

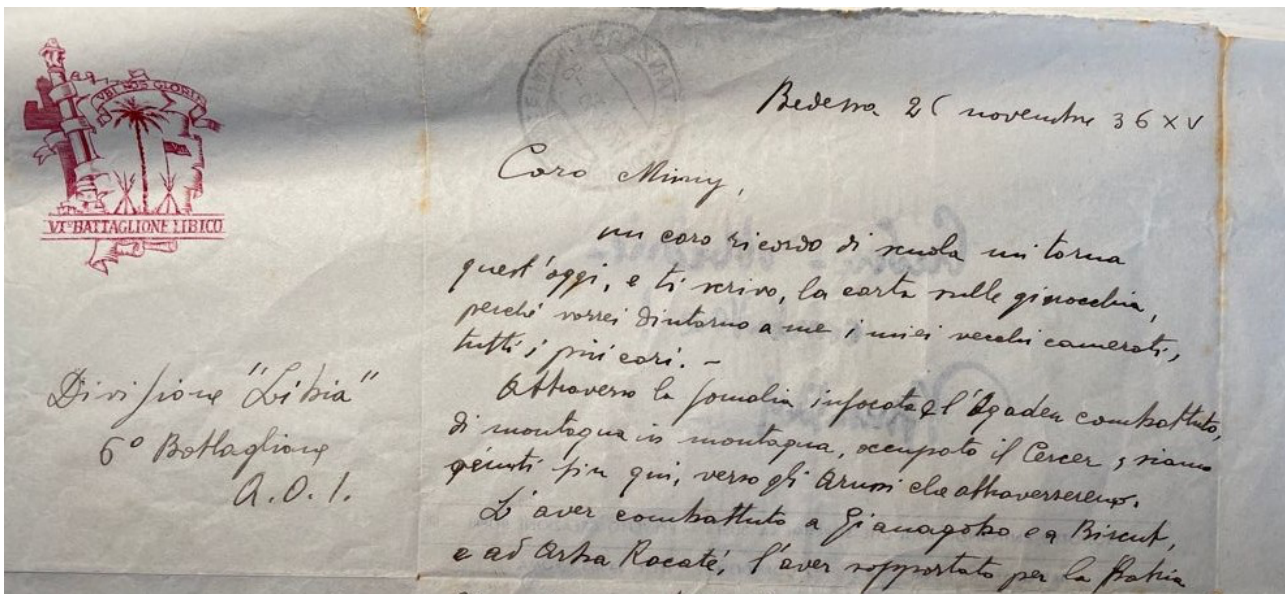
## Methods and Sources for Historical Research

Academic year 2024-2025

### Syllabus

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(Letter by an official of the Italian Army during the Italo-Ethiopian War, Ethiopia, 26 November 1936)

I and II Semester 2024/2025

### Description

The course consists of a series of two-hour seminars. In each meeting, invited speakers develop a series of arguments on specific methods of historical research, delving into the possibility, richness, and problems in the approach to historical sources. PhD students (and possibly undergraduates) discuss the suggested readings. Invited speakers will also tackle the question of historical sources, starting from the perspective of their past and present research.

*General objectives:* the course deals with historical sources, considering their variety and analyzing the possible interpretative problems their use raises. The primary purpose of the course is to equip PhD students with a minimum "toolbox" to deal with the problems that historians face in identifying and interpreting the sources.

#### General readings:

1. Bloch M., *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, Paris: A. Colin, 1974
2. Evans R., *In defence of history*, London: Granta Books, 1997
3. Carr E., *What is history?* New York: Knopf, 1964.

Translations are admitted.

### **Seminars**

15 November 11-13

Olindo De Napoli (Università di Napoli Federico II)

*Critique of the sources: general remarks*

The first seminar aims at introducing the problem of historical critique and critique of sources. Through concrete examples, some classical historiographical reflections will be proposed on the problem of the relationship between the historian and the sources.

#### Readings:

1. Bloch M., "Critique historique et critique du témoignage", *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*. 5<sup>e</sup> année, N. 1, 1950, pp. 1-8; in Italian: "Critica storica e critica della testimonianza", in *Storici e storia*, Einaudi, Torino, 1977, pp. 11 ff.
2. Momigliano A., "Ancient History and the Antiquarian", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 13, no. 3-4, 1950, pp. 285-315

29 November 11-13

Elena Bacchin (Universität Wien)

*Transnational History*

Focusing on key transnational actors of the 19th century, this seminar will discuss why and when transnational history emerged, what it means to adopt a transnational approach to historical events, and what its limitations and risks are.

#### Readings:

1. Iriye A., *Global and transnational history the past, present, and future* (2013), pp. 1-18.
2. The EUI Global History Seminar Group, 'For a Fair(er) Global History', *Cromohs - Cyber Review of Modern Historiography* (2021), pp. 1-8.
3. (Optional) Bacchin E., "Our Botany Bay": The Political Prisoners of the Risorgimento and the Sentence of Deportation', *Journal of Modern History* (2023), pp. 349-84.

13 December 11-13

Giulia Barrera (Ministero dei beni culturali, Italia)

*What is an archive?*

...

Reading:

1.

17 January 11-13

Carlotta Sorba (Università di Padova)

*Material History*

What has the material-culture turn meant in historiography? What inspirations did it draw from other disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology and art history? To answer these questions, the seminar will combine theoretical perspectives and case studies, with the aim of understanding how placing the material world of things at the centre of research does not just mean adding an element to the research agenda but changing and reconfiguring it.

Readings:

1. Trentmann F., "Materiality in the Future of History. Things, Practices and Politics", *Journal of British Studies*, 48/2, 2009, pp. 283-307
2. Riello G., "The Material Turn in World and Global History", *Journal of World History*, Vol. 33, no. 2, June 2022, pp. 193-232

7 February 11-13

Mario Del Pero (SciencesPo, Paris)

*International History*

The seminar will explore the historiographical evolution of what was traditionally known as "diplomatic history" or the "history of international relations," and which has, in recent years, expanded into "international" or even "global" history. We will focus on the shifting objects and actors of this historiography, and examine how its primary disciplinary interlocutors and partners — ranging from international law to economics, political science, and sociology — have evolved over time. Additionally, we will discuss the role of archives and primary sources in shaping this redefinition of the field. The seminar will conclude with an assessment of the merits and limitations of the recent "global turn."

Readings:

1. Osterhammel J., "Global History" in Marek Tamm & Peter Burke (eds.), *Debating New Approaches in History* (2019), pp. 21-34
2. Manela E., "International Society as a Historical Subject," *Diplomatic History*, 2, April 2020, 184-209
3. (Optional) Conrad S., *What's Global History?* (2016), "Introduction"

14 February 11-13

Vittorio Beonio Brocchieri (Università della Calabria)

*Regimes of historicity*

The "modern regime of historicity", with its roots in the industrial revolution and , the global western domination and confidently turned to the future, seems today definitely obsolete. To understand this decline, we should however consider that since the first decades of the 19th century, the hegemony of the "futuristic" view of history appears far from undisputed.

Reading:

1. Beonio Brocchieri V., *Immagini del tempo e della storia nella modernità: uno sguardo critico*, Carocci, Roma, 2022, pp. 63-103

7 March 11-13

Ettore Costa (Scuola Superiore Meridionale)

*Quantitative text analysis*

The new tools of data mining promise to produce new insights into the traditional field of the humanities. However, how much can we fear (or hope) ancient disciplines such as history to be transformed by the shining new approaches? The seminar offers a critical look at the new digital tools, especially quantitative text analysis, looking to uncover which of them are suitable to be integrated into a historical research

Readings:

1. Blaxill, L., "Quantifying the Language of British Politics, 1880-1910", *Historical Research*, vol. 86, no. 232, pp. 313-341
2. Fridlund, M., "A Middle Way between Normal and Paradigmatic Digital History Research", in *Digital Histories: Emergent approaches within the New Digital History* (ed. by Fridlund, Oiva, and Paju), HUP, Helsinki, 2020, pp. 69-87

21 March 9-11

Marco Rovinello (Università della Calabria)

*Social History*

The workshop is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on tracing the origins, evolution, and variations of social history within key Western historiographic traditions throughout the 20th and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The second part adopts a more interactive approach, encouraging students to rethink their research projects by incorporating a social history perspective, integrating their sources, and adjusting their methodologies accordingly.

Readings:

Mandatory:

1. Fairburn M., *Social History: Problems, Strategies and Methods* (1999, Macmillan Education UK)

Suggested:

1. Burke P., *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-1989* (1990, Polity Press);
2. M. MacRaild D., Taylor A., *Social Theory and Social History* (2004, Macmillan Education UK);
3. Stone L., *The Past and The Present Revisited* (1987, Routledge & Kegan Paul), especially pp. 3-96;
4. Browsing social history journals (i.e. *Social History*, *International Review of Social History*, *Journal of Social History*, etc.)

11 April 11-13

Laura Di Fiore (Università di Napoli Federico II)

*History of institutions*

How to study institutions? The seminar will introduce different typologies of sources for the historian of institutions. The first part will focus on the basic features of the discipline and its historiographical development. A second moment will consist in a workshop in which issues, problems and gaps concerning the sources for the history of institutions will be addressed.

Reading:

1. Brunner O., *Lord and Lordship. Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992 (1st edition 1939), Chapter II, "State, Law, and Constitution", pp. 95-113

7-8 May 17-19

Alessandro Stanziani (Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales), Paris

*Global and Comparative History*

these two lectures will discuss the different approaches to global and comparative history. In particular, the tensions between world and connected history, first, will lead to discuss those between archival documents, language skills and the scales of investigation. The second lecture will focus on comparative methods and therefore on the tensions between schemes and models issued from social sciences and areas' specificities.

Readings:

1. Stoler A.L., "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance", *Archival Science* 2, 2002, pp. 87-109
2. Cerutti S., Grangaud I., "Sources and Contextualizations: Comparing Eighteenth-Century North African and Western European Institutions", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2017; 59(1), pp. 5-33
3. Steinmetz G., "Comparative History and Its Critics: A Genealogy and a Possible Solution" in *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, ed. by Duara, Murthy, Sartori, Wiley, 2014, pp. 412-436
4. Cooper F., "What is the Concept of Globalization Good for? An African Historian's Perspective", *African Affairs* 100(2001), pp. 189-213

23 May 11-13

Maurizio Isabella (Queen Mary College, University of London)

*Intellectual History*