

5HUM0271 ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Choose ONE essay question from the list below.

Word limit: **2500 words**.

This is worth 70% of your total mark for the module, and it is due on **Monday, 21 December 2015**

Give careful attention to historiographical issues in your answer. You should consider:

- (a) what historians have said on a particular topic and related issues;
- (b) the extent to which they agree or disagree in their interpretations or emphases;
- (c) reasons why debate has taken the form it has (e.g. different interpretations of evidence, different questions asked).

Your essay should be based on wide reading, and a thorough understanding of the period. The best essays are generally those which, for example, question the basic assumptions which underpin the literature. When examining different historical interpretations, it is important to draw your observations together to advance one coherent line of argument or discussion. However pertinent your points about an individual work of history, they will be much less effective if that work is discussed in isolation.

Please use footnotes to reference all secondary and primary sources you have used. Pay attention to the warnings against plagiarism in the History Subject Guide.

QUESTIONS

1. Why have historians used the term ‘the long eighteenth century’? What are the advantages and limitations of using this periodisation?
2. To what extent is Jurgen Habermas’s concept of the ‘public sphere’ a useful way of describing eighteenth-century British society?
3. Who were the ‘middling sorts’ in eighteenth-century Britain, and to what extent did they have a distinct identity?
4. How can the literary works of the ‘Scriblerians’ help historians to understand politics in early eighteenth century Britain?
5. How has cultural history as a discipline expanded historians’ understanding of eighteenth-century British society?
6. To what extent was eighteenth-century Britain a religiously ‘tolerant’ society?

7. How have studies of material culture helped historians to understand the role of consumerism in eighteenth-century British society?
8. What impact did the American and French revolutions have on British politics?
9. ‘The Enlightenment in Britain was fuelled by commerce and invention’. Discuss.
10. Examine attitudes to ‘luxury’ in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* by Tobias Smollett. To what extent did Smollett reflect contemporary views?