

The Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History (The post-1914 period)

Description of Courses

Advanced Historiography

Lecture

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Melinda Kalmár, Senior Research Fellow

The course focuses on the main narratives of the 20th century international historiography with the aim to read and discuss the prevailing theoretical approaches and the most-known and/or contested methodology of the contemporary history writing. The curriculum based on topics significantly representing the most challenging problems of the modern and postmodern discourses of History as a discipline.

Contemporary History: Practice and Method

Lecture

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Péter Bencsik, Assistant Professor with Habilitation

The lecture summarizes the methodological foundations of the research of 20th-century history. In addition to examining the concept and interpretations of contemporary history and the uses of history, it covers the problems of periodization and the peculiarities of 20th century political systems. Among the methodological issues in the narrower sense, it deals with the basic peculiarities of the sources of contemporary history, the limits of historical knowledge, the comparative method, and the relationship between history and social theory.

Sources of 20th Century History

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Péter Bencsik, Assistant Professor with Habilitation

The course aims at getting to know the theoretical background and practicing the use of 20th-century historical sources. During the semester, students will learn how to read, interpret, evaluate and analyze sources of contemporary history and will be able to select, compile and edit a collection of historical sources within their own field of research.

Comparative History: Advanced Readings

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Prof. Dr. Béla Tomka

The comparative approach/method is an invaluable tool for historians to be able to find out possible connections between separate historical settings. This course is intended to give a critical overview of different theoretical and empirical approaches in comparative history and to discuss practices, and challenges of research in this field. It also introduces students into related areas, such as transnational and global history, which are some of the most dynamic fields of historical enquiry. The seminar aims to provide students with an understanding of what makes comparative history distinctive and what its principal strengths and limits might be. The objectives of the course also include to help students develop a conceptual and practical understanding of the skills of a comparative historian, and to help students improve their ability to formulate and test comparative concepts and hypotheses in their own doctoral research.

Globalization: Definitions, Waves, Consequences

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Prof. Dr. Béla Tomka

This course is designed to introduce students into the history of globalization. Over the course of the semester we survey how scholars of diverse disciplinary backgrounds have defined globalization; analyzed the process and stages of global integration; typified globalization; and assessed the causes and consequences of transnational interactions. Students are required to prepare essays exploring major scholarly approaches to globalization; the most influential works of international research on globalization; the most prominent contemporary scholars of globalization research; and historical works dealing with globalization.

Historians Debate

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Zoltán Cora, Senior Assistant Professor

The course examines various aspects of historical research at the postgraduate level. Each seminar will investigate the methods used by scholars to interrogate a range of sources,

including statistics, visual images, archival sources and newsreels that encourage students to test and develop different aspects of research design. The seminar seeks to be inclusive and address archives covering a broad chronology, geography and form but at the same time geared toward researching modern and contemporary history. Additionally, it offers students key transferable skills in identifying, using and interpreting different forms of data as well as in developing plans and proposals for transforming ideas into completed projects. Moreover, the course facilitates students' transition to higher level study and research, providing both continuity and a solid base for in-depth and new exploration of historical theory, method and practice. Students are particularly encouraged to learn and appreciate how the discipline has evolved and is still evolving, and how it changes over time. We explore in what ways historical enquiry has encompassed topics such as monarchy, diplomacy and politics and, more recently, cultural, gender, public and many other histories; and students are encouraged to explore links between history and current policy-making. The seminar seeks to enhance students' understanding of the use of different theories and methodologies through the evolution of the field of history with a focus on British history writing. Historical methodologies are considered in all their varied forms: quantitative, qualitative and electronic, and it involves a series of 'mini-projects' which facilitate students' engagement with historical theory, method and practice. These draw on local and other archives and other repositories of information and they include instruction in various techniques ranging from oral history to digital history. By the end of the course students will have acquired a valuable set of transferrable skills which will enhance their employability not only in historical research and heritage sectors but in a much wider range.

Major Controversies in Contemporary History

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Linda Margittai, Assistant Lecturer

This course aims to introduce doctoral students to some of the main themes that have been subjects to often-heated debates among scholars of contemporary history. Who was responsible for the outbreak of the First World War? What was the *Historikerstreit* about? Is the Holocaust unique? Why did Timothy Snyder's "Bloodlands" and Daniel J. Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners" provoked highly controversial receptions? Has violence declined in the course of human history? Through studying such debates, students are expected to identify specific circumstances and developments in academic literature and its broader social and political context that sparked the debates in question, to analyze opposing theories and arguments, and to recognize how these debates influenced scholarly research and shaped broader understanding of certain chapters of contemporary history.

Political Violence and Genocides in the 20th Century

Seminar

Doctoral School of History, Contemporary and Comparative History Programme, University of Szeged

Dr. Linda Margittai, Assistant Lecturer

Wars and political conflicts in contemporary history were accompanied by cases of mass violence where the power holders sought to effectuate complete or nearly complete destruction and, in the most extreme cases, physical annihilation of members of groups defined as “enemies” by political and social criteria, by religion, ethnicity or “race”. This seminar discusses causes, mechanisms and consequences of mass violence and genocide in the contemporary era through the most important examples that occurred during the 20th century including the genocides committed in the colonies, the Armenian genocide, political violence in the Soviet Union, the Holocaust, the mass massacres in Indonesia, and the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. During the seminar, issues such as terminology, the definition of genocide and other forms of mass violence, and theoretical and methodological problems will also be addressed. Roles of the perpetrators, the experiences of victims and survivors, and the historical memory of genocides will be discussed along with discussions on possibilities of and limitations to international historical, legal and political efforts to identify and reveal genocidal events, deliver justice and prevent future genocides.