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| **Seminar type** | MA Literature seminar |
| **Title Seminar** | Comparing and connecting: Medieval and Early Modern Worlds |
| **Specialisation** | Medieval and Early Modern History: Europe in its Global Context |
| **Year & Semester** | 2024-2025 semester I block 1 |
| **Instructor** | Philippe Buc, Jeroen Duindam |
| **Time** | Wednesday 13.15-15.00 |
| **Room** | Hertha Mohr 006 |

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| **1. Course description:**  A human grouping's history more often than not has a strong local core: a place, a language; shared stories and memories. Any ‘imagined’ community cultivates its own history. The methods and objectives of academic history do not as a rule copy such shared histories. Nevertheless, history as a discipline has had national overtones. A preoccupation with the development of the nation state characterized traditional historiography. While this approach has lost most of its appeal, funding structures, social commitment, and academic institutions still push historians to examine first and foremost their own environs. In practical terms, the need to master languages as well as a variety of media and scripts restrict historical research's scope. This regional focus clashes with the intellectual need to juxtapose the histories of different areas. Indeed, not only does comparison underline patterns in human behaviour; it also reveals telling divergences: the specificity of any single region becomes visible only in comparison.  Yet comparison has often been used to validate stereotypes by implicitly using the trajectories of one set of nations or a ‘civilisation’ as a model, to be contrasted with less positive development elsewhere. The ‘Rise of the West’ is a classic example. As a consequence, comparison has been criticized by scholars who underline the impact of connections and the hybridity of cultures. But is comparison always so fraught with dangers?  In this course we take for granted the need to look at the histories of different places and periods together, and examine two competing approaches, ‘connected’ history and comparison. We will study classic examples of the two, consider the fruitful combination of the two approaches, and invite students to actively engage in research that crosses boundaries in place and time. |

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| **Learning objectives:** | **General learning objectives**  The student has acquired:  1.The ability to analyse and evaluate literature with a view to addressing a particular historical problem;   1. The ability to give a clear and well-founded oral and written report on research results in correct English, when required, or Dutch, meeting the criteria of the discipline; 2. The ability to provide constructive feedback to and formulate criticism of the work of others and the ability to evaluate the value of such criticism and feedback on one’s own work and incorporate it; 3. The ability to participate in current debates in the specialisation; 4. (ResMA only:) The ability to participate in a discussion of the theoretical foundations of the discipline.   **Learning objectives, pertaining to the specialisation**  The student has acquired:   1. Thorough knowledge and comprehension of one of the specialisations or subtracks as well as of the historiography of the specialisation, focusing particularly on the following;   -in the specialisation **Medieval and Early Modern History: Europe in its Global Context**: broader processes of political, social and cultural identity formation between about 1000-1800; awareness of problems of periodisation and impact of ‘national’ historiographical traditions on the field.   1. (ResMA only): Thorough knowledge and comprehension of the theoretical foundation of the discipline and of its position vis-à-vis other disciplines.   **Learning objectives, pertaining to this Literature Seminar**  The student:   1. will have a thorough knowledge of debates on cross-cultural comparison and interaction in medieval and early modern history; 2. understands the complexity of these debates in terms of the use of historical concepts; has the capacity to engage with current debates on the possibilities and complications of global comparison as well as the connections; 3. will be able to develop her/his own critical view of a specific aspect of these debates through oral presentations and written papers, based on the reading of several recent monographs and a selection of articles. |
| **Assessment and weighing:** | **Assessment**   * Participation in discussion through Brightspace discussion board as well as in the group *measured learning objectives: 2, 4-6, 8-10, for ResMA students also 5* * Opening assignment *measured learning objectives: 1-6, 8-10* * Midterm and essay: *measured learning objectives: 1-6, 8-10, for Res MA students also 7*   **Weighing:**   * Opening assignment: 10% * Participation (discussion board and group): 20% * Midterm: 20% * Essay: 50%   The final grade for the course is established by determining the weighted average with the additional requirement that the written paper must always be sufficient |
| **Compulsory literature:** | Will be made available on Brightspace. See the week programme below for the first three weeks, and the course reserve (digital and physical) for more readings [**https://courses.library.leiden.edu/public/course/ULCRS00538**](https://courses.library.leiden.edu/public/course/ULCRS00538) |
| **Weekly seminar schedule*:*** [please fill in the weekly schedule of the course. It should contain at least the elements mentioned underneath – please add all other course activities]]  **Week 1, 11 September. Comparison: classics and an example**  **○ Scholarship to be read**   * Marc Bloch, ‘A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies’ in Peter Apor, Constantin Iordachi, and Balázs Trencsenyi, eds., *The Rise of Comparative History* (New York: 2021), 89-124.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/18s393l/alma9940085285402711>   * Jürgen Kocka, ‘Comparative History: Methodology and Ethos’, *East Central Europe* 36 (2009) 12-19. [https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB\_LEU/rdnp04/cdi\_crossref\_primary\_10\_1163\_187633009X411430](https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1163_187633009X411430%20) * Eric Hobsbawm & J. W. Scott, ‘Political Shoemakers’ *Past & Present*, 89 (1980) 86–114.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_proquest_journals_1299227119>  **RMA students also read & integrate:**   * Oliver Freiberger, *Considering Comparison. A Method for Religious Studies* (Oxford: 2019), chapter 4. Pdf @ <https://brightspace.universiteitleiden.nl/d2l/le/lessons/325062/topics/3002894>   **○ Opening assignment**: (10% of the final grade), due on Brightspace on **09 September at 17:00.**  Please write a short QARP style analysis of each of the three works listed above for week 1, and make them enter in dialogue. Instead of the ‘problem’ part of the QARPs, end by briefly (200 words) suggesting a theme where comparison could work well, arguing why you think this is the case.  **Week 2, 18 September. Criticism and alternatives: connected and croisée**  ○ Scholarship to be read   * ~~Sanjay Subrahmanyam, ‘Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,~~*~~Modern Asian Studies~~*~~31 (1997) 735-762~~ [~~https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB\_LEU/rdnp04/cdi\_crossref\_primary\_10\_1017\_S0026749X00017133~~](https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_crossref_primary_10_1017_S0026749X00017133) * ***Optional****:* Victor Lieberman*,* What Strange Parallels Sought to Accomplish’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70:4 (2011) 931–938.<https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_cambridge_journals_10_1017_S0021911811001628> * Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, ‘Beyond comparison: Histoire croisée and the challenge of reflexivity’, *History and Theory* 45:1 (2006) 30-50. <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_37706970> * Yvonne Friedman, ‘How to End Holy War: Negotiations and Peace Treaties between Muslims and Crusaders in the Latin East, *Common Knowledge,* 21:1 (2015) 83–103.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_projectmuse_journals_566021_S1538457815100074>  **Week 3, 25 September. Global History: other challenges?**   * Jürgen Osterhammel, ‘Global History and Historical Sociology’, in James Belich, John Darwin, Margret Frenz, and Chris Wickham, eds., *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: 2016), 23-43. <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/18s393l/alma9940052745002711> * Sebastian Conrad, ‘Global History as a Distinct Approach’, in idem, *What Is Global History*? (Princeton: 2016), 62-89 (chapter 4), 251-255 (notes to chapter 4).   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/qvnl54/alma9940131177602711>   * Caroline Dodds Pennock and Amanda Power, ‘Globalizing Cosmologies’, *Past & Present* 238 (2018) 88-115.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_proquest_journals_2225199272>   * Jack Goldstone, ‘Dating the Great Divergence’, *Journal of Global History*, 16:2 (2021) 266-285.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_proquest_journals_2543962422>   * ***Optional***: response by Stephen Broadberry, ‘Historical national accounting and dating the Great Divergence’, *Journal of Global History*, 16:2 (2021) 286–293.   <https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/permalink/31UKB_LEU/rdnp04/cdi_proquest_journals_2543961731>  **Midterm assignment** due on 30 September 17.00 via Brightspace. Present one of the books from the list, relating it to the discussion of the first three weeks. Integrate a second book or article of your choice (this can be done in preparation of essay options). Free choice of the first book is an option, but needs to be discussed with the teachers before 25 September. 700-800 words.  Week 4, 2 October, individual consultations on essay themes (schedule t.b.d.)  Week 5, 9 October, writing workshop and option to discuss essay themes in class  Week 6, 16 October. Room for supplementary readings and discussion or writing time (t.b.d.)  Week 7, 25 October no class. **Final essay** needs to be handed in via Brightspace before 17.00. In the essay you elaborate a theme via comparative or connected approaches. This can be done in the form of a literature review but you can also develop your own theme. The foundation of your work needs to be visible in footnotes and bibliography. Your essay should reflect the course literature but add at least two books and two articles or publications reflecting an equivalent scope). The essay numbers 2500-3000 words. | |
| **Deadlines:** | - opening assignment: 9 September at 17.00 (via Brightspace)  - midterm assignment: 30 September at 17.00 (via Brightspace)  - final essay 25 October at 17.00 (via Brightspace) |
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| **Contact information instructors:** | Philippe Buc (Huizinga 1.75b) [p.buc@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:p.buc@hum.leidenuniv.nl)  Jeroen Duindam (Huizinga 203b) [j.f.j.duindam@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.f.j.duindam@hum.leidenuniv.nl) |