Università degli Studi di Milano  
a.a. 2015-2016  
Laboratorio didattico  

FACING GLOBAL HISTORY: A NEW HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TURN OR AN EMPTY SHELL?

Rationale

This course is designed as an optional 20 hours seminar for History graduate students who have already taken classes of Modern History and, if possible, International History of Modern World. A good knowledge of English is required in order to take part in the discussions and to read the readings proposed for each session. At the centre of this module there is the study of the recent historiographical trend of Global History and its impact on the field of historical studies. Students will learn how the concept of global history has shaped different sectors of historical studies in recent years. Moreover, students will personally deal with sources and cases that can be better understood employing a “global approach”. During the course students will learn how to use the main reviews within the field of global history and the main databases that can be helpful whenever they need to deal with more recent historiographical debates within global history as well as in another fields of historical studies.

Topics include the birth and the development of global history in the world, its impact on the study of European empire in early modern history such as the Portuguese and the Spanish Empire as well as on the study of the American and the French revolution. At the same time, the rapid success of global history shaped in a new way the organization of departments of history throughout the world starting from the Anglo-Saxon countries to Europe and Asia. This wave raised numerous criticisms on the use of global history and on its feasibility.

After the introductory class, each class will be open by a presentation of the readings assigned for the class. After this small introduction, the professor leaves the floor to a student presentation of the readings given for that session. Students should critically resume the main position and themes within the field of Global history. Moreover, it will be asked them to distinguish how the new historiographical positions stood in relation with past debates on similar aspects.

At the end of each session the student/s who have presented will receive a feedback on their presentation. At the end of the course all students have to submit a review of 500-1,000 words that deals with one of the books presented during the seminar by the professor or by other students. The final assessment will be the outcome of three assessments: the exposition
of the readings during the course, the active participation in the seminar and the final essay. This last assessment counts for the 30%, the exposition counts for the 50% and the participation in class for the remaining 20% of the final vote.

Course Outline

Title: Facing Global History: a new historiographical turn or an empty shell?

Aims/outcomes:

By the end of the seminar students will know:

- How to recognize the main historiographical trends within Global History studies.
- How to compare different trends within this field.
- How to relate the historiographical position to the cultural environment in which historians lived.
- To use in a “global perspective” historical documents such as notarial acts or political events.
- To use electronic resources and databases useful not only for global history but also for

Flow of lecture series:

1. Introduction to the discipline: global history and its evolution.
2. Opening new perspectives: global history and early modern history.
3. Global history from below: slaves, merchants and networks around the world.
4. Global history and national myths: the Age of Revolution and the new paradigm.
5. Ideas and intellectuals around the world: the Enlightenment and global history.
6. How to write a global history from local sources? Working on notarial archives in a broader perspective.
7. Databases and electronic resources: the essential tools for every historian dealing with global history.
8. Sons or rebels? The relationships between global history and environmental history and history of consumption.
9. Provincializing Europe: global history from the perspective of India and China.
Resources:
Students will receive mandatory readings for each class and other readings (monographs or book chapters), which can be helpful in the completion of the final essay.

Coursework:
During the first class students will choose which readings and authors they will present in class. At the end of the fifth session, it will be required to student to choose which book or series of articles they want to review for the final assessment.

Summative assessment:
A review of 500-4,000 words of a book or a series of articles treated during the course.

Review/evaluation:
The course will be successful if students will succeed to achieve the main aims above described.

Enrolment procedure:
To enrol in this seminar it is necessary to send an e-mail to the following address: niccolo.valmori@eui.eu from 9th September onwards. In the e-mail the student should specify his name, surname, his badge number and whether he has already taken the class of Modern History. Students will be accepted on the principle of “first come, first served”.