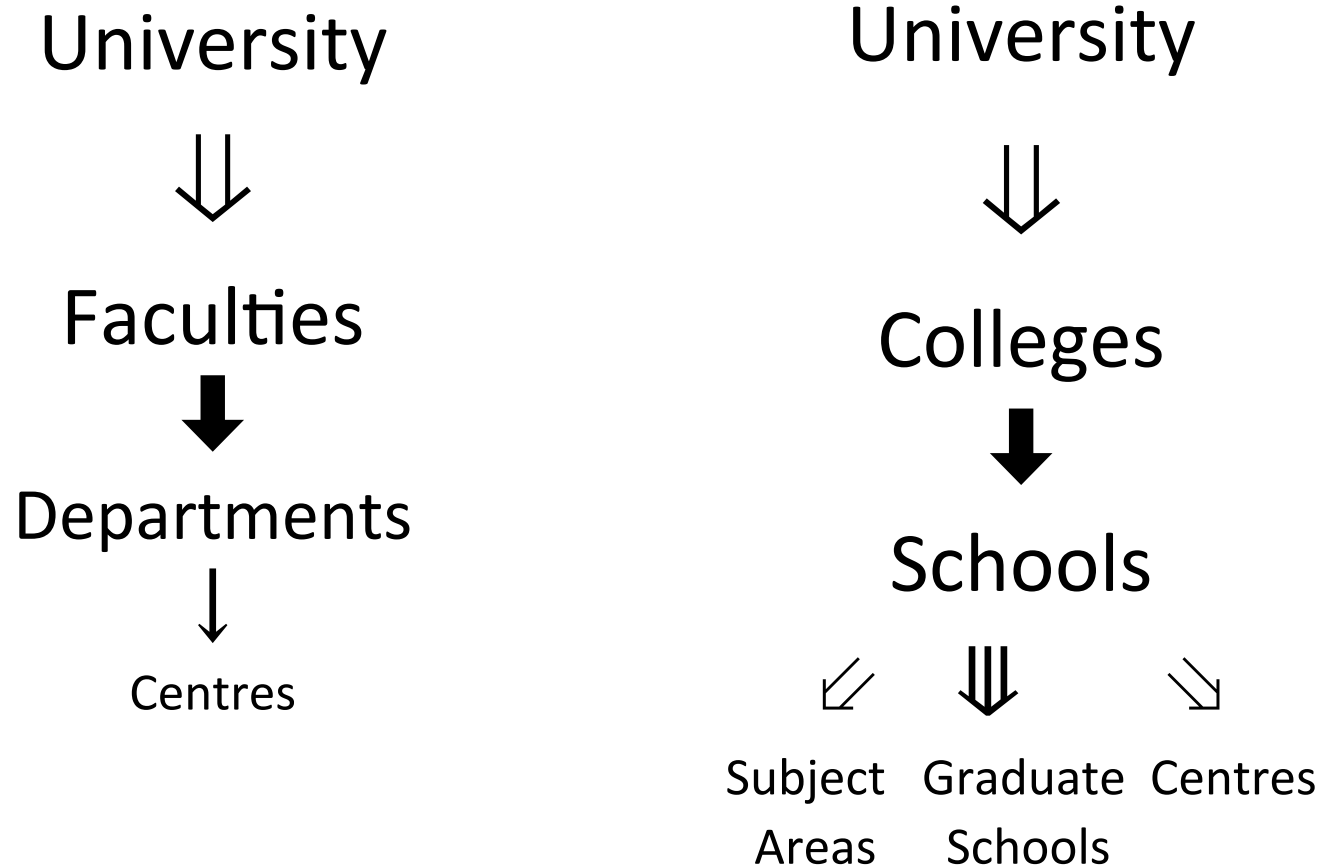


# Postgraduate Training at a UK University



Dr. Crispin Bates  
University of Edinburgh and  
National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

# Structure of British Universities



# The UK Educational System: undergraduate

- **England:** selective recruitment to undergraduate courses at 18 – 3 year B.A. degrees
- **Scotland:** selective recruitment to undergraduate degrees at 17/18 – 4 year ‘M.A.’ degrees
- Student Recruits do not exceed 37% of High School Graduates (highly selective)
- **Academic year** runs from September/October to May/June. Taught either in  
3 ‘terms’ OR 2 ‘semesters’ .

# The UK Educational System: Postgraduate year one

- Typically only **one year training degrees**: variously titled ‘M.A.’ or ‘M.Sc.’ .
  - compulsory for students intending to pursue Ph.D.
- Training Degrees can be ‘taught’ or ‘by Research’ . In Edinburgh:
  - **M.Sc./Dip (taught)**
  - **M.Sc./Dip (by research)**

# Higher Degrees

After masters degree postgraduates can pursue:

- M.Phil./M.Lit. (2 years) – circa 60,000 word dissertation
- Ph.D. (3 years) – circa 100,000 word dissertation



Degrees can be undertaken FULL-TIME or PART-TIME

# Structure of M.Sc.(Res)

- Core training courses
- Individual Directed Reading
- Advanced courses by agreement
- Two essays (7,000 words each) – 15% x 2
- Summary Dissertation plan (3,000 words) – 10%
- Dissertation (16-20,000 words) – may be a plan for the Ph.D. – 60%

# Structure of M.Sc. (taught)

- Core training courses – 10% x 3
- Advanced courses specified by degree programme, plus others by agreement – 20%
- Three essays (5,000 words each) – 10% x 3
- Dissertation plan (3,000 words)
- Dissertation (12-15,000 words) on subjects specific to the programme – 40%

# Postgraduate Year One Training - Edinburgh

Students opt to study a variety of different Degree Programmes in different Schools. Common to all are:

- **Core training courses** (20 credits)
  - Generic
  - Programme specific
- **Elective courses** (20 credits)
- **Dissertation** - circa 12-30,000 words (40-100) credits. 120 credits required to complete degree.



# Core Training Courses in HISTORY (SHCA)

Generic (1):

- **Postgraduate Research Skills & Methods**
  - critical approaches to historical sources
  - open peer reviewing
  - online discussion forums, web profiles, blogs
  - written weekly student presentations and student-led discussion
  - PG conference
  - tours of repositories (M.Sc.Res and Ph.D.1 only)
  - additional ‘transferable-skills’ courses

# Core Training Courses in HISTORY (SHCA)

Generic (2):

- **Historical Methodology**

- weekly online forum (posted comments on key texts) and presentations
- guidance and feedback on dissertation plans – submitted in April (3000 words)

In all courses: extensive use of WEB-CT or Blackboard learning system – [www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com)



# Courses for Specific taught Degree Programmes in History (SCHA)

- Gender and History
  - Holocaust Studies
  - Slavery & Forced Labour
  - Issues in Medieval History
  - Migration & Diaspora Studies
  - Etc.
- Some courses mirror final year undergraduate special subjects
  - Each course contributes 20 credits. 120 credits are required to complete the degree



# Core Training Courses in Social and Political Science (SSPS)

## Generic (1)

### CORE SKILLS

- Research Skills in the Social Sciences: Data Collection
- Core Quantitative Data Analysis
- Research Design in the Social Sciences



# Core Training Courses in Social and Political Science (SSPS)

## Generic (2)

### **ADVANCED SKILLS**

- Comparative Analysis of Social and Public Policy
- Explanation and Understanding in Social and Political Research
- Ethical and Political Issues in Social Research
- Conducting Research Interviews: a practical approach to skills development for social science researchers
- Reflexivity in Qualitative Research
- Discourse Analysis / Conversation Analysis
- Analysing Qualitative Data
- Qualitative Methods: Ethnographic Fieldwork
- Contemporary Social Theory

# Core Training Courses in Social and Political Science (SSPS)

## Generic (2)

### **ADVANCED SKILLS (contd.)**

- Researching Drugs and Alcohol
- Intermediate Inferential Statistics: testing and modeling
- Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences
- Listening to Children: Research and Consultation
- Narrative Text and Discourse
- Key Issues in Law and Society
- South Asian Studies: Conceptual & Theoretical Underpinnings
- Contemporary South Asian Issues and Debates
- Researching the City
- Methodological Debates In Human Geography
- Research Design in Human Geography

# Courses for Specific taught Degree Programmes in Social & Political Science (SSPS)

- Post Independence African Politics
- Issues in Childhood Studies
- Politics of the European Union
- Nationalism
- Theory in Social Anthropology
- History and Anthropology
- Gender Studies
- Etc.
- Some courses mirror final year undergraduate special subjects
- Each course contributes 20 credits. 120 credits are required to complete the degree

# SPECIFICATIONS of PG courses

(c. 4 pages)

- Rationale
- Course Aims & Objectives
- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Student Intake (who can take the course)
- Course Contents (summary)
- Organisation of Teaching
- Student Assessment (3,000 word essay)
- Introductory Reading (summary bibliography)



# HANDBOOKS

Every PROGRAMME has a handbook and every COURSE has a detailed handbook specifying:

- Course goals
- Assessment
- Seminar Schedule
- Topics and Readings for Each Week
- Guidance on the use of the course website and on the submission of course work

# Dissertations

- Dissertation Handbook specifies structure and style in accordance with expectations of major UK funding councils – Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- A training for future Ph.D.

# ISSUES

- Cross-School / Interdisciplinary Degrees??
- Inter-institutional / Collaborative Degree training Programmes??
- Student Funding
- Balance of Staff time: undergraduate versus postgraduate teaching
- One year (UK) versus Two year (US-style) Masters Courses??