

KAREN FOLEY: The Arts Hub was an online interactive event, and you're about to watch a session from that. But I wanted to explain to you how it all worked.

You're about to see the video stream of the studio, but our audience participated online through chat and through interactive widgets. And those ideas were fed through into the studio from the social media desk. Of course, because you're watching it on catch up, you won't be able to do those activities. But I do hope that you enjoy the discussion that follows.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hi, and welcome back to the Arts Hub. Well, in our next session, we're going to take a look at history. Now, I know that some of you have had to go and get the children from school. And we will be having some replays of this later in the day before our evening session.

So if you do need to dash off, don't worry. You will be able to access all of this and the morning sessions very soon. And we'll be replaying those and having a chat along later in the day.

But firstly, I would like to talk about our caption competition. So we've been doing a caption competition. And we've been looking at this image here.

And Gina has sent us in a suggestion for her caption, which is "What do you mean you never watch the *Game of Thrones*?" We love it. Thank you, Gina, for that.

But the winner by vote from us all in the studio is Owen Jones. And I think Owen's had to dash off. But hopefully he will be back later, who said, "When you confidently click on the final link in the week's materials to find a 25-page reading."

I'm not sure if we all really identify with that, Owen, or not. But it's very funny. Thank you. We're going to send you a 10-pound Amazon voucher for that. We've got lots more of those, and we'll be doing another one a little bit later.

So thank you. HJ and Rachel, how's it all going over there?

HJ: It's going really well, actually. We've had some great conversations, I think, about all our different sessions. It's interesting to see what everyone's studying within the arts. So we've got

a few people doing classics, a few people interested in literature, creative writing, and actually studying that and telling us about what they're doing. So we've looked at life writing as well. So I'm still interested in looking at that a bit more.

But people have been sending us their stuff in as well. So we've had a few bits and bobs in our mailbox. So we've got some from our green room as well. So when guests come in, they've been taking some selfies. And Rachel--

RACHEL: And look how jazzy it is, there. Well, not me, and not that one.

HJ: Not that one, no. You look a bit dishevelled there. But yes, so we had a go at taking one earlier. But some of our guests have been taking them, as well, which we're really--

RACHEL: And Kim, who was on the couch earlier, she's sent one in as well. It's a big frame, as well, isn't it?

HJ: Yes.

RACHEL: I wonder who's going to try and take it home for their living room. There's going to be someone here, isn't there?

HJ: Quite possibly. And Siobhan from Careers as well. But there's so many great opportunities for arts graduates. So I think we don't really realise it. So we've got a great session. Talked about that three as well. So Siobhan's coming back for that one, I think.

RACHEL: And she's really-- you listen to her as well, she sort of explains it very well, doesn't she?

HJ: Yes.

RACHEL: Which is really handy, especially when you're feeling a little bit nervous.

HJ: So definitely want to keep a lookout for that session.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, the studio manager says, no one's going to take the frame. It's hers. So [LAUGHS] I've been told. [LAUGHS]

RACHEL: Allowed? Allowed.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, we don't break the rules here. We've also had some interactive widgets, which we've asked you to fill in. And we're just starting a new one now.

And so a lot of this is about course choice and things. But we're also talking about the end of module. And we were thinking about what meaning well looks like for you.

So I'd like to show you the widgets. And if you haven't done this yet, you can select the Watch and Engage option. And there, you can be able to input words into things like this.

And this is what it looks like. So we can see that for doing well, it's words like confident, pleasing, progressing. new opportunities, success in life, development, being healthy, passing, and recovering well, also. I don't know if I mentioned that.

So success, I guess, looks very, very different for people. And we're going to be talking a little bit about that in the evening session tonight after the quiz when Sally Still comes and talks to us about resilience. So some really good thoughts from that there. Thank you very much for those.

But without further ado, I'm going to welcome Debbie and Gemma to the studio. Thank you for coming in, both. We're here to talk about a new module, which I know you're very excited about. So could you tell us what it is, and why are you so excited about it?

DEBORAH It is called-- wait for it.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: We have a drum. No, we don't after all. Ah.

[LAUGHTER]

[DRUM ROLL]

DEBORAH Right. Yes. A23-- A223-- get it right, woman. Early Modern Europe, Society and Culture, 1500
BRUNTON: to 1780.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

DEBORAH Now, why is that interesting? Well, it's interesting because it's early modern. And for historians,
BRUNTON: you know we cut periods-- we cut history up into periods. And early modern is the one that fits between the mediaeval and the modern. And it's kind of got this reputation for being the bit in the middle that sort of gets you from being mediaeval to being modern.

But it's actually a very, very interesting period. It's got lots of characteristics of its own. There's-- lots of it is very distinctive. Some of it comes out as being really quite modern feeling.

So all kinds of weird things pop up in the 18th century-- tea drinking, shopping as a form of leisure activity.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's a--

KAREN FOLEY: Maybe not like that.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** There's a teacup there. Social mobility, the rise the middle classes-- so there's lots of stuff that feels quite modern. And on the other hand, the working week, which kind of vaguely trickled on from Monday to Saturday and had no start and no end and just kind of rambled on a bit is completely mediaeval.

So it's this very interesting mixture of continuity and change. And that's what makes it interesting to historians. It's a real patchwork.

And the other brilliant thing about it, from my point of view, is that it deals with society and culture. So it's not about kings and queens. It's not about power grabs. It's not about wars, although we do have some wars in there.

It's about the lives-- well, if I say, the lives of ordinary people, that makes it sound like it's about the poor. But it's not. It's about lives of people from the poor to the very, very rich.

It's about what they did. It's about how their families were structured. It's about what they believed. It's about how they thought of themselves within the country that they grew up in. So it's the fact that it deals with people is the thing, for me, that makes it really, really interesting.

GEMMA ALLEN: I think that's exactly-- we take a different approach with it. So rather than thinking about the history of just great men and great politics, we take a different approach. We come at it from a different angle.

So to give you an example, in the 16th century, which is where our course starts, it was a time of huge religious change across Europe. So in England, people might know there's a reformation. Henry VIII changes the church. He breaks with the pope in Rome. And people might know that as a really sort of big political history-- big men doing important things.

And yeah, we take a different approach. And we try and look at what it was like to live through a period like that. I mean, how was it to wake up each morning and things to be changing in terms of the way you worship your religion every day?

So I've brought something along to show you.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, lovely, we love our objects.

GEMMA ALLEN: Yes, I've brought something along to show you. So this object here is a banner, OK. And this is a banner that was carried by a rebel army in 1536 up in the north. I mean, it was a rebellion that started in Lincolnshire, spread all the way across the north. 40,000 people turned out to protest about religious change.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow.

GEMMA ALLEN: And these were people-- ordinary people. These weren't great knights and nobles. These were ordinary people that said, you know what, enough is enough. This has changed too much. And we're interested in what those sort of people thought in this module.

KAREN FOLEY: And of these modern placards-- that's a work of art, isn't it?

GEMMA ALLEN: It is. I mean, and it's remarkable this has survived because it's a really beautiful, beautiful piece of fabric. But you know, this is what led this army. And it's really hard to know about this. It's really hard [INAUDIBLE] because it's full of so many normal people.

So we have to turn to things like this banner. We have to turn to the petitions that they put forward. They said, you know, this is what we want to happen. And we have to look at that sort of evidence rather than, for example, what Henry VIII is doing in London.

We're looking all the way over to the north, people a long way from London, thinking about what do they know? How do they understand this? How did they live through this period of massive change?

KAREN FOLEY: Because so much of history-- you know, you were talking about the important people doing important things, having that voice. And yet actually, so much is about other sources aside from all of that makes it very interesting. So what sorts of materials, I guess, are you using to find out what these lives were actually like?

DEBORAH A bit of everything.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Yeah.

DEBORAH I mean, banner from pilgrimage of grace. This, although it has been rebound, is genuinely a

BRUNTON: 17th-century book. Now, that's one of the other great features of the early modern period [INAUDIBLE]. It begins with Gutenberg and the printing press.

DEBORAH Right.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: It's the first age where people could own lots of books. They become quite cheap. You can get expensive ones if you want.

This is quite a cheap one. It's a bit battered. It's lost its title page.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow.

DEBORAH It's called *A New London Dispensatory*. And essentially, it is-- it's a book that was printed for
BRUNTON: surgeons and medical practitioners. It's a list of drugs and all the substances you could make medicines from.

So in some ways, it's very modern because it's cheap print. So it's the sort of thing that we could do. You know, people could go out and buy-- you could go out and buy a book. You could go to Amazon and buy a book. Now you can go to book seller and buy a book.

But the wonderful thing is-- just before we get too carried away with everything being new and fancy-dancy and changing a lot-- on page 220, it tells you the uses, the medicinal uses for unicorn's horn.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, right. [CHUCKLES]

DEBORAH And the charming thing is it begins by saying, "Many doubt whether there is such a beast or
BRUNTON: no." But it says, "We know this."

KAREN FOLEY: If you can get hold of one.

DEBORAH It's in-- no, they say, it's in the Bible, so we know it exists.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, OK.

DEBORAH But we just don't know where he lives.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Very diplomatic.

DEBORAH Yeah, so it's a charming example of the old and the new, just encapsulated in one slightly tatty
BRUNTON: old book.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And I mean, books are something we take so much for granted now. And sometimes it's difficult to conceptualise what it was like, especially in that time where people didn't have access to printed sources. And then all of a sudden, not only did things become available to read and enjoy, but information was spreading. And that changed things so much in terms of how people, I guess, could engage with some of those more political debates.

GEMMA ALLEN: Exactly. And more people could read and write. I mean, I think that's really important. And that really helps us as historians writing the course because suddenly we have a lot more sources we can get hold of.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

GEMMA ALLEN: Can I show you something else?

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

GEMMA ALLEN: So I brought along-- this is a letter. This is a letter from 1580. Now, I'm not expecting you to be able to read anything. It's not particularly good handwriting at the best of times. But what I wanted to bring it along to show you was one of the things that makes this course so exciting is we feature lots of things like letters. And we couldn't have written this course 10 years ago because 10 years ago we didn't know how many letters we had from this period because really in the big archives, it's full of the letters of the great men, again. But it's only really in the last few years we've started to think, you know, hold on a second. Do we have letters from other types of people? Women? Children?

And historians are going out. And they've going into archives. And they're looking at the catalogues of these archives. Now, these catalogues were put together by Victorian men, OK.

Now, Victorian men-- interested in lots of things.

DEBORAH Nothing wrong with Victorian men.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Nothing wrong with Victorian men. But they were not that interested in women or certain types of history. So they'd come across a letter by a woman, and they'd just-- if they recorded it, they'd say, well, it's about family matters. And they wouldn't be interested.

DEBORAH Miscellaneous.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Miscellaneous--

DEBORAH Exactly

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: What a fabulous term to cover everything. Miscellaneous. And you know what? This course is all about miscella-- we are interested in that sort of thing.

So these sort letters-- this letter by a woman, Lady Ann Bacon, we're interested in that sort of thing in this course. But also, we're interested about looking at these sources in new ways. So we don't just look at what she says in the letter, which is all about her argument with a stepson who's trying to get lots of money after the death of his father.

KAREN FOLEY: They were scandalous, weren't they?

GEMMA ALLEN: Yeah, it's real scandalous stuff, OK. But we're also interested in how this looks, OK. So you might think this looks really ropey. But it tells us something.

So there's a reason there's a big bit of space here. That tells us something because paper was blooming expensive then, OK. So you used it all up.

But people were really worried about security. You know, we're worried about encrypting emails today. People were worried about the security of their letters then.

So what they did was they folded them up many, many times. You had to have a blank sheet so you could fold it into a little packet. Ball of wax seal on it, and then you'd have it secure. And you knew no one could get to your letter.

But also, we know about how this spacing on the page means something, OK. So you could see-- you should be able to make it out. You know you can't see what she's saying. You can see the big bit of the letter here and a signature just down the bottom, OK.

Now she's only left a very small gap between the big bit of the letter and the signature. And that means she's not being that respectful because if you want to be really respectful to someone, you put your signature right down the bottom to show you're humble.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, really?

GEMMA ALLEN: You put it right down the bottom, a long way from the main-- you'll use a lot of paper up, and you leave a big gap. She's not. So this is the sort of thing we're interested in this course-- looking at new sources we didn't know we have, but also looking at sources in new ways to find out things about society and culture in this period.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow. So what are the ways that students can then engage with some of these? These are obviously sources. And I see you've brought one of, I think, the only copies, isn't it--

DEBORAH Yes.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: --of the new-- which I know you're very, very, very proud of because I wanted to give some of these away. But we're not allowed because it's the only copy. [LAUGHS]

DEBORAH No, this is it. It's not hot off the press. But still--

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: I know.

DEBORAH --slightly warm.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, it looks beautiful, actually. I can see why you're so attached to it.

DEBORAH Yeah. Thank you. So we use print. We use letters. But we also have lots of objects.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

DEBORAH Do you want to go? You go with yours.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Oh, OK. I've got another object to show you. OK.

DEBORAH She's got a nasty one.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: So one of the things we try to think about-- we try to think about different levels of people. So we think about individuals in one. But we think about communities, another. We think about states, another.

Communities are really interesting in this period, OK, because communities could work for you, and they could also work against you. So I want to show you something that's really quite gruesome and horrible, OK. And if you look at this image, you'll see that this poor lady here has a sort of iron muzzle over her face.

Now, it might look like an instrument of torture. And yeah, it really is in some ways. It's called a scold's bridle, OK. So to describe to you what this is, it was a sort of iron cage that went over the head, and a bit went into the mouth and pressed down on the tongue. And women that spoke too much, that said the wrong thing, that were thought to be scolds-- this is basically unruly, outspoken women-- were made to wear these in this period as punishment by their communities.

And this poor woman here-- we know who she is. This is Ann Biddlestone. This is an image of her up in Newcastle in 1655 being processed through town because she's too outspoken a woman.

KAREN FOLEY: That looks like it could break your teeth. It looks really--

GEMMA ALLEN: I mean, it's really-- I mean, there is descriptions of her blood pouring out of her mouth, OK. But it just shows how societies in this period tried to impose order. You know, they were absolutely fixated on order. And women that sort of stepped outside of what they were meant to say were punished in this way.

I mean, I would be no good in those times because I'm always saying the wrong thing. So

goodness knows what would happen to me. But this is the sorts of things we think about-- how do communities work in this period?

KAREN FOLEY: And there's a debate about unicorns on the social media desk.

DEBORAH Oh God. I've started something.

BRUNTON:

HJ: Yeah.

RACHEL: Well, we're not 100% sure, are we? We've got some are saying, unicorns may exist. Some saying unicorns don't exist.

However, we just was discussing about strapping a carrot to a pony, and does that make it a unicorn?

DEBORAH No.

BRUNTON:

RACHEL: And--

HJ: No?

RACHEL: People were saying--

HJ: [LAUGHING]

RACHEL: People were saying, yeah.

HJ: I think so. That definitely counts.

RACHEL: People were saying, yeah, that makes it a unicorn. And--

DEBORAH The carrot has a new additional medicinal facility.

BRUNTON:

[LAUGHTER]

RACHEL: Well, it's food-- food for the journey. But we've also-- Yvonne said, she believed they existed. And she now collects unicorns because she thinks that they're mystical. So yeah, unicorns has kind of sort of created a huge debate here, hasn't it?

[LAUGHTER]

So And Helen's also said, the history module looks really interesting.

DEBORAH That's great.

BRUNTON:

RACHEL: And so there's a lot of positive for this. And they're absolutely loving this session, as well. They're saying it's incredibly engaging. So it's great.

KAREN FOLEY: Good. I wonder if in the future, emails-- the way that we write now-- will be kept and used? I hope some of mine won't be.

DEBORAH It's quite--

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Does that change things?

DEBORAH It's quite a big debate amongst historians because, yes, emails just kind of drift off into the
BRUNTON: ether. And people-- librarians are quite worried that we will no longer be able to capture people's correspondence in the way that we could do really up until about Second World War when the telephone came in.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

DEBORAH So you stopped writing notes several times a day to your friends.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: So how will they then find out-- how will future historians find out about-- they'll probably watch reruns of this or something.

[LAUGHTER]

GEMMA ALLEN: New types of sources.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, they were all bad. Yeah, yeah.

DEBORAH Yes, new types of sources.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Exactly.

DEBORAH Television, radio.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: I guess that's the challenge, isn't it?

DEBORAH You have magazines.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Finding out-- you've got a fire bucket.

DEBORAH Well, I was just going to say, this is the counter to the scold's bridle.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: Right.

DEBORAH It does look very tatty. But it did survive the Fire of London-- the Great Fire of London in 1666.

BRUNTON: So yeah, it is a fire bucket. And you can't see it very well. But on the fire bucket there, can you just see that there's some writing there? There's initials that says, SB.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, yeah, yeah.

DEBORAH Which it stands for Saint Butolds.

BRUNTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, yes, yes.

DEBORAH Because what would happen in a fire? Fire-- fire-fighting equipment, so buckets and ladders,

BRUNTON: were kept in the parish church.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

DEBORAH If a fire broke out, the parish church bell was rung. And the community-- everybody in the

BRUNTON: neighborhood-- would run to the church, grab the equipment, and rush off to the fire, and put it out. And most of the time, of course, they did manage to put them out. We only know about the great fire of London because it completely got out of hand.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, it was not put out. Yeah.

DEBORAH This was discovered in the 1970s in rubble left over from the fire, quite close to Pudding Lane,

BRUNTON: where the fire breaks out. And you can just-- I mean, it's a ratty old object by-- you can't see anything more than that. It's a ratty old object.

But you can just picture the scene, can't you? They were fighting the fire. They were throwing water on the flames. They realised the fire had got out of control. They chucked the bucket into the flames, and they ran.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

DEBORAH So and it survived.

BRUNTON:

GEMMA ALLEN: That's remarkable.

DEBORAH I mean, I think it's just miraculous that it's still there. But it also shows you that communities

BRUNTON: were not just about trying to shut women up, trying to keep things. They were also about helping each other out in times of crisis. It's a really important thing that neighbourhoods can do.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And what about other aspects of life-- things like shopping, consumption? What else can we find using some of these objects?

DEBORAH Well, this-- I suppose this is an object. This is a painting. Well, it's actually, it's pastels. And

BRUNTON: paintings, obviously, they're very beautiful. But they are really useful as sources.

I mean, this is a painting of a maid carrying a tray. And on the tray is a cup of chocolate. Now, chocolate is the new luxury drink in the late 17th century. Quite fond of it myself.

[CHUCKLES]

KAREN FOLEY: It's still a popular choice.

[LAUGHTER]

DEBORAH Yes. And here we all are. But the other wonderful thing about this painting, we can see her

BRUNTON: dress. We can see that she's wearing fine linen, fine cotton, which had to come in from India over a long distance. She's wearing a silk skirt. Again, that's traded over huge long distances.

So just in this one painting, we can see more 18th-century consumption.

KAREN FOLEY: But this is a maid.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** All the luxury-- well, yes. We don't-- we're not absolutely certain who the model was. But the story that's most likely is she was actually the daughter of a gentleman who fell on hard times. So she was sent to work in the court in Vienna, in Austria.

And, the story goes-- so she's quite well-born. She's not well-off. But she is well-born. But the story goes, a prince fell in love with her and married her and then had this painting made.

Now, of course, that, again, just in that little story tells you something else that's very important in the early modern period. And that is social mobility. In the mediaeval period, if you were born poor, your chances were you were going to stay poor your whole life. If you were rich, unless there was a major misfortune, you would remain rich.

In the 18th century, you can trade. You can move up the social scale. And equally, businesses go bust, and you can shoot straight back down again.

KAREN FOLEY: Would it have been embarrassing for somebody to have a painting of them doing a menial task? Like, I mean, how would that sort of fit in terms of their identity in that context?

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** Well, I think in her case, it's not a very menial task. She's not scrubbing a floor. She's carrying--

KAREN FOLEY: Could be worse.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** So it could be a heck of a lot worse, yeah. I mean, she's carrying a cup of chocolate to some-- to a rich person.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** She's beautifully dressed.

KAREN FOLEY: And posed, it looks like, as well.

**DEBORAH
BRUNTON:** Yes, yes.

GEMMA ALLEN: Yes.

DEBORAH BRUNTON: And it is beautifully posed. It's just a beautiful image. So I think it would be kind of a reminder of a stage of her life.

And actually, it wasn't unusual for children to be sent from their home into the home of somebody maybe wealthier or a relative. And it was almost like part of your training. You were semi-- you semi-worked for them. But you were also brought up there. And you experienced another household.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, yeah.

DEBORAH BRUNTON: So again, it's an image that tells you a lot about the early modern period, once you know what to look for. Because if you don't know about the history, of course, it's just a very beautiful painting. And there's nothing wrong with that.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, we're almost out of time. And I just wanted to finish briefly by just talking a little bit about the structure. I see we've got the first book here. But could you just briefly tell us what is the structure? And what do students do?

GEMMA ALLEN: So we've got a three-book structure. We've got the first one, which this is about, as you can see, about individuals. So this is about the very small in society.

And then the second book-- it's a bit bigger-- about communities and activities, and then the third book, we're going even bigger. We're thinking about states and commerce. So it sort of keeps changing the picture and getting a greater view of early modern society. So each book structured like that, it's just changing our perspective.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, wonderful. And what about the assessment then? How does that work?

DEBORAH BRUNTON: The assessment is pretty standard for a history course. So much as in level one, a mixture of essays and documentary analysis. Starts with small, short tasks. Works up to a big long essay.

And in addition, we ask students to, in one TMA, prepare a presentation, which isn't strictly a skill for historians. But it's a really useful skill for employability in all sorts of things, and indeed doing this.

GEMMA ALLEN: Absolutely.

DEBORAH BRUNTON: And so yeah, fairly standard. And we have tried very hard to make sure that everything is very graded. So we don't fling people in at the deep end. We gradually teach them how to do

things, and teach them how to do things, and teach them how to do things.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, it was-- Debbie and Gemma, thank you so much. It has been a fabulous session. And next, we have someone who's very keen on employability-- something we're talking about a lot. And that's Siobhan Flint from the Careers Advisory Service.

But thank you. You're so passionate about the subject. And it sounds so exciting, this module. I'm sure our students will really enjoy doing it.

And if you've got any thoughts, please do put those in the chat box for us. Don't forget to stay in touch. You know, we'd love to hear your comments, your thoughts, et cetera. And, of course, if you have any questions, we can answer those for you.

But next, as I said, we've got Siobhan with the Careers Advisory Service, thinking about how the Open University service can work for you in terms of both identifying skills you've got now, as well as giving you assistance in your career. But before that, we're going to have a short video, which again is about the Careers Advisory Service. You can see what we did there. So I'll see you in about five minutes then with Siobhan.

[MUSIC PLAYING]