



Collaborative Enhancement Project 2022/2023



## Optionality in Assessment: Case Studies

### Case Study 12

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**Institution:** University College London

**Discipline/Field of Study:** History

**Type of Assessment:** Website and report

**Credits:** 15

**Level:** 5

**Unit Type:** Mandatory or core for all students on a particular programme

**Type of Optionality:** Submission format and negotiated assessment task/question

## **Assessment Details:**

### **a. Instructions for completing the assessment.**

#### **Overview:**

A blog is an effective way to publish a series of short articles or reflections, often enhanced by the inclusion of images, audio, videos and other multimedia. Blog entries are ordered by date, with the newest entry generally displayed at the top of the page. These articles can be about anything, and they can be any length. In short, a blog is a very simple website consisting of a series of webpages focused on a particular theme or problem. Blogs require minimal technical knowledge to create and operate. There are additional tools and features that you can use to make them more complex, but the content is by far the most important aspect of any blog. Clarity of presentation and ease of navigation are also a distinctive feature of good blogs.

This assessment asks you to collaborate to produce a project blog to showcase your research and the conclusions you have drawn from it. Historians increasingly use blogs to share their research with others in their field and beyond. There is no limit to who can read or write a historical blog. You will find historical blogs by academics, archivists, librarians, museum curators, students, and enthusiasts. These blogs serve many purposes. Some might discuss their personal research or their professional experiences. Others might promote an archive, a library, or a museum. Some contain extensive datasets—online galleries or databases, for example.

Your blog and your report (which will constitute the second half of your assessment for this module) both need to be based on your assigned research project, but they do not have to cover identical topics within that project or, together, to cover all of its dimensions. Choose aspects of your project that best fit the two assessments and your group's skills and interests to complete them.

**The Task:** Your task is to create a blog using UCL Reflect (discussed below) to showcase your research project for a public audience. Your blog should include 20 minutes of content, which can include:

- Articles
- Images (including online exhibitions)
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Interactive Maps

The purpose of your blog is to explain why your project is significant and what we can learn from it. What important historical questions does your research allow your group to answer? Your blog should include appropriate attention to the themes of material culture and/or space and place. Although every group will approach the blog differently, it is important that you all consider the following questions:

- What point(s) are you trying to make?
- What evidence are you using?

- Who is your target audience?
- How successfully have you communicated historical ideas and concepts?
- How creative, innovative, and imaginative is it?

Your blog will be assessed according to the Making History Assessment Criteria. Assessors will only spend 20 minutes on each blog: it is therefore important that you only include 20 minutes of material. If your blog includes video or audio then timing is straightforward. If your blog includes text, images, maps, diagrams or other content you should estimate the time required. You should work on the assumption that average reader can digest 200 words per minute.

Your group should decide, with advice from your tutor, what content will be most effective at conveying your research to your chosen audience. Remember, producing a five-minute video poses different challenges to writing five minutes (1000 words) of text. The best projects use a combination of different media for different purposes.

You are not expected to provide footnotes in your blog posts. If you wish to refer to a specific publication by a specific author, simply insert a surname, short title, and date reference into the body of your text. E.g. "Starr, What is Public History Good For? (1973) argues that..." Nor are you expected to provide a bibliography for each blog post. However, you should provide a separate blog post entitled 'Further Reading' that lists up to 12 books or articles that have influenced your blog. This will not be included in the reading time (in the same way that an essay bibliography is not included in your word count.)

Your project blog must be complete by Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 4pm. Your blog will be frozen at this time and no more changes will be possible.

### **UCL Reflect:**

The software you will be using is called UCL Reflect which is UCL's education blogging service. UCL Reflect is based on WordPress which is an industry-standard blogging and website-building tool. At the end of the module your group can choose to keep your blog private or to make it public. Some students choose to make the blog public so it can serve as a portfolio of your work.

UCL Reflect requires very little technical skill to create and operate. You should begin by exploring the Making History Blog, which has been made by two finalists, Parmal and Urja. In this blog they reflect on their experiences from the course and offer some guidance and advice. Further guidance can be found on the UCL Reflect Wiki. You can also find an infinite number of guides for WordPress by searching online. We recommend EduBlogs as a good place to start but there are countless others.

Further Guidance on Historical Blogs: There are thousands of historical blogs online on a vast number of topics. Here are some of our favourite blogs that might provide you with some inspiration:

- British Library Untold Lives: <https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/>
- The Fabric of India: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/fabric-of-india/the-fabric-of-india>

- Georgian Papers Programme: <https://georgianpapers.com/about/blog/>
- The Junto: Early American History: <https://earlyamericanists.com/>
- The National Archives: <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- The Wonder House: <https://thewonderhouse.co.uk/>

## b. Marking rubric

### UCL History Department Undergraduate Marking Criteria – Public History Outputs

Class (Mark range)	Typical characteristics of coursework in different undergraduate classification brackets. Markers will look for a preponderance of criteria in three key areas of assessment.		
	Historical Knowledge	Audience and Communication	Creativity and Originality
<b>Exceptional First (80-100)</b>	<i>Work that meets all of the First Class criteria and is in one or two respects truly exceptional (e.g. in offering striking insight and originality, showing extreme sophistication in use of evidence, or developing a unusually compelling mode of public communication) will be given a mark in the range 80-84.</i> <i>Work that meets all of the First Class criteria and is in many respects truly exceptional, so that it is of publishable or near-publishable standard in the case of dissertations, or of equivalent quality in shorter coursework essays and exam scripts, will be given a mark in the range 85-100.</i>		
<b>First (70-79)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work shows an exceptional command of the historical subject matter and associated concepts, theories and historiography.</li> <li>• Develops a distinctive and original argument from detailed and precise evaluation of historical evidence.</li> <li>• Uses independent historical judgment to build on or challenge existing scholarship.</li> <li>• Argument has a clear and logical structure and its conclusions are powerful and persuasive.</li> <li>• Claims are supported by well-chosen primary and secondary evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptionally clear and detailed understanding of target audience, including prior knowledge, skills and interests. Deploys language, tone and style of communication ideally suited to that audience.</li> <li>• Offers a clear, consistent and sophisticated line of argument throughout all parts of the work.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a sophisticated conceptual and practical understanding of how to communicate historical material to non-specialist audiences while maintaining historical accuracy.</li> <li>• All outputs designed and delivered to the highest professional standards.</li> <li>• All outputs demonstrate an excellent understanding of the brief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers an unusually creative and original approach to disseminating historical findings.</li> <li>• Outputs offer an exceptionally imaginative, evocative and compelling representation of a particular historical event, subject or theme.</li> <li>• Creative aspects are exceptionally suited to the chosen audience and based on a rigorous understanding of the principles of effective public history.</li> </ul>
<b>Upper Second (60-69)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work shows a good command of the historical subject matter and associated concepts, theories and historiography.</li> <li>• Develops a strong and persuasive argument from detailed and precise evaluation of historical evidence.</li> <li>• Demonstrates clear understanding, and successfully evaluates the strengths and weaknesses, of key historical debates.</li> <li>• Argument has a clear structure and its conclusions are generally persuasive.</li> <li>• Argument uses a good body of primary and secondary evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and detailed understanding of intended target audience. Uses language, tone and style of communication well suited to that audience.</li> <li>• Has a consistent line of argument, but occasionally lacks clarity in communication.</li> <li>• Shows a good understanding of the challenges of communicating historical knowledge to non-specialist audiences while maintaining historical accuracy.</li> <li>• Outputs are designed and presented to a very high standard.</li> <li>• Outputs demonstrate a very good understanding of the brief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers a creative approach to the dissemination of historical findings.</li> <li>• Presents an imaginative and evocative representation of a particular historical event, subject or theme.</li> <li>• Creative aspects are useful and engaging, but are not always based on a clear prior understanding of intended learning outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Second (50-59)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work shows reasonable understanding of the historical subject matter and associated concepts, theories and historiography, but occasionally lacks accuracy.</li> <li>• Argument is based on historical evidence, but lacks clarity and consistency.</li> <li>• Limited awareness or evaluation of key historical debates.</li> <li>• Structure of the argument is not always clear and its conclusions are not always well supported.</li> <li>• Uses primary and secondary evidence, but not always very effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of intended target audience but lacks precision or makes incorrect assumptions about their needs and capacities.</li> <li>• Deploys appropriate language, tone and style of communication, though occasionally loses focus and consistency.</li> <li>• Argument is not always clear or consistently delivered to audience.</li> <li>• Shows a reasonable understanding of the challenges of communicating historical material to non-specialist audiences.</li> <li>• Outputs are designed and presented to a high standard, but show occasional lack of professionalism.</li> <li>• Outputs demonstrate a solid grasp of most aspects of the brief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective but not especially creative approach to the dissemination of historical findings.</li> <li>• The subject matter is presented clearly but not in a powerful or compelling manner.</li> <li>• Original or distinctive aspects of the output are included more for diversionary purposes that to facilitate deeper understanding of a topic.</li> </ul>
<b>Third (40-49)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work shows limited understanding of the historical subject matter and lacks engagement with concepts, theories and historiography.</li> <li>• Argument is unclear or inconsistent.</li> <li>• Inaccurate understanding of key historical debates.</li> <li>• Structure is unclear or confusing</li> <li>• Little evidence of prior research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates insufficient understanding of intended target audience and delivers messages that are inappropriate or ineffective.</li> <li>• Deploys a language, tone and style of communication that is not well suited to selected audience. Argument is unclear or confusing.</li> <li>• Sacrifices historical accuracy in process of communicating findings.</li> <li>• Outputs are not well designed or presented and have many errors.</li> <li>• Key dimensions of the brief are missing or inaccurate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical conclusions are delivered in a manner that is unoriginal and lacks creativity.</li> <li>• Aspects of the delivery are gimmicky or poorly considered and occasionally obscure historical understanding.</li> <li>• Distinctive aspects of the output have little or no relationship to the intended audience and no connection to the underlying historical subject matter.</li> </ul>
<b>Fail (0-39)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work shows routinely poor understanding of the historical subject matter and lacks any conceptual grounding.</li> <li>• No clear argument or is repeatedly contradictory.</li> <li>• No engagement with key historical debates.</li> <li>• No clear structure to the work</li> <li>• cursory engagement with historical literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates limited or no understanding of intended target audience. Offers a highly generic sense of the public.</li> <li>• No obvious attempt to present a clear historical argument.</li> <li>• Inappropriate or inconsistent language, tone and style of communication.</li> <li>• Fails to communicate historical findings.</li> <li>• Outputs are poorly designed or presented and contain many mistakes.</li> <li>• There is a lack of understanding and/or reference to the brief.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploys methods of communication that are derivative, unclear, or distracting.</li> <li>• Little to none of the output is distinctive, creative or memorable.</li> <li>• There is no connection between presentational choices and historical content.</li> </ul>

## c. Teaching materials:

[CS12 - Making History Report Guidance 2021.pdf](#)

## d. Other links or pertinent information

Students choose from a list of 6-8 research projects. Students are then assigned to work in a group of 4-5 on that research project. The research project is scaffolded through weekly lectures/seminars, and they receive support from a PGTA. However, they are free to pursue their own research. Their assessment is framed as 20mins of content on a website, but this can be any mix of text, images, audio, and video. (We have also had augmented reality!). Students have free choice to decide how to present their research. The second assessment component is a report, which is a more structured assessment, in which students draw on their research to write an action plan for the Mayor of London's Commission on Diversity.