

Course Outline – Theory & Methodology Seminar: Global Social History. New Theoretical Perspectives on Social Inequality, Class Formation, and Gender Roles in a Global Context

Can the theoretical and methodological approaches of social history, or ‘historical social science’ (*Historische Sozialwissenschaft*) also be meaningfully applied as analytical tools in a global context? This question is particularly significant because the terms, categories, and theoretical approaches developed, for example, by Edward P. Thompson in his studies of the English working class or by Hans-Ulrich Wehler in *A History of German Society*, were shaped to a considerable extent by a Western European experience and frame of reference. Nevertheless, social history with its focus on the emergence and transformation of social groups, classes, and genders, as well as on social inequality and processes of social stratification remains relevant to global history. Yet the question arises as to whether social categories such as ‘workers’, the ‘bourgeoisie’, or private property can readily be applied to Southeast Asia, Latin America, or Africa. Or, in order to do justice to the social heterogeneity of history, are entirely different, historically and regionally specific categories needed? Are these categories comparable and can they be placed in relation to one another? Through the reading of ‘classic’ texts on social history as well as more recent approaches to global social history, this seminar will focus in particular on engaging with the questions raised above.

Session 1 | 14.10.25 | Introduction

Literature: Wehler, Hans-Ulrich: Einleitung, in: *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte*, edited by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Düsseldorf 1981, p. 9-16.

Part I: The ‘Classics’ of (Western European) Social History

Session 2 | 21.10.25 | Foundations of Social History

Literature: Kocka, Jürgen: *Sozialgeschichte*, Göttingen 1977. Reading: Part II: *Sozialgeschichte: Begriffe – Entwicklungen – Probleme*, p. 48-111.

Session 3 | 28.10.25 | A History of German Society

Literature: Wehler, Hans-Ulrich: *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, Vol. 1: *Vom Feudalismus des Alten Reiches bis zur Defensiven Modernisierung der Reformära 1700-1815*, Munich 1987, daraus: Einleitung, p. 6-31.

Session 4 | 04.11.25 | Modern German Social History

Literature: Koselleck, Reinhart: *Staat und Gesellschaft in Preußen, 1815-1848*, in: *Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte*, edited by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Düsseldorf 1981, p. 55-84.

Session 5 | 11.11.25 | English Social History

Literature: Hobsbawm, Eric J.: Soziale Ungleichheit und Klassenstrukturen in England: Die Arbeiterklasse, in: Klassen in der europäischen Sozialgeschichte edited by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Göttingen 1979, p. 53-65.

Literature: Thompson, E.P.: History from Below, The Times Literary Supplement, 07 April 1966, p. 279-280.

Part II: The 'global turn' in Social History

Session 6 | 18.11.25 | Social History – Europe and the 'global turn'

Literature: Drayton, Richard: European Social History. A Latecomer to the Global Turn?, in: Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales, FirstView, 09.10.2022, online: <https://doi.org/10.1017/ahsse.2022.8> [28.09.2025].

Literature: Motadel, David: Globalizing Europe. European History after the Global Turn, in: Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales, FirstView, 09.10.2022, online: <https://doi.org/10.1017/ahsse.2022.8> [28.09.2025].

Session 7 | 25.11.25 | Global Social History

Literature: 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 8 | 02.12.25 | Global Bourgeoisie I

Literature: Dejung, Christof/Motadel, David/Osterhammel, Jürgen: Worlds of the Bourgeoisie, in: The Global Bourgeoisie. The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire edited by Christof Dejung/David Motadel/Jürgen Osterhammel, Princeton/Oxford 2019, p. 1-39.

Session 9 | 09.12.25 | Global Bourgeoisie II

Literature: Group Work – Choose, Read, and Present one of the Chapter from the edited volume 'Global Bourgeoisie'

Session 10 | 16.12.25 | Global History of Work and Workers I

Literature: Van der Linden, Marcel: The World Wide Web of Work (Work around the World: Studies in Global Labour History), London 2023. Reading: Chapter: Introduction, p. 1-17; Workers, p. 70-83 und Household Strategies, p. 111-124.

Further Literature: Hofmeester, Karin/van der Linden, Marcel (hrsg.): Handbook Global History of Work, Berlin/Boston 2018.

Session 11 | 13.01.26 | Global History of Work and Workers II

Literature: Stanziani, Alessandro: Bondage. Labor and Rights in Eurasia from the Sixteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries, New York/Oxford 2018. Reading: Introduction, p. 1-19.

Further Literature: Stanziani, Alessandro: Les Métamorphoses du Travail Contraint. Une Histoire Global XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles, Paris 2020.

Session 12 | 20.01.26 | Bandits and 'Tribes'

Literature: Fuoli, Francesca: Banditry in Global Social History, in: The Historical Journal 67/4 (2024), p. 803-825.

Leake, Elisabeth: The Construction of 'Tribe' as a Socio-Political Unit in Global History, in: The Historical Journal 67/4 (2024), S. 826-849.

Part III: Gender Roles in a Global Context

Session 13 | 27.01.26 | Gender – A Useful Category of Historical Analysis

Literature: Scott, Joan W.: Gender. A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, in: The American Historical Review 91/5 (1986), p. 1053-1075.

Further Literature: Frevert, Ute (ed.): Bürgerinnen und Bürger. Geschlechterverhältnisse im 19. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 1988.

Session 14 | 03.02.26 | Intersectionality and Gender Roles in a Global Context

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