

## International History

Academic year 2019–2020

### Approaches to Global History

HI118 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

Tuesdays 8.15–10am, S2

### Course Description

This seminar offers an overview of recent approaches to, and discussions about, global history. It thus aims to take stock of the much broader global turn in history that has taken place during the last 30 years. By discussing writings and research widely drawn upon by global historians, the seminar provides students with a toolkit for better understanding the turn away from nation-centered ways of seeing history, which have given way to histories focusing on the movements of people, goods, and ideas across boundaries and on how these movements have been determinants of historical change. The seminar situates global history within related fields, such as transnational history and imperial history. Finally, it delves into recent challenges to global history, which in the eyes of some of its critics has given up on some classic virtues of historians altogether. Throughout the seminar, a particular focus will be on the manifestations and implications of Eurocentrism in historical writing.

### > PROFESSOR

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#### Office hours

Tuesdays 2–4pm

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### > ASSISTANT

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#### Office hours

Tuesdays 10:15–12:15

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## Syllabus

### Course Requirements

1. Term Paper: 50% of final grade; 4,000 words; deadline January 5, 2020 (by email to professor and TA)

Term papers of 4,000 words (including the footnotes, but excluding the bibliography) should deal with a clearly circumscribed historical topic and address a viable research question. Topic and question should be related to migration history, be developed by the student, and discussed in advance with the instructor. For this purpose, students must submit (by email, to professor and TA) a 300-word abstract by October 22, which states the title,

topic, question, and structure of the future paper. This serves as a basis for discussion in the office hour. Once you submitted your abstract please make an appointment here:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ECmV28YZOkGQrTE6\\_UVThlx8BmjIw2MfYvmGhN6Tzq4/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ECmV28YZOkGQrTE6_UVThlx8BmjIw2MfYvmGhN6Tzq4/edit#gid=0)

For general reference of how to write term papers, please read the guidelines (available on Moodle) carefully. Two sessions will be devoted to academic writing. When in doubt you can also refer to this online guide for writing academic research papers: <https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html>

**2. Book Presentation and Review:** 20% of final grade; 800–1,000 words; deadline Friday noon before class presentation.

From the week-by-week list below you must choose one book to present in class and write a review of it. Book reviews are standalone pieces of 800–1,000 words, which should summarize the book's content (ideally not on a chapter-by-chapter basis, but as a whole), approach, and main arguments in relation to the wider historiography of the relevant topic. They should also contain explicit praise and/or criticism. For reference, please read yourself through the book reviews of the *American Historical Review* as well as prior reviews of the book that you pick. The reviews must be submitted to all course participants by Friday noon before your presentation of the book. Feedback on the written reviews will be provided in the office hour (ideally together with discussing your abstract, if possible).

The book presentation in class should be concise (7 minutes as an absolute maximum) and refrain from summarizing the book's content once more, which through your written review will be known to all course participants before your presentation. Rather, it should relate the book's arguments to the general required reading of the session in which you present the book. Does it support or complement the arguments made in the required reading? In what way? Does it shed a different light on them or contradict them? Your presentation should thus serve as an opener of the discussion rather than as a standalone review.

**3. Class Participation:** 30% of final grade

Just like an orchestra, a history seminar is only as good as the individual effort of all its participants. Please come to every class equipped with a thorough reading of the assigned texts, prepared answers to the questions that you find below for each session, as well as questions of your own. Make yourself heard in class and we will all benefit as a group.

In order to integrate reading and writing exercises, every student has to write a one-page summary (ca. 400 words) of one item on the list of required readings in one week: students with surnames A–G should summarize Austin for week 2 (September 24), H–P Drayton and Motadel for week 3, and Q–Z Cooper for week 4. These are not graded, should be submitted by email to the TA only, who will provide a brief feedback on them.

## Course Structure

### 1. 17 September: Introduction

Who are we? Distribution of presentations.

#### Methods and Techniques:

How to prepare and deliver a good presentation. The 5–7-minute rule, brevity, and precision.

### 2. 24 September: What is Global History?

#### Topic/Question:

Ever since the term has achieved growing currency in the 1990s, people have asked what global history is. In this session we will discuss this question, without finding a definitive answer with validity for everyone. In particular,

we will discuss whether and how global history is different from other kinds of connected histories, such as transnational history or world history. And: Where, why, and how did global history as an academic sub-discipline take shape and what does this tell us about its main traits?

#### Required Reading:

Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 1–16.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks, review of *What is Global History?* by Sebastian Conrad, in *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 3 (2016): 481–485.

Gareth Austin, “Global History in (Northwestern) Europe: Explorations and Debates,” in *Global History, Globally*, ed. Sven Beckert and Dominic Sachsenmaier (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 21–44.

#### Techniques:

Finding, Reading, and Writing Book Reviews

### **3. 1 October: Is Global History Necessary?**

#### Topic/Question:

Like any other academic sub-field, global history has had its fair share of critics and sceptics. Some of them claim that it is old wine in new bottles; others maintain that it has neglected place and sedentariness in favor of tropes of networks, flux, and mobility; others yet argue that it has “had its moment,” suffering from a sort of imperial overstretch owing to its own success. Whereas last week we discussed what global history is, our topics this week will be whether it is necessary and whether it is a good thing.

#### Required Reading:

David A. Bell, “This is What Happens When Historians Overuse the Idea of the Network,” *The New Republic*, October 25, 2013: <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114709/world-connecting-reviewed-historians-overuse-network-metaphor>

Jeremy Adelman, “What is Global History Now?” *Aeon*, March 2, 2017: <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>

Richard Drayton and David Motadel, “Discussion: The Futures of Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1–21.

### **4. 8 October: Globalization in History**

#### Topic/Question:

The rise of global history as a subfield has obviously coincided with the emergence of debates about globalization in social sciences other than history. But is global history simply the history of globalization? Is it useful to speak of globalization for historical periods prior to the twentieth century, as many historians today do? And is the term globalization useful for historians at all? These questions will concern us in this week.

#### Required Reading:

Jürgen Osterhammel, “Globalizations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89–104.

Frederick Cooper, “Globalization,” in his *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 91–112.

Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Antony G. Hopkins (ed.), *Globalization in World History* (London: Pimlico, 2002).

Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

**5. 15 October: Writing Term Papers**

Please read carefully the guidelines and come prepared to discuss specific matters that in your eyes arise from these guidelines.

**6. 22 October: The Great Divergence**

Topic/Question:

From this week onwards, we will now longer deal with the history and theory of global history per se, but instead delve into some of the most prominent topical historical debates that have accompanied and promoted the rise of global history since the 1990s. The first of these is an economic history debate, about the so-called “great divergence” between Europe and China. It essentially seeks to answer the question of why, considering roughly comparable standards of living prior to 1800, (Northwestern) Europe grew so much wealthier and more powerful thereafter, whereas China did not. The American economic historian Kenneth Pomeranz has famously delivered his answer to this question. But is his answer convincing?

Required Reading:

Kenneth Pomeranz, “Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization: Europe, China, and the Global Conjuncture,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 425–446.

E.L. Jones, review of *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* by Kenneth Pomeranz, in *The Journal of Economic History* 60, no. 3 (2000): 856–859.

Charles P. Kindleberger, review of *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* by Kenneth Pomeranz, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 50, no. 2 (2002): 458–460.

Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, “How Did the West Usurp the Rest? Origins of the Great Divergence over the Longue Durée,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 1 (2017): 34–67.

Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (New York: Norton, 1998).

Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

## 7. 29 October: Slavery and Capitalism

### Topic/Question:

As you will have gathered from last week, the eighteenth-century American plantation complex plays a significant, though relatively implicit, role in Pomeranz's explanation of the industrial revolution in England. Yet how important was this plantation complex, and the system of slavery on which it was based, for capitalism in the United States? Whereas much classic Marxist theory thought of slavery as archaic, feudal, unprofitable, and thus an obsolete obstacle to the nineteenth-century rise of capitalism, dissenters such as the Trinidadian historian (and later Prime Minister) Eric Williams and the American economic historians Stanley Engerman and Robert Fogel shattered this view. After lying dormant for a long time, recent years have seen a resurgence of the debate about capitalism and slavery, particularly in the form of the so-called New History of Capitalism, many proponents of which have argued that slavery was crucial to economic growth in the nineteenth-century U.S. Some economic historians disagree. Who is right?

### Required Reading:

Marc Parry, "Shackles and Dollars: Historians and Economists Clash Over Slavery," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 2016: <https://parrym.files.wordpress.com/2017/01/shackles-and-dollars-the-chronicle-of-higher-education.pdf>

Sven Beckert, "Slavery and Capitalism," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 12, 2014: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/SlaveryCapitalism/150787>

John J. Clegg, "Capitalism and Slavery," *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 281–304.

Edward E. Baptist, "Correcting an Incorrect 'Corrective,'" *The Junto*, November 4, 2015: <https://earlyamericanists.com/2015/11/04/guest-post-correcting-an-incorrect-corrective/#comment-73147> (and John Clegg's response below)

Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, "Cotton, Slavery, and the New History of Capitalism," *Explorations in Economic History* 67, no. 1 (2018): 1–17.

### Watch

If you have the time watch this lecture: <http://www.ehs.org.uk/multimedia/tawney-lecture-2019-slavery-and-anglo-american-capitalism-revisited>

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

Gavin Wright, *Slavery and American Economic Development* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

## 8. 5 November: Global Intellectual History and Human Rights

### Topic/Question:

With its strong literary anchorage and its long-held endearment towards famous (usually white, male) writers, intellectual history was long a bastion of Eurocentrism and methodological nationalism, and thus a relative latecomer to the label of the global. But can there be such a thing as a global intellectual history? We will discuss this question based on a particular example this week: the history of human rights. As a markedly universalist idea, do demands for human rights travel better than particularist ideas, such as nationalism?

### Required Reading:

Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, “What is Global Intellectual History? ...If It Should Exist At All,”: <http://imperialglobalexeter.com/2015/02/23/what-is-global-intellectual-history-if-it-should-exist-at-all/#more-1964>

Laurent Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic,” *Social History* 31, no. 1 (2006): 1–14.

Samuel Moyn, “On the Nonglobalization of Ideas,” in *Global Intellectual History*, ed. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 187–204.

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Jan Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good: Human Rights in International Politics Since the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

## **9. 12 November: Empires and Their Boundaries**

### Topic/Question:

One attraction of global history has been that other than transnational history or international history it is more obviously capable of encompassing quarters of world history in which the nation-state was not the most important point of reference for political organization—in other words, the overwhelming majority of humanity prior to the twentieth century. For the same reason, global history has revived debates about the relationship between empires and nation-states; notably in the U.S. case, which on the one hand was long seen as a quintessential example of a postcolonial or post-imperial nation-state, yet on the other hand also acted as an imperialist power throughout the twentieth century. How should one write this history?

### Required Reading:

Patrick Iber, “Off the Map: How the United States Reinvented Empire,” *The New Republic*, February 12, 2019: <https://newrepublic.com/article/153038/how-america-reinvented-empire-review-daniel-immerwahr>

Paul A. Kramer, “How Not to Write the History of U.S. Empire,” *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 5 (2018): 911–931.

Daniel Immerwahr, “Writing the History of the Greater United States: A Reply to Paul Kramer,” *Diplomatic History* 43, no. 2 (2019): 397–403.

Andy Seal, “Arrogance and Empire: What Can U.S. Intellectual History Learn from U.S. and the World?” *U.S. Intellectual History Blog*, May 20, 2019: <https://s-usih.org/2019/05/arrogance-and-empire-what-can-us-intellectual-history-learn-from-us-and-the-world/>

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Antony G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019).

## 10. 19 November: Eurocentrism

### Topic/Question:

If global history has had a declared enemy it has always been Eurocentrism—a sometimes ill-defined concept that can refer to undue historiographical attention to Europe (and North America?) to the detriment of other world regions, the uncritical use of concepts derived from historical trajectories specific to Europe (and these concepts' uncritical application elsewhere), and the normative assumption that Europe was somehow superior; or a combination of these three. In this session we will discuss the origins, the interplay, and the escapability of these three varieties of Eurocentrism.

### Required Reading:

Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?”, *Representations*, no. 37 (1992): 1–26.

Alex Lichtenstein, “Decolonizing the American Historical Review”, *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 1 (2018): xiv–xvii.

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

## 11. 26 November: International History

### Topic/Question:

At least in the form of diplomatic history, international history is much older than global history and in some ways has acted as a handmaiden for it. Today we will ask whether there are longer term roots in the history of international relations and organizations that have helped bury Eurocentric notions of history and thus helped the rise of global history *avant la lettre*.

### Required Reading:

Mark Mazower, “The End of Eurocentrism”, *Critical Inquiry* 40, n. 1 (2014) 298–313.

Glenda Sluga, “The Transformation of International Institutions: Global Shock as Cultural Shock”, in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et.al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 223–237.

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). [AVAILABLE ON MOODLE]

Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). [AVAILABLE ON MOODLE]

## **12. 3 December: The History of Development**

### Topic/Question:

Closely linked, as well as equally tied to this institution, has been the history of development. A relatively recent field of historical inquiry, the history of development has risen exponentially in recent decades, in tandem with the global history boom. Following on from our earlier, more theoretical, discussions of Eurocentrism, in this session we will ask more concretely about the implications of global history and of Eurocentrism for the writing of the history of development.

### Required Reading:

Frederick Cooper, "Writing the History of Development", *Journal of Modern European History* 8, no. 1 (2010) 5-23.

Corinna Unger, "Postwar European Development Aid: Defined by Decolonization, the Cold War, and European Integration?", in *The Development Century: A Global History*, ed. Stephen J. Macekura and Erez Manela (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 240–259.

### Possible Presentations / Reviews:

Jeremy Adelman, *Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). [AVAILABLE ON MOODLE]

James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). [AVAILABLE ON MOODLE]

## **13. 10 December: Class Taught by TA**

## **14. 17 December: Digitization and Global History**

### Topic/Question:

This final session will be devoted to a rather different, more methodological, issue: What does the rise of global history (and transnational history, if you will) owe to the everyday digitization of historians' work environment? Did we simply all jump on the global history bandwagon because it is so much easier to retrieve fine-grained information about a previously little-known person in the eighteenth-century Caribbean than it was thirty years ago? What kinds of anachronisms do we risk? And what gets lost through the digitization of our work?

### Required Reading:

Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast", *The American Historical Review* 121, n. 2 (2016) 377-402.

Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital: Or How Academic History Writing Lost the Plot," *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 1 (2013): 9–23.