

IB HISTORY



Hebron, West Bank. July 2018 (photo taken by Patrick Lagendijk)

WHAT IS THE COURSE ABOUT?

The IB History course at BISC is primarily designed to give students a more nuanced understanding of humanity and the narratives people use to talk about the past. Both SL and HL students study two compulsory case studies for their Paper 1 exam: the Rwandan genocide and the war in Kosovo. Students then study two topics for their Paper 2 exam, both of which are looked at thematically: the causes and effects of twentieth century wars and the Cold War - superpower tensions and rivalries. HL students study the history of Africa and the Middle East as their regional option for their Paper 3 exam, from which three modules are chosen: war and change in the Middle East and North Africa 1914-1945; post-war developments in the Middle East (1945-2000); and an optional module from one of the following:

- The Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258)
- The Fatimids (909-1172)
- The Crusades (1095-1291)

- The Ottomans (1281-1566)
- The slave trade in Africa and the Middle East (1500-1900)
- The Ottoman Empire (1800-1923)
- European imperialism and the partition of Africa (1850-1900)
- Africa under colonialism (1890-1980)
- Social and cultural developments in Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries

HOW IS THE COURSE STRUCTURED?

In the first term of the first year, both SL and HL students will explore both case studies for Paper 1 (10 weeks). This serves as an ideal introduction to the Internal Assessment, which asks students to work with a range of sources on a topic of their choosing. In the second term, we begin work on the first topic of Paper 2. Throughout the year HL students will study 2 modules for Paper 3. In the second year, both SL and HL students will work on their second topic for Paper 2, which we complete by the end of the first term. HL students also study the third and final module for Paper 3. We then go into mock examinations, and the remaining time will be spent on revision and study leave for the IB examination.

	IB 1		IB 2	
	SL	HL	SL	HL
Term 1	Paper 1 Subject 5	Paper 3 Section 13	Paper 2 Topic 11	Paper 3 Section: optional
Term 2	Paper 2 Topic 12 IA	Paper 3 Section 17	Revision	Revision
Term 3	Paper 2 Topic 12	Paper 3 Section 17	IB Examination	IB Examination

The underlying philosophy of the course is one where students are given fewer and fewer ‘crutches’ as the course progresses, so that by the end students become independent learners. This is reflected in the following:

IB1

- Students begin by looking at Paper 1, which requires short answers to question prompts. Writing essays is not required at this stage.
- Assessment for the content of Paper 1 (Subject 5) and Paper 3 (Section 13) takes the form of students choosing to write short analytical answers to five questions

- Students work from the course book in the first term, and no supplementary material is required. As such, students are exposed to prevalent narratives from their reading, which are then unpacked in the classroom
- Students are taught research skills in the second term, which they then use to complete their internal assessment
- In the second term, students are exposed to essay writing. This is expressed in their work for Paper 2 (Topic 12) and for Paper 3 (Section 17). Students transfer the skills they have learned in their class on Academic Skills
- In the end of year examination students are assessed by means of essay for both Paper 2 (one essay from a choice of two questions) and Paper 3 (two essays from a choice of four questions)

IB2

- Students are asked to read academic articles to prepare for class each week. The approach is comparative and students are given responsibility for research and for communicating findings to others
- Students choose an optional Section with the help of the teacher. They are given a copy of the syllabus for their chosen Section as well as an individualised scheme of work to help them structure their learning
- Students are required to write essays regularly (every second week) to encourage automaticity
- Students are asked to choose a topic from their chosen Section and deliver a lecture to the school community

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THIS COURSE FROM OTHERS?

The history teacher is of the belief that the course should not merely be academic, but one which can promote certain values (see below for how it links with the IB student profile). It does this through activities, which help consolidate what is learned in class. In the past, these have included:

- Skype conversations with noted historians or political scientists (e.g. Ramzy Baroud)
- School trips (e.g. MUN trip to Serbia)
- Presentations/exhibits (e.g. First World War)
- Competitions (e.g. 10 significant battles of First World War)
- History films (e.g. No Man's Land)

HOW IS THE COURSE ASSESSED?

Each topic will conclude with a formal assessment for that topic, and will replicate the format of the paper in which that topic is assessed. In addition, each topic from Paper 2 will be assessed by way of two tests and each section from Paper 3 will require that students submit two essays. Ongoing assessment constitutes 50% of the final grade,

where the remaining 50% come from formal assessment (end-of-topic test or the end-of-year examination).

ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS?

As History demands strong writing skills you will need to show that you have sufficient command of the language in order to be able to express yourself, especially at Higher Level. To enter SL students should have achieved at least grade C in IGCSE or equivalent. To enter HL students should have achieved A or A* in IGCSE or equivalent. If students have not been formally assessed at the end of Y11 students are required to take an entry test which will determine their readiness to cope with the demands of the course.

WHAT MATERIALS WILL I NEED?

Apart from an open mind and a willingness to learn, you will not need any materials for the course as these will be provided for you. A suggested reading list (see below) will help you prepare for the course before starting it in September. This is not compulsory, but it will help you make better sense of the material (especially recommended for HL). Course books will be provided for the Paper 1 case studies and both Paper 2 topics. As the prescribed content for Paper 3 is sizeable, the teacher will make use of books from the collection. In addition, material will be made available on Schoology, the virtual learning environment used by the school.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

The common theme running throughout the course is conflict and our attempt to understand what causes conflict and what its consequences are. The options chosen have been judiciously chosen to allow you to make sense of the material. You will develop the following skills:

- you will sharpen your analytical skills and in so doing will be better able to make sense of human affairs
- you will develop a more nuanced view of historical events which takes account of different perspectives
- you will develop your language skills so as to articulate your thoughts more precisely
- you will be able to situate contemporary events (especially in the Middle East) by using your knowledge of history
- you will grow to become a more compassionate human being, and come to understand that working for a better world takes effort, imagination and cooperation

HOW DOES HISTORY PROMOTE THE LEARNER PROFILE?

The syllabus promotes the attributes in the following ways:

1. The *curiosity* attribute is developed through options found in the IA and one HL module.
2. The *balanced* attribute is reflected in classroom discussions on historiography ('the history of History', in other words). In particular, students are expected to answer the following:
 - What are the various narratives about an event and what do these reflect?
 - What is the responsibility of the historian, if any?
 - How do narratives colour our understanding of the world?
3. The *reflective* attribute is developed in keeping a journal to record their current historical thinking.
4. The *principled* attribute focuses on academic honesty and the concomitant value of individual insight into the historical process.
5. The *caring* attribute comes from exposure to the local. Students are presented with a range of CAS activities/projects in which to engage.
6. The *open-minded* attribute is developed by students articulating their beliefs and looking at how these can be opposed through other narratives. Students are encouraged to reflect on these beliefs and, like historians, consider where they come from.
7. The *knowledgeable* attribute is developed by looking at issues which are still pertinent, like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of the UN, or the proliferation of weapons.
8. The *communicative* attribute is developed by students delivering a lecture on a topic of their choice in the HL class. As a means to better understanding the Middle East they are also encourage to study Arabic, as well as its literature.
9. The *inquirer* attribute is reflected in the choice of topic for the IA, for the third module of the HL course, and possibly in the EE if the student decides to choose History as their subject.
10. The *thinker* attribute to me means a student who is not quick to jump to conclusions; who is willing to put in the effort to come to a more nuanced understanding of the discipline.

WHAT WOULD MAKE FOR A WORTHWHILE EXTENDED ESSAY?

The extended essay is very much a personal endeavour - students are encouraged to follow their own star, so to speak. However, if students are interested in tying their extended essay topic to the history syllabus studied at BISC, the following questions are considered worthwhile:

1. Why did Britain support the Zionist project, which led to the establishment of the Palestine Mandate in 1921?
2. To what extent was the Middle East a factor in the decision to go to war in 1914?
3. What explains the rise of political Islam among Palestinians in the 1980s?

CAN AN INTEREST IN HISTORY LEAD TO A CAS PROJECT?

Yes it can, as can any subject for that matter. Choosing to do a CAS History project can better help to understand the importance of the discipline, and how it touches on the lives of real people.

Here are examples of possible CAS projects:

1. A creativity experience writing, acting and/or directing a play about a particular historical episode
2. A service experience volunteering in a museum in the local area
3. A combined activity and service experience organising and participating in a fun run to raise funds for veterans charity

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY AND TOK?

The history of History, otherwise known as historiography, is fundamental to the discipline. TOK challenges students to think about historical knowledge, its validity and its uses. Questions such as 'how do we know' are integrated throughout the History course from day one. This is with a view - perhaps even an *ideology* - that reflection and creativity are stimulated through such questions.

WHAT CAREER PATHS ARE OPEN TO ME?

History is one of those subjects which can open a number of different career paths, such as in journalism, law, international relations, European studies, peace studies, gender studies, anthropology, sociology, ethnology and archeology. This is because it provides a foundation upon which we can better understand the world around us. History graduates are highly valued by universities because the methodology of history is rigorous.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Please download the History subject guide for more information. Please also feel free to email the History teacher at p.lagendijk@bisc.krakow.pl.

Recommended reading list for Paper 1 (SL/HL)

- We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow You Will Be Killed With Your Families by Philip Gourevitch
- Kosovo: War and Revenge by Tim Judas

Recommended reading list for Paper 3 (HL only)

- The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920 by Eugene Rogan