Rich Kids, Campesinos and Wealthy Housewives. Historical Sources for a (Global) Social History of the 'Long' Nineteenth Century

Social and economic history examines processes of social inequality, social stratification, and economic transformations using specific analytical categories and typologies. In this source-based course, we will examine a diverse range of sources – from urban tax registers and letters written by wives of plantation owners to periodicals – in order to study these processes. As we will observe, the terms employed by social historians rarely appear in these sources themselves. This places us in this course at the heart of a central discrepancy, which raises a wide range of questions. Who, exactly, were the working women of Western Europe so often studied by historians? Who belonged to the so-called "middle class" in the nineteenth century? And would anyone in Central or South America actually have described themselves as a *campesino*? Within a global framework of analysis, these challenges become even greater. Can we simply apply categories derived, for example, from Western European tax registers to societies in Southeast Asia or Latin America? And how did people from different social strata and geographical regions themselves perceive the social changes of the nineteenth century? By engaging with these and other fundamental questions, this source-based course not only provides an introduction to working with historical sources, but also conveys the essential foundations of social and economic history.

Part I: Introduction to Critical Source Analysis and Social History

Session 1 | 12 October 2026 | Thematic Introduction

Session 2 | 19 October 2026 | Critical Source Analysis

Literature: Rhode, Maria/Wawra, Ernst (eds.): Quellenanalyse. Ein epochenübergreifendes Handbuch für das Geschichtsstudium, Paderborn 2022, p. 15-30; p. 323-329.

Session 3 | 26 October 2026 | Social History

Literature: Blaschke, Olaf: Sozialgeschichte. Einführung, Baden-Baden 2025, p. 143-186.

Further Readings: Kocka, Jürgen: Sozialgeschichte. Begriff – Entwicklung – Probleme, Göttingen 1977.
Maeder, Pascal/Lüthi, Barbara/Mergel, Thomas (eds.): Wozu noch Sozialgeschichte? Eine Disziplin im Umbruch, Göttingen 2012.

Part II: Sources and Concepts of Western European Social History

Session 4 | 02 November 2026 | Agrarian Reform and Peasant Emancipation

Sources: Edict Concerning the Easier Acquisition and Free Use of Real Property and the Personal Status of Rural Inhabitants, 09 October 1807, in: Freiherr vom Stein. Briefe und amtliche Schriften, Vol. 2.2: Das Reformministerium (1807-1809), ed. by Peter G. Thielen, Stuttgart et al. 1960, p. 457-460; Edict Concerning the Regulation of the Relations between Landowners and Peasants, 14 September 1811, in: Gesetzsammlung für die Königlich-Preußischen Staaten (1811), p. 281-299.

Literature: Dipper, Christof: Die Bauernbefreiung in Deutschland. 1790-1850, Stuttgart et al. 1980.

Further Readings: Koselleck, Reinhart: Staat und Gesellschaft in Preußen 1815-1848, in: Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte, ed. by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Köln/Berlin 1966, p. 55-84.
Colligan, Daniel: The Origins of the Prussian Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1840, in: Sociology Lens 38/4 (2025), p. 275-291.

Session 5 | 09 November 2026 | Craftsmen, Journeymen, and Workers

Sources: Petition of the Trade Associations of the City of Amberg/Upper Palatinate, in: Die Petitionen an den Deutschen Handwerker- und Gewerbe-Kongress in Frankfurt 1848, ed. by Werner Conze/Wolgang Zorn, Boppard 1994, p. 19-22; Statement of the Carpenter Journeyman Carl Scheurich, in: Die Petitionen an den Deutschen Handwerker- und Gewerbe-Kongress in Frankfurt 1848, ed. by Werner Conze/Wolgang Zorn, Boppard 1994, p. 76-79; Protest of the Heidelberg Workers' Association, in: Die Petitionen an den Deutschen Handwerker- und Gewerbe-Kongress in Frankfurt 1848, ed. by Werner Conze/Wolgang Zorn, Boppard 1994, p. 97-98.

Literature: Conze, Werner/Zorn, Wolfgang (eds.): Die Petitionen an den Deutschen Handwerker- und Gewerbe-Kongress in Frankfurt 1848 (Forschungen zur Deutschen Sozialgeschichte 7), Boppard 1994, p. 1-17.

Session 6 | 16 November 2026 | The Silesian Weavers

Sources: The Weaver's Song "Blutgericht", in: Hodenberg, Christina von: Der Aufstand der Weber. Die Revolte von 1844 und ihr Aufstieg zum Mythos, Bonn 1997, p. 238-240; Judgment of the Criminal Division of the Breslau Higher Regional Court against the 'Participants of the Silesian Weavers' Riots', in: Hodenberg, Christina von: Der Aufstand der Weber. Die Revolte von 1844 und ihr Aufstieg zum Mythos, Bonn 1997, p. 242-252; Newspaper reports and contemporary interpretations of the weavers' uprising.

Literature: Hodenberg, Christina von: Aufstand der Weber. Die Revolte von 1844 und ihr Aufstieg zum Mythos, Bonn 1997, p. 9-18.

Further Readings: Steffen, Anka/Weber, Klaus: Spinning and Weaving for the Slave Trade. Proto-Industry in Eigtheenth-Century Silesia, in: Slavery Hinterland. Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850, ed. by Felix Brahm/Eve Rosenhaft, Woodbrige/Rochester 2016, S. 87-107.

Session 7 | 23 November 2026 | The 'Middle Classes' and 'Bourgeois' Self-Fashioning

Sources: Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's Characterization of Bourgeois Society (1866), in: Quellen zur Deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung, ed. by Walter Steitz, Darmstadt 1980, p. 375-359; Research into articles in 'Die Gartenlaube'.

Literature: Michael: Geschichte des Bürgertums. Eine Einführung, Köln et al. 2009, p. 131-178.

Further Reading: Dejung, Christof/Motadel, David/Osterhammel, Jürgen (eds.): The Global Bourgeoisie. The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire, Princeton/Oxford 2019.

Session 8 | 30 November 2026 | Tax Registers of the Canton of Zurich

Source: Steuerregister Stadt Zürich – Bürger (1860), Staatsarchiv Zürich, RR I 222.63.

Literature: Legentilhomme, Geoffroy/Leimgruber, Matthieu: The Golden Layer. The Origins, Concentration, and Transmission of Top Wealth in Zurich, 1880-1952, in: The Economic History Review 79/1 (2026), p. 31-56.

Part III: Sources and Conceptual Challenges of a Global Social and Economic History

Session 9 | 07 December 2026 | Global Social History

Literature: Dejung, Christof: Auf dem Weg zu einer globalen Sozialgeschichte? Neuere Studien zur Globalgeschichte des Bürgertums, in: Neue Politische Literatur 59/2 (2014), p. 229-254.

Further Reading: Dejung, Christof/Motadel, David: Global Social History. Rethinking Class and Social Transformation in the Modern World, in: The Historical Journal 67/4 (2024), p. 611-633.

Session 10 | 14 December 2026 | *Pueblos* and *Indígenas* in Social History

Sources: Fuentes para el estudio de la historia moderna de los pueblos indígenas https://hmpi.historicas.unam.mx/index.php/.

Literature: Schüren, Ute/Gabbert, Wolfgang: From Indio to Campesino and Back. Revolution, Agrarian Reform and Indigenism in Mexico, in: "Para quê serve o conhecimento se eu não posso dividi-lo?" "Was nützt alles Wissen, wenn man es nicht teilen kann?": Gedenkschrift für Erwin Heinrich Frank, ed. by Birgit Krekeler et al., Berlin 2013, p. 123-142.

Session 11 | 11 January 2027 | *Campesinos* – Self-Identification or Analytical Category?

Plan of Ayala, Library of Congress, online: https://www.loc.gov/item/2021667593 [04.10.26.]; Emiliano Zapata, Manifesto to the Nation (1913), in: Der lange Kampf Lateinamerikas. Texte und Dokumente von José Martí bis Salvador Allende, ed. by Angel Rama, Frankfurt Main 1982, p. 134-139.

Literature: Boyer, Christopher: Becoming Campesinos. Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacan, 1920-1935, Stanford 2003.

Session 12 | 18 January 2027 | 'Housewives' and Global Economic Integration – Part I

Sources: Briefe von Lina Tritschler-Beck aus Sumatra, Stadtarchiv Zürich, Spezialarchive, VII.537.1.2.; Briefe von Elisabetha Bleuler-Fahrner aus Guatemala, Stadtarchiv Zürich, Spezialarchive, VII.607.4.5.

Literature: Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E.: Gender, Intersectionality, and Global Social History, in: The Historical Journal 67/4 (2024), p. 649-669.

Session 13 | 25 January 2027 | 'Housewives' and Global Economic Integration – Part II

Sources: Briefe von Lina Tritschler-Beck aus Sumatra, Stadtarchiv Zürich, Spezialarchive, VII.537.1.2.; Briefe von Elisabetha Bleuler-Fahrner aus Guatemala, Stadtarchiv Zürich, Spezialarchive, VII.607.4.5.

Session 14 | 01 February 2027 | Free Trade and Protectionism

Sources: Friedrich List's Memorandum from 1820 on the Economic Situation of Germany Following the Napoleonic Wars, in: Quellen zur Deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung, ed. by Walter Steitz, Darmstadt 1980, p. 32-49; Un fabricante de sombreros, in: Diario Comercial, Político y Literario from 17. September 1832, p. 2.