

## Research Seminar: Economic and Ecological History (A005533)

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

**Credits 5.0**

**Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026**

A (semester 1)

Dutch, English

Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Govaerts, Sander

LW03

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

[Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities \(main subject History\)](#)

**crdts**

5

**offering**

A

[Master of Arts in History](#)

5

A

[Exchange Programme History](#)

5

A

**Teaching languages**

English, Dutch

**Keywords**

Biodiversity, ecosystems, environmental history, economic history, animals, plants, landscape, environment, climate, capitalism, history of food, energy, disease

**Position of the course**

In this seminar, students are immersed in the concepts, methods and trends in the area of environmental and socio-economic history

**Contents**

### **Module 1 Sustainability in historical perspective.**

The concept of sustainability is recently gaining a lot of attention, and is dominating contemporary discussions about work, economics, climate and the relationship between humans and nature more broadly. The concept of sustainability, however, is also entering the historical sciences. In this module we explore, using historic and scientific literature, the value of this concept for historical research. We discuss literature that aims to define the concept, but we also look at applications in historical research.

The concept of sustainability maybe recently coined, but we also have attention for notions and thinking about sustainability (such as self-reproduction of social, economic and environmental systems) in a more distant past. Can we identify sustainability and sustainable systems on the level of historical actors and draw lessons from their experiences? Sustainability is a concept suited to analyses on different levels, such as the micro (peasant communities, eco-systems), but also on the level of global history.

The analysis and usage of the concept of sustainability will be done through a series of discussion lectures. In the lectures, the working method is bottom-up: we create or own definition of sustainability and distill lessons from historical cases. Based on this course material, students are to develop a case-study themselves and present it in class.

**OR**

### **Module 2. Parallel-trajectory 'Production and distribution of foodstuffs in**

**Classical Antiquity'** (part of the International MA program in Food History). This module on the production and distribution of foodstuffs in Greco-Roman Antiquity offers a parallel-trajectory within the research seminar EED. It is part of the curriculum of the International MA program in Food History organized in co-

operation with the history departments of the universities of Brussels (VUB), Bologna, Tours and Leiden (see [http://research.vub.ac.be/sites/default/files/uploads/FOST/masterkaart\\_lw\\_food\\_history\\_gvd\\_versie.pdf](http://research.vub.ac.be/sites/default/files/uploads/FOST/masterkaart_lw_food_history_gvd_versie.pdf)). The module is therefore open to students enrolled in the Food History MA, but also to UGent students, who can, if they wish, follow this module instead of the regular EED module to gain their credits for the EED research seminar. The module concentrates on the history of food production and distribution during classical antiquity. Introductory lectures will be followed by seminar sessions in which students will give oral presentations on subtopics related to the overall theme, based on assigned readings complemented by their own research. There will also be small preparatory assignments to be completed by each student in preparation for the individual sessions. Students will complete the module by writing an individual research paper on a subtopic related to the overall theme of the module and to their presentations. This is an English-language module.

### **Initial competences**

Bachelor in history.

### **Final competences**

- 1 To participate critically and independently in debates on the topics dealt with in the research seminar.
- 2 To make a critical and historically sound judgement about the problems covered in this seminar, especially in terms of interdisciplinary approaches.
- 3 To be able to trace and process sources and literature on this topic on an individual basis.
- 4 To be able to critically evaluate and existing theories and creatively apply them on a subject covered in the research seminar.
- 5 To be able to critically reflect and report on this course
- 6 To demonstrate advanced knowledge and insight into these research areas.

### **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**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

### **Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

Workshop: discussion and processing of literature in group  
Research project: processing of concepts and application unto case-study, learning to apply concepts  
Independent work: processing of literatuur (preceding workshops)  
Microteaching: short presentations of students (literature + discussion of case-studies). Follow up of organic course by students.  
Lectures: introductory and concluding lectures, explaining course material, in interaction with students

### **Study material**

Type: Reader

Name: Reader Economic and Environmental History  
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty  
Optional: no  
Language : English  
Number of Pages : 300  
Available on Ufora : Yes  
Online Available : No  
Available in the Library : No  
Available through Student Association : No  
Additional information: Reader will be made available through Ufora

### **References**

**Course content-related study coaching**

There will be guidance during seminars. Additional information can be obtained during office hours and on Minerva.

**Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment

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

Oral assessment, Assignment

**Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

**Calculation of the examination mark**

**Permanent:** 50% in total, of which 40% based upon an assessment of interactive participation during class and input (presentation) 10 % during the seminars.

**Periodical:** 50%, containing an end product (poster, infographic...) and a written report on creation of that end product (30 %) and oral examination on the end product (20%) and course content

**Facilities for Working Students**

Facilities:

- 1 Student attendance during educational activities is required
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Feedback can be given by email or during an appointment during and after office hours

Extra information:

Always contact the lecturer

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy