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From: The Undergraduate Office

**To:** All candidates for Preliminary Examination in History  
All candidates in Joint Schools with History

June 2023

**Information to:** All tutors in History  
Chairs of Joint Schools

**CANDIDATES SHOULD READ THIS CIRCULAR VERY CAREFULLY**

### PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION IN HISTORY 2023

#### A note on COVID

Your examiners are conscious that Covid-19 has continued to have an impact this academic year, even as restrictions have eased and teaching and examining has returned to a more normal pattern. We recognise that teaching and learning have been disrupted at times due to illness, the need to isolate, and caring responsibilities. If you feel that your personal circumstances for one or more of your papers should be taken into account, you can submit a Mitigating Circumstances form for consideration by the Exam Board. Details on how to do this can be found here:

[Problems completing your assessment | University of Oxford](#)

Candidates should also be aware that the overall profile of this year's results will be monitored to ensure comparability with that of previous years.

Candidates may wish to consult the Prelims Examining Conventions and seek the advice of their college tutors.

#### A. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

##### 1. Timetables

You can view the Exam Timetables online at:

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/timetables>

You will also be able to see your individual personal timetable on eVision. If you think there is an error in your personal timetable, please contact the undergraduate office at once on [undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk).

*Any candidate who arrives more than 30 minutes after the beginning of an examination will not be admitted.*

## 2. Academic Dress

Candidates should ensure that their dress worn in the Examination conforms to the University Regulations which you can find here: [Academic dress | University of Oxford](#)

## 3. Personal Belongings

- i. You do not need specific permission to take into examination rooms
  - (a) Non-carbonated water in a clear, spill-proof bottle (i.e. sports cap, one that does not remove from the bottle, **not** screw-top) and
  - (b) certain prescription medications and/or conventional medical treatments (for asthma and Type 1 diabetes): please bring a letter from your College Office regarding any items you need to bring in with you for Exam Schools staff to refer to.
- ii. Water will also be available outside the room.
- iii. Only **transparent** pencil cases containing nothing but personal items and permitted calculators may be brought into the Examination Room, and candidates must offer them for inspection if required. All other bags and belongings must be deposited in designated areas.
- iv. **Mobile phones and other electronic devices** – Candidates are particularly warned that **they MUST NOT bring into the examination room any mobile phones, smart watches, cameras, music players, headphones, tablets, or electronic devices. Candidates are NOT permitted to use mobile phones in the foyer, marquee, corridors or lavatories in the Examination Schools.**

## 4. Seating in the Examination Schools

- i. Please refer to your individual timetables to find out in which building your examination is to be held. Please note that if you have alternative arrangements and are not sitting your exam in College, your papers will be held in either the Word Processing Suite or the Extra Time Room. You are advised to arrive 20-30 minutes before the start of the examination. **You should bring with you your university card and candidate number (see iii below for how to find out your candidate number).** The entrance lobby of Examination Schools is not open, you must go around the side of the building into Merton Street and through the iron gates. A marquee will be set up over the garden quad. Inside it will be notice-boards displaying candidates' names alphabetically. Find your name and next to it you will see the room number where you will sit your exam (this will not be the same room every day). You wait in the marquee until your room number is called by a member of the Exam Team staff.
- ii. Your seat number in the allocated room will be shown on the display boards in the marquee before the start of your examination. The desk you are allocated for each examination will have a number label on it. Please note that you will **not** necessarily be seated at the same desk for each paper. It is the responsibility of the students to arrive on time for the start of the examinations. **When seated, candidates should place their university card face-up on the desk.**

- iii. You have been informed of your candidate number by the Registry via your Senior Tutor or College Office, and the number is repeated on the individual timetable that is published online shortly before the commencement of the examination. You will also have received a confirmation of entry, stating your candidate number. You should be able to obtain your candidate number from SITS-eVision, Student Self Service. Should you still be in any doubt about it you should contact the Undergraduate Office in the History Faculty, by **Monday 12 June (Eighth Week) at the latest**. *You should make a note of your number and take it into the examination.* A candidate who forgets their number will be able to ascertain it from invigilation staff during the examination, but this should be regarded as a very last resort. **Please note that your candidate number is NOT the same as your student number.**

## 5. Examination instructions

- i. Please check that the question paper on your desk is the paper you are expecting to take, and if not, alert an invigilator immediately.
- ii. **No paper may be taken into the examination room.** Candidates will be issued with two booklets at the beginning of each examination. Supplementary booklets will be issued by the invigilators on request. Rough notes should be made in one of the booklets. **ALL** booklets, whether containing working notes or fair copy, **must be secured together by the treasury tags provided and handed in.** It is the responsibility of the candidate to mark the rough notes booklet clearly as such. No paper (except the question paper) may be taken out of the examination room.
- iii. **You MUST NOT write either your own name or the name of your College on your script.** Write only **your candidate number**, the **School** for which you are entered (i.e. 'History' or 'Ancient and Modern History' or 'History and Modern Languages' or 'History and Economics' or 'History and English' or 'History and Politics') and the **number** and a short title for the paper that you are taking (e.g. 'OS3: Early Gothic France').
- iv. **If you complete more than one booklet**, write your number and the short title of the paper at the top of the second and any subsequent booklets. All answer booklets must be secured together by the treasury tags provided.
- v. You **MUST NOT** write in pencil.
- vi. If you think there is an error in the exam paper you should state what you think the question was supposed to say within your exam script.
- vii. At the end of each examination session the invigilators will announce procedures to ensure the secure collection of scripts. Candidates are **required to wait** in their seats and follow these instructions.
- viii. Candidates are responsible for handing in their scripts at the end of the session.

6. **Leaving the Examination Early**

You are **not** permitted to leave the examination room until 30 minutes after the start of the paper. Similarly, in order to minimize disturbance to other candidates, you are **not** permitted to leave the examination room during the last 30 minutes of each examination. No candidate is allowed to leave the examination room for any purpose during the examination without an Invigilator's permission.

7. **Acute illness or other urgent problems during the Examination period**

Long-standing conditions likely to affect a candidate's performance will have been made known by colleges to the Examiners well in advance. But if you believe your performance in assessment has been seriously affected by circumstances related to Covid-19 and/or personal circumstances such as acute serious illness, chronic illness (including mental health conditions), bereavement etc., submit a mitigating circumstances notice to your examiners (MCE). MCEs should be submitted *after* completing the affected assessments. Before submitting your notice, you can seek advice from your college office. You should carefully read the guidance for students online:

[https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field\\_document/PDF%20-%20MCE%20Guidance%20MT21.pdf](https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/PDF%20-%20MCE%20Guidance%20MT21.pdf).

B. **THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

8. **Illegibility and intelligibility**

It is the responsibility of candidates to write legibly at all times. **Candidates producing scripts that are difficult to read may disadvantage themselves.** If the examiners cannot easily read parts of your script its mark will be reduced. If an entire script is deemed illegible **the Examiners will require you to return to Oxford after the examination and to pay for the invigilated typing of your script(s).** The Examiners will notify the Senior Tutor of any College so concerned (through whom all administrative arrangements must be made) by 27June: **no candidate should leave Oxford without giving the Senior Tutor of their College an address where they may be contacted immediately, in case any illegible script needs to be typed.**

You should practise your handwriting under time constraints in advance of the examination. Any candidate who suspects that their illegible handwriting is due to a medical condition should **immediately** seek advice from the Disabilities Office. A formal diagnosis of such a condition may result in Proctoral permission to use a word processor.

You must also write **intelligibly**: do not employ text-speak, non-standard abbreviations, or other deviations from standard written English.

9. **Short-weight and compulsory questions**

Candidates are reminded that in every paper they must observe the rubric at its head in relation to the number of questions to be answered, and to compulsory questions or sections. ***The Examiners heavily penalise candidates who omit or fail to complete questions, or who break the rubric in other ways.***

**10. Overlaps between papers**

The Examiners hope that candidates will, where appropriate, connect with each other their study of the History of the British Isles, European and World History, their Optional Subject, and their fourth paper. You should avoid repeating in one paper substantial material you have already used in another. But there is no reason why you should not relate your studies for one subject to questions asked in another, if you think them relevant.

**11. Late changes of Optional Subject**

Any candidate who changes their Optional Subject in the course of Trinity Term, after the submission of their entry form, should liaise as a matter of urgency with their College Academic Office to submit a Change of Option form to the Academic Records Office and that separate notification is sent to the Chair of the Examiners.

**12. Classification and notification of results**

The Preliminary Examination is not classified and there is no viva voce examination. Candidates will be able to see their Individual Assessments and Year Outcome results via Student Self-Service (SITS-eVision) under 'My Exams', and then on the 'Academic and Assessment Results' page. It is expected, but not guaranteed, that results will be released on Monday 17 July. **Schools and Faculty staff cannot give results over the telephone.**

**13. Queries**

Any questions arising out of this circular relating to the Examination more generally may be directed via a History Tutor of the candidate's College to the Chair of the Examiners ([undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk)).

**Examiners**

F. Bessard  
S. Gunn (Chair)  
A. Lifschitz  
B. Jackson  
C. O'Brien (Secretary)  
L. Wooding