

Heuristics: Extra-European History (A006717)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Becker, Felicitas Maria	LW03	lecturer-in-charge
Coghe, Samuël	LW03	co-lecturer
Limberger, Michael	LW03	co-lecturer
Mathys, Gillian	LW03	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in History	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in History	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in History	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Heuristics, methods and sources, global history, African history, Middle Eastern history, Ottoman history, European exploration overseas

Position of the course

The course is designed to introduce students to the great variety of methods and sourced used for writing histories of regions beyond Europe, and to enable them to reflect critically on their own choice, approach to and use of historical sources. It is built around case studies drawing on the research of the different lecturers involved. It will provide students with:

- An overview of the location and nature of major source holdings on the different topics addressed.
- An appreciation of the importance of considering the historical contexts and processes through which sources were produced.
- The ability to identify methodological problems, as well as the specific limitations and biases of different kinds of sources.
- The ability to reflect on and assess the limits of achievable knowledge given the nature of the sources available on a given topic.
- An appreciation of Euro- or Belgocentric biases in the writing of history.

Contents

Classes will combine lecturing and discussion, some of the latter based on sample sources provided in class. Lectures will provide some factual background, but focus on problems of sources and methods.

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of historical epochs and global geography; interest in exploring unfamiliar historical regions, processes and sources.

Final competences

- 1 A basic understanding of the diversity of history beyond Europe, and of the need to broaden and adapt source bases and historiographic strategies in order to do it justice.

- 2 A basic understanding of the pervasiveness and limiting effects of Eurocentric biases in European historiographic traditions, and the rationales for seeking to overcome them.
- 3 The ability to formulate historical questions for non-European topics, taking into account the peculiarities and limits of existing research and sources.
- 4 The ability to locate and explore sources relevant to problems in the history of societies beyond Europe.
- 5 The ability to develop research strategies appropriate to questions in extra-European history, considering all types of sources available with their specific strengths and limitations.

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

Group work, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Active participation by students is essential.

Study material

None

References

Achebe, Chinua, An image of Africa: racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness
 Conrad, Sebastian, What is global history?
 Fanon, Frantz, The wretched of the earth
 Iliffe, John, Africans: the history of a continent
 Jacobs, Nancy, African history through sources
 Lockman, Zachary, Contending visions of the Middle East

Course content-related study coaching

Directly in the class (interactive classes) through Ufora
 Through office hours

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

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

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

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

NPE: Active and constructive participation in the classes on the basis of reading assignments and guiding questions.

Calculation of the examination mark

Three written assignments: 25% each participation: 25% Students must obtain a pass grade for each assignment to pass the course.

Facilities for Working Students

Possibility to move feedback.