

International History

Academic year 2019-2020

Global Intellectual History

HI126 - Spring - 3 ECTS / S1

Course Description

"Global Intellectual History" is a relatively new field, as only recently historians have systematically begun to explore the circulation of ideas, concepts, and ideologies in a global context. But what does this mean? Are some ideas (e.g., human rights) more global than others? Whose ideas travel, and under what conditions? Are forms of knowledge global because they circulate widely, or because they respond to global challenges? The objective of this class is to provide an overview of these fascinating new currents, and to think through the implications of looking at intellectual developments globally.

> PROFESSOR

[Sebastian Conrad](#)

[Office hours](#)

By appointment

> ASSISTANT

[Ayode Habib Daniel Dossou](#)

[Office hours](#)

Wednesdays: 16:15 - 18:00

Syllabus

Course Requirements

1. Term paper: 60% of final grade; 3.000 words; deadline June 30, 2020 (by email to professor and TA)

Term papers of 3,000 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 global intellectual 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 May 22, which states the title, topic, question, and structure of the future paper. This serves as a basis for discussion during office hours.

2. Session experts: 10% of final grade.

Every student is asked to serve as “session expert,” a role that includes: introducing the author/s of the required readings, providing a brief contextualization of the readings, and posing one central question that can guide discussion (in smaller groups, or in the plenum). The introduction should not exceed 6 minutes. Please also be prepared to explain terms in the readings that may be unfamiliar to others.

3. Class participation: 30% of final grade.

Please come to every class equipped with a thorough reading of the assigned texts, and make yourself heard in class. This is an interactive, discussion-based seminar – the more you are engaged, the more you and the group will benefit.

Course Structure

1 / May 7 (Thursday, 16:15 – 18:00): Introduction

In the first session, we will all get to know each other and share our expectations for the course. But we will also have a first introductory discussion about Global History, Intellectual History, and Global Intellectual History.

Required reading:

Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, “What is Global Intellectual History? ...If It Should Exist At All,” (Imperial & Global Forum = Blog of the Center for Imperial and Global History at the University of Exeter, 2015).

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.

Rosario López, “The Quest for the Global: Remapping Intellectual History,” *History of European Ideas* 42:1 (2016), 155–160.

2 / May 8 (Friday, 12:15 – 14:00): Circulation and Translation

In this session, we will encounter our first examples of “global intellectual history” in action. Today, the focus is on the role of transfers and interactions in the field of intellectual history. A more conceptual article is paired with a case study from the field of literature. Both articles address the role of transfers and translations in the globalization of ideas and textual forms, and discuss the role of translations in the globalization of the literary forms, such as the naturalist novel. More generally put, the question is: Are connections and exchange a necessary element for a global intellectual history, and in what ways?

Required reading:

Christopher L. Hill, „Conceptual Universalization in the Transnational Nineteenth Century,” in: Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History*, New York (Columbia University Press) 2013, 134–158

Christopher L. Hill, "Nana in the World: Novel, Gender, and Transnational Form," *Modern Language Quarterly* 72 (2011), 75-105.

3 / May 14 (Thursday, 12:15 – 14:00): Postcolonialism

In the third session, we will take a step back and look at postcolonial readings of cultural transfers and the globalization of ideas and concepts (that are sometimes seen as at odds with global history interpretations). Emphasizing the colonial context and focusing on "cultural imperialism," postcolonial approaches stress the European origins of modern concepts (such as history, nation, caste, religion, etc.), and see their application to non-European contexts as a form of imposition. Using two examples from South Asia, we will discuss how global history can benefit from postcolonial studies, and where the two approaches diverge.

Required reading:

Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and ,The Mystic East,* London (Routledge) 1999, 96-111.

Vinay Lal, "Provincializing the West: World History from the Perspective of Indian History," in: Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs (eds.), *Writing World History 1800-2000*, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2003, 271-89.

4 / May 14 (Thursday, 14:15 – 16:00): History of Science

The history of science is a particularly vibrant field, and issues of transfer, mobility, and translation across cultural and political borders are now high on the agenda. This session will give us the opportunity to discuss the effects of the global turn on the history of science, and to explore the relationship between intellectual history and the history of science.

Required reading:

Marwa Elshakhy, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860-1950* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press) 2013, 1-24.

Marwa Elshakry, "When Science Became Western: Historiographical Reflections," *Isis* 101 (2010), 98-109.

Kapil Raj, "Beyond Postcolonialism ... and Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science," *Isis* 104 (2013), 337-347.

Helen Tilley, "Global Histories, Vernacular Science, and African Genealogies; or Is the History of Science ready for the World?" *Isis* 101 (2010), 110-119.

5 / May 15 (Friday, 12:15 – 14:00): Nationalism

The study of the history of nationalism has been one of the most prolific fields for historians to explore the potential of the global turn. In this session, we will seek to assess the benefits (and

also the potential intellectual costs) of reading the intellectual history of nationalism from a global perspective. The two case studies are from South Asia, and they are in conversation with each other. Their points of contention will enable us to discuss the relationship between local and global contexts, and between global processes and indigenous traditions.

Required reading:

Andrew Sartori, "Beyond Culture-Contact and Colonial Discourse: 'Germanism' in Colonial Bengal," *Modern Intellectual History* 4 (2007), 77-93.

Kris Manjappa, "From Imperial to International Horizons: A Hermeneutic Study of Bengali Modernism," *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (2011), 327-359.

6 / May 22 (Friday, 10:15 – 12:00): Enlightenment

The Enlightenment has long been seen as the marker of the modern, and as the origin of the modern world. Standard accounts treat it as the quintessential example of a European idea that then gradually spread around the world. Criticizing such a diffusionist reading, the first text proposes a novel interpretation that reads the Enlightenment as a response to global challenges; moreover, it argues that the Enlightenment has a long, global history – and that this history needs to be taken into account in order to fully understand the phenomenon. The second text offers a fierce critique of what the author sees as a "politically correct," multi-cultural misunderstanding of world history.

Required reading:

Sebastian Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *American Historical Review* 117 (2012), 999-1027.

Ricardo Duchesne, "Multicultural Historians: The Assault on Western Civilization and Defilement of the Historical Profession, Part II: The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment," *The Occidental Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (2013-14), 3-31 (read only 14-26).

7 / May 22 (Friday, 12:15 – 14:00): Anarchism

In the final session, we will use the example of the history of anarchism to explore the role of different actors and geographies in global intellectual history. The case study is set in Russia and Japan, and thus helps de-center interpretations of anarchism that focus on Spain, and Southern Europe more generally. We will also use this session to take stock, and to summarize the main features of global intellectual history as an approach, as well as its main benefits (and potential pitfalls).

Required reading:

Sho Konishi, "Reopening the 'Opening of Japan': A Russian-Japanese Revolutionary Encounter and the Vision of Anarchist Progress," *American Historical Review* 112 (2007), 101–30.