English Language & Communication

University of Hertfordshire

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As a student in the School of Humanities, you will benefit from being part of a diverse and active academic community. This means that whatever your degree subject or subjects, there is a lot more on offer to enrich your studies and support your academic development. Here, student experience, research and community engagement are interdependent. So, you may find yourself working with lecturer on a community research project or collaborating with a student from a different subject on an area of mutual interest. By participating in these projects, you will develop your creative and professional skills and contribute to activities that are inspiring and career enhancing.

You will also have access to the wide range of modules and pathways that the School of Humanities is able to offer. You will have at least two subjects in your first year and up to four if you want - even if you have applied for a single honours degree. This helps you to broaden your horizons and gain additional skills - both qualities that are highly valued by employers. You follow a common module in the first year, engaging with the Humanities which helps you find your feet in the academic environment, establish ways of working confidently, creatively and collaboratively, and explore areas of common interest between the individual subjects you are following.

Then there are the optional extras…

- Co-curricular activities such as clubs and societies, research seminars, writing for the student papers, working on student radio
- A year's study abroad in Europe or America
- Work placement

These activities will give you something extra to put on your CV and help you succeed at that graduate interview.

What is it like to study English Language & Communication?

English Language & Communication is taught in various ways, on your from lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to workshops. Outside classroom hours, in addition to your private study, one-to-one tutorials and group work will further enhance your knowledge of the subject.

Our tuition is excellent, as demonstrated by our high scores in the National Student Survey. Our innovative modules are taught by a diverse group of staff with a range of research interests, encouraging students to explore and interpret different aspects of language, cultures and society.

Not all modules are assessed in the same way. Depending on what is most appropriate for the module, your assessment might consist of an essay, analysis of a language transcript, a critical review, a group presentation or a poster presentation, or there might be a class test or an exam. In your final year, you have the opportunity to write either a long or a short dissertation on a topic of your choice.

Year A modules

Semester A

Language Analysis

Assessment: 100% coursework

The module presents an introduction to some of the core areas of interest within the study of formal aspects of language.

In particular it introduces students to the fields of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, and discuss the relevance of these fields of study to the study of language and communication in a wider sense.

Talk, Text, and Patwa

Assessment: 100% coursework

The focus of the module is “language in use”. It sets out to maximise the students’ individual awareness of language, to encourage their reflection on their own and others’ use of language, to observe language as used around them, and to provide them with basic categories of analysis. The content of this module is in three parts: first, face-to-face conversation between different speakers: native- and non-native speakers, child-adult, doctor-patient, etc. The second element is language in the media, looking at the etiquettes of journalism, the new literacies (e-mail, texting), and advertising with a view to distinguishing established and emerging styles, and bias.

Career Paths

Our graduates have an excellent record of gaining employment in media, publishing, teaching and information management where their skills in analysis, communication and evaluation are highly valued. They have paid and unpaid work placements at BBC Three Counties Radio, Channel 4, Associated Press and many more. Our degree in English Language & Communication forms an excellent basis for postgraduate study in Speech and Language Therapy and teaching.
American Studies (Joint or Minor)

American Studies offers you the opportunity to combine modules with an American focus from our Literature, History and Film courses. You can follow a specified route through the Humanities programme, choosing multi-disciplinary American topics at each level, providing a fascinating insight into one of the world’s most influential, complex and multicultural societies. Students on the American Studies pathway also have the option of spending a semester of their second year studying at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

“The thing I find most rewarding about American Studies is the diversity it offers. By incorporating a variety of disciplines into one pathway, I can broaden my learning experience by studying multiple disciplines while majoring in one of them. It has also encouraged me to consider a wider range of ideas and approaches within my historical studies.”

Martin Williams

Creative Writing (Joint or Minor)

Studying Creative Writing allows you to work creatively and imaginatively within a formal academic programme. It gives you valuable employability skills, at the same time as allowing you to write that story, poem, play or novel you’ve always wanted to. Creative Writing complements the single and major disciplines (Philosophy, Literature, History, English Language & Communication), particularly through its concern with the production and communication and presentation of ideas.

“Creative Writing helped me to become a better scriptwriter and poet, and gave me skills that I’ll have for life. My eye for detail is a lot sharper, as are my editing and re-drafting skills. The support I’ve received over the years from my tutors has been incredible and boosted my confidence in my writing immensely.”

Alex MacGregor

Contact: Dr Jennifer Young Creative Writing Coordinator
j.m.young@herts.ac.uk

English Language Teaching (Minor only)

English Language Teaching focuses on learning a second language and the different motivations, techniques and outcomes this may have; on dominant approaches to teaching and learning; and on the roles of English in the contemporary world. It’s a practical subject with an interdisciplinary focus that combines well with other Humanities subjects as well as English Language & Communication.

“English Language Teaching is an opportunity for speakers of English, whether as a first or a second language, to learn how to pass on this fabulous communication tool.”

Liz Rameses

Contact: Dr Tim Parke Principal Lecturer in English Language & Communication
lparke@herts.ac.uk

English Literature (Major, Joint or Minor)

As a student of English Literature you will attend a variety of different sorts of teaching session including lectures, small seminar groups, 2-hour workshops, on-line group discussions and one-to-one tutorials. In your final year you will receive individual tuition as you write a dissertation on a topic of your choice. You will need to enjoy reading widely and be prepared to challenge yourself. We offer a curriculum that familiarises students with significant authors, movements and periods from literary history, whilst also introducing them to more marginal writers, texts and genres.

“I could never have imagined how truly engaging the subject would prove to be. The teaching staff all have not only great teaching skills and an excellent work ethos, but such passion about their subject that it is quite infectious. A wonderful experience I wholeheartedly recommend!”

Kate de-Gregorio

Contact: Dr Andrew Maunder Head of English Literature
a.maunder@herts.ac.uk

Film (Minor only)

Studying Film as a combined subject helps you develop both practical and theoretical skills in film and television analysis, via an understanding of cinema’s history and contexts. Such skills are of value in a wide range of careers including; teaching, research, curation and journalism. The course includes a focus on specific subjects such as: European film, Cult film and TV forms, gender and representation; film and TV adaptation, and the opportunity to gain practical experience in digital film-making (in fiction, non-fiction and via the developing video essay form).

“Provides an excellent insight into film analysis and theory. There is also the opportunity on the course for practical filmmaking and work experience, both of which are very useful in enhancing future employability.”

Adam Jones-Lloyd

Contact: Dr Darren Elliott-Smith Film Coordinator
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History (Major, Joint or Minor)

History is taught in various ways, ranging from three-hour workshops, to lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to one-to-one discussions with a tutor. In your final year, you may write a dissertation on a topic of your choice. Our course also offers you the possibility of undertaking a placement in a local museum, archive or heritage site, allowing you to gain credit and valuable work experience.

“Studying at the University of Hertfordshire has allowed me to engage with History in both an academic and non-academic setting...I have been given the opportunity to use my skills and work with the local community to provide history to the public.”

Abi Wilson

Contact: Dr Ciara Meehan Head of History
c.meehan@herts.ac.uk

Journalism (Joint or Minor)

This course gives you a range of journalistic skills, and hands-on experience of producing work in a variety of styles, for different markets. You will be introduced to the concept of “news” and “features” in the print medium and what they constitute, along with a variety of journalistic skills to help you to source and write them. We encourage you to take work placements in the vacations and many of our students have been published in the local press and worked in TV or radio before they graduate. Students will also have the opportunity to meet and network with a wide variety of industry-relevant speakers. Previous speakers have included award winning magazine editor Carol Bronze, sports journalist and broadcaster Andrew Bonnif and journalist and news presenter Martine Croxall.

“This course pushes you to produce the best work that you can. From writing news stories to feature stories and the importance of interviews and getting quotes. There is never a dull moment, especially when you see your work published.”

Rebecca McAleese

Contact: Philip Cowan Journalism Coordinator
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Languages – French, German, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish (Minor only)

Learn a language as part of your degree and become the graduate that employers want: an excellent communicator, open-minded, adaptable and good at analysing situations. The UK has a shortage of people who can combine language skills with other specialisms so find a successful career in today’s global market with your knowledge of a language. French, German and Spanish are each offered at beginners, intermediate or advanced level. “Advanced” means you have taken an A-level (or equivalent) in the subject. Japanese and Mandarin are offered only at beginner level. You can only take one language and may only do so as a minor subject.

“The world is becoming globalised more and more every day, which makes communication in between different cultures very important. The ELC course with Japanese has allowed me to both broaden my language horizons and think about communication in a completely different way.”

Nathalie Vinatzer

Contact:
Nicolle Duplain Subject Leader for Languages
languages@herts.ac.uk

Media (Joint) and Media Cultures (Minor)

Studying media will encourage you to explore both the historical contexts of media practice and the emergence of new media whilst developing technical literacy in the design and editing of images, video and web based publications. In this course you will learn the different ways in which media communicates, how the various industries are connected and what influence the media has on society. In addition you will develop an in-depth knowledge of specialist subjects such as Public Relations, Advertising, magazine and web layout and the production of short digital films which will complement your other subjects and enable you to work in a broad variety of fields.

“I now have a clear mind of how the complex industry works, and this is definitely a great advantage.”

Anisa Luk

Contact:
Dr Sylvie Magerstadt Media Cultures coordinator
S.Magerstadt@herts.ac.uk

New Media Publishing (Minor only)

Graduates wishing to work in the media industry will need to be technologically literate. Publishing is a cross platform industry with print and on-line brand extension. This subject will enable you to develop practical skills from web design to magazine layout and producing short digital films.

“...the skills I have picked up over the last three years will aid me endlessly in my career to come and I would do it all again in a blink.”

Emma Champion

Contact:
James Nichols New Media Publishing coordinator
j.nichols3@herts.ac.uk

Philosophy (Major, Joint or Minor)

Philosophy is taught in various ways, ranging from lectures attended by everyone on the module, to smaller seminar groups which allow for in-depth discussion among students, to one-to-one discussion with a tutor. Outside classroom hours, in addition to your private study, you will enhance your knowledge of the subject by joining with others to debate the philosophical issues. Our diverse philosophy curriculum will introduce you to a wide range of philosophical problems from a range of philosophical traditions. The aim is to give you first-hand experience of philosophy by doing it: assessing the arguments of others, formulating your own arguments, arriving at your own conclusions on deep and important issues.

“The sheer depth of the subject has always kept me interested in my next essay or presentation. It’s a credit to philosophy itself, a discipline which hones writing skills and critical thinking, but mostly the thanks goes to the consistent excellence of the teaching. I cannot recommend it highly enough.”

Jamie Cawthra

Contact:
Dr. Craig Bourne Head of Philosophy
C.Bourne@herts.ac.uk

Public History (Minor only)

Public History is a unique and innovative course. Students will investigate the ways in which history and heritage are put to use in a wide variety of contexts in Britain and internationally: in museums, monuments, sets of phrase, commemorations, digital media, film and fiction, for example. Through exploring professional, popular and community engagements with the past, you will become aware of the practices and methodologies of public history. A major element of the Public History course is the work placement in your second year, which will enable you to apply your learning and gain first-hand experience of the public history/heritage sector.

“Public History opened your eyes to the fact that history is all around us. Studying Public History has enabled me to appreciate the ways in which history is, or isn’t, remembered and how it is presented to the public.”

George Worby

Contact:
Dr Ciara Meehan Head of History
C.meehan2@herts.ac.uk

Religious Studies (Minor only)

Religion is central to many social, political and ethical controversies. Understanding how people live their different faiths is crucial to navigating a globalised world. The Religious Studies pathway enables you to gain a deep understanding of the ideas, beliefs and practices of some of the major world religions including their historical development and engagement with the contemporary world. It explores these traditions from a multi-disciplinary perspective that brings together philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, phenomenology and media studies. The Religious Studies pathway is equally appropriate to students who have not previously taken the subject and those who have studied it before and desire to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

“Religion is an integral part of many of the humanities subjects... The religious studies pathway has an independent appeal, but additionally has the potential to enrich students’ understanding of other subjects.”

Alex Lloyd

Contact:
Professor John Lippitt Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion
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The way the course is structured, the content involved and the way the lecturers deliver the topic are all outstanding.

Melissa Ellis