its leading practitioners, including Quentin Skinner, Harold Laski, and Leszek Kolakowski. Students will evaluate the potential pitfalls of different standpoints to intellectual history by examining some short texts from a variety of authors, including Ancient Greek philosophers, Islamic intellectuals, and the Western Conservative tradition.

11.30 – 1.00: Machiavelli & Hobbes

But how do specific ideas and intellectual currents develop and change over the course of time, how do key figures shape new theories and doctrines, and what role do their intellectual forbearers and contemporary context play in this? Students will now consider such questions by analysing the writings of two leading figures in European intellectual history: Niccolò Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes. They will critically engage with the ideas of both these



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authors, and the contexts in which those ideas were produced, attempting to reconstruct the contributions both figures made to European political and intellectual development.

1.00 – 1.45: Lunch

1.45 – 4.30 The Development of the Socialist Tradition

Intellectual history is not just about the study of individual theorists, but about the charting of broad, evolving traditions over time. In this session, students will examine one such tradition: that of the ideology of socialism. Students will study key 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century thinkers like Robert Owen, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Charles Fourier and Rosa Luxemburg, to chart how Socialist conceptions of freedom changed across some seventy five years of development. Students will then examine the development of socialism as a political ideology in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, charting the different ways in which it influenced political movements in Europe and assessing its role in the early Soviet Union.

**Day 4:**

10.30 – 11.30: Women and Gender History

For many modern historians, one of the lamentable flaws of much study throughout history has been the exclusion of women from major historical works. Students will be introduced to developments in gender history which seek to address this problem, and the major concepts and theories deployed in order to conceptualise gender relations as a force in historical development. Students will engage in two key exercises: one examining original primary sources from the medieval period to study changing views on women; the second examining women in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, and how modern historians have analysed them.

11.30 – 1.00: Minority Histories

It is impossible to glance at the grand sweep of human history and ignore the perpetual patterns of violence and discrimination against minorities in different human societies. The study of discrimination and violence against minorities can be politically contentious and raises particular explanatory difficulties for historians. How do we deal with such problems? How do we treat often disorganised and fragmentary, but nevertheless vital, evidence from victim groups? Students will engage with these questions through a series of case studies, including an examination of European anti-Semitism in the early modern period, persecution and violence against the Native Americans in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the violence in Rwanda in the 1990s.

1.00– 1.45: Lunch

1.45 – 4.30: Analysing the Irrational

What should historians do when confronting historical periods in which large scale social behaviour seems wildly irrational by modern standards? What are the implications of historical contexts in which the basic belief systems of the time are radically different from our own? Students will engage with these problems, and deploy ideas from earlier in Day Four, through an afternoon project on Witchcraft, examining persecutions and witchcraft trials in 17<sup>th</sup> Century



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England, France and Germany. Both original sources from the period, and a host of rival explanations by historians, will be introduced to students for them to examine and debate.

**Day 5:**

10.30 – 11.30: Uncovering the Causes of Conflict

Few phenomena have as profound power in shaping historical change as war. In this session, students will examine several wars from across history with two objectives in mind: to examine how warfare has changed over human history, and to inquire as to whether historians can identify common causes of human conflict, or whether we are confined to ad hoc contextualised explanations. War-waging from the classical era right through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be examined.

11.30 – 1.00: Drawing Lines on Maps – Diplomacy & High Politics in History

How have the enduring social divides of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century been shaped by diplomats and ‘high politics’? Students will examine this question through a series of case studies in which they will be put in the shoes of major historical actors responding to massive political changes. Provided with materials and maps from the time, students will see if they can do a better job than the negotiators of the Paris Peace Treaties after World War I, the post-World War II settlements, and the political settlements involved in decolonization. In doing so, students will examine critically why major diplomatic decisions were made, and question whether those decisions were the responsibility of key political figures, or shaped by factors beyond their control.

1.00 – 1.45: Lunch

1.45 – 4.30 Culture & Ideology – Life and Politics in the Cold War

Increasingly, historians consider culture and ideology important components for historical study. This final session draws together ideas from the whole Summer School to examine how ideas and culture shaped life and political understandings during the Cold War. Students will examine original documentary evidence – memos by government officials in both the United States and Soviet Union, speeches by politicians, and photographic evidence of propaganda posters, artwork and architecture on both sides of the iron curtain. For new generations born after the end of the Cold War, it is a vital historical question to ask: what did the Cold War mean to those who lived through it? Students will have been encouraged to talk to parents, between Days Four and Five, to get their perspectives on this question, which will also be important material for the discussion.