1. ASSESSMENT

As stated in the Handbook, year-long List 2 courses are assessed by two essays, one per term, which together give a mark worth 10 ECTS. The maximum length of each essay is 5,000 but as I have stated to you all, I consider this a little on the long side. The History Department committee on 29 October clarified that the two essays do not need to be the same length or worth the same amount. I therefore propose to weight the first essay (this term) at 40% and the second essay (next term) at 60%, to allow for the fact that you are gradually learning across the course about the nature of historiography. You may write up to 5,000 words for each essay, but I recommend a lower limit of 3,500 words for the first essay (i.e. 3,500 to 5,000 words) and 4,000 (i.e. 4,000 to 5,000 words) for the second.

The dates for delivery remain those of the revised handbook, namely, Monday, 8 December this term and Monday, 30 March next term – which is twelfth week in both cases.

2. MODEL ESSAY QUESTIONS

I am supplying a list of questions for your essays because I am aware that you may not have written on historiography before. Taking historians and history writing as the subject of investigation is different to examining an historical topic directly, in which historiography (how the subject has been constructed and dealt with in the past) is an important but ancillary dimension compared to the analysis of the primary sources and the intrinsic merits of the arguments made in the secondary literature.

The questions listed below are models. You are free to devise your own questions, and I would encourage you to do so, for learning how to ask a question in a way that can be answered effectively is one of the most important skills you can acquire. Your question may be related to the ‘model questions’ or be quite different from them. It may also be based on any section of the course, even if we have not covered it, though there is an obvious benefit to writing on a theme that we have discussed in class. However, if you formulate your own question, it is vital that you clear it with me by email in advance.

Session 2: Marc Bloch’s *The Strange Defeat*.

- In what capacity or capacities does Marc Bloch write *The Strange Defeat*?
- How does Marc Bloch’s account differ from more recent analyses of French defeat in 1940 (such as Julian Jackson’s *The Fall of France*)?

Session 3: Resistance: myth histories and hagiography.

- How did the French write the history of WW2 down to the late 1960s?
- What is meant by a myth history? Discuss in relation to Gaullism and/or Communism and/or other currents of the Resistance.
Session 4: Resistance history since the 1960s.

- How did British and American historians write the history of Resistance from the 1960s?

Session 5: Vichy reassessed: the Paxton revolution.

- How did Robert Paxton’s *Vichy France* (1972) change the historical understanding of French experience in WW2?
- How did the French react to the publication of Paxton’s *Vichy France*?

Session 6: Film and history making.

- What was the significance of Marcel Ophuls’ *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1968)?
- Is documentary film-making a legitimate form of writing history?

Session 7: Repressed memory: Vichy, the Holocaust and Historians.

- What were the arguments and the impact of Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus’ *Vichy France and the Jews* (1981)?
- Why did it take so long for Vichy’s complicity in the Holocaust to become a major topic?
- What kinds of history-making has the issue of the Holocaust prompted in France?

Session 8: Film and legal trials as forms of history-making.

- How did Louis Malle as a film-maker tackle the issues of Resistance, collaboration and anti-semitism in WW2 France? (Relevant here are *Lacombe Lucien* (1974) and *Goodbye Children* (1987))
- Were the trials against former collaborators in the 1990s a form of history-making or not?

Session 9: Liberation.

- When, how and why did gender emerge as a preoccupation of historians in discussing the Liberation of France in 1944-1945?
- Did Rachhid Bouchareb’s 2006 film *Days of Hope (Indigènes)* break the last ‘historical silence’ of WW2 France?

Session 10: Empire.

- How important has the history of the French Empire been to the history of WW2 France?
Why did it take the French so long to recover the ‘memory’ of the Algerian War (1954-1962) and was this related to their ‘memory’ of WW2?

I am sending this document to all of you by email and placing it on the course module webpage.

John Horne, Department of History 30th October 2014