GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2023-2024

Intellectual History (A004010)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2024-2025

A (semester 2)	English	Gent	lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

Vanden Broecke, Steven	LW03	lecturer-in-charge
Bol, Geertje	LW03	co-lecturer
Kurtz, Paul Michael	LW03	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Bachelor of Science in Political Science	5	A
Exchange Programme Critical Perspectives on Culture	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme History	5	A
Exchange Programme in Political and Social Sciences	5	A
Elective Set Critical Perspectives on Culture	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Text analysis
Historiographical research methods
History of science
History of political thought
History of religion
History of medicine

Position of the course

This is an introductory course to the field, methodologies, and subfields of intellectual history, exploring these through the weekly practice of historical text analysis of primary sources.

Contents

Intellectual history studies how humans interpreted their (social or natural) world in the past, and how they made this world meaningful for themselves. It focuses on the history of human thought, and on the way in which humans appropriate ideas about the world. It also pays special attention to phenomena of ideology and performativity in human discourse; both of these bring out the political or social dimensions of human meaning-making. We operate in two stages:
(1) Introduction to the scholarly field of intellectual history: what, where, when, how, and why?
(2) Each session follows the same pattern thereafter. Each week we focus on one classic intellectual history theme (e.g., atheism, war, science, civilization, ethics, gender, rationality, power). These are studied through a central intellectual-historical source (e.g. Pierre Bayle's *Pensées diverses*; Hobbes' *Leviathan*; texts from the *Royal Society*; Montaigne's *Des cannibales*; Mary Astell; de Certeau on the Possession of Loudun; Herculine Barbin's Diary), as well as an important historical analysis of this source (e.g. the work of Quentin Skinner, Charles Taylor, Michel Foucault, etc). The combination allows us to study in a more practical way how intellectual historians work, and to practice our own intellectual-historical analysis during class.

Initial competences

English, CEFR level B1 or higher.

Final competences

1
2
3
4
5

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Forms of instruction may be changed when necessary due to the current COVID19-epidemic.
This lecture series attaches considerable importance to: individual preparation of weekly reading materials; in-class participation; class attendance.
Experience shows that English as a language of instruction poses few problems for Ghent bachelor students, as well as for many foreign students (with the possible exception of Spain and Asia). Please contact the instructor if you have doubts about your (written or spoken) English skills.

Study material

None

References

Richard Whatmore, *What is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015). ISBN 9780745644936

Course content-related study coaching

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

PE: written essay exam on texts seen: 60% of the final score
NPE:
*Weekly one group of students has to give a small presentation about their reading and questions prior to the lesson around the source/literature: 10% of the score
*in preparation for the exam, students write two position papers on the assigned reading for that week: 20% of the score
*class participation: 10% of the score

Calculation of the examination mark

PE: 60 %
NPE: 40%

Facilities for Working Students

It is possible to:
-be excused from mandatory class participation after consultation with the instructor
-take an oral exam with written preparation outside official exam session times