

Department of International History

Academic year 2020 - 2021

Applied Research Seminar

HI125 -Spring - 6 ECTS

Mondays, 12h15-14h00, P3-506 or other classrooms as indicated by the instructor or the TA

Course Description

This Applied Research Seminar aims to introduce Master's students in International History to a broad range of historical and contemporary research and relevant methodologies. The workshop revolves around the "how". How do historians conduct research? How do they overcome methodological difficulties? A key objective of the course is to expose students to various research skills and approaches involved in historical and policy analysis. A further purpose is to expose them to collaborative research projects through the production of a podcast. Finally, the workshop aims to familiarize students with primary sources available in or beyond Genève internationale.

We assume that this seminar will take place online. Participants will receive a digital copy of the primary sources they will work with and all necessary explanations. If we can resume teaching in hybrid or in person mode... tant mieux! If archives, will open during the semester, we – very happily – adapt.

> PROFESSOR

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> PODCAST PEDAGOGY TEAM

Dr. Rahel Kunz and Dr. Maria Ruxandra Stoicescu are academics, writers and podcast producers who are passionate about developing innovative and creative pedagogy on international topics. They have successfully collaborated to introduce podcasting in the classroom at the University of Lausanne and they hope to grow similar practices in other higher education institutions.

Syllabus

1. 22 February

Introduction & 1st Podcast meeting

Roadmap: students get a preliminary idea on what podcast production entails in terms of content and technique

2. 1 March

Students familiarize themselves with primary sources assigned to their respective groups (We do not meet up!)

Roadmap: students evaluate the sources and start thinking about potential podcast formats and angles of analysis

3. 8 March

On Primary Sources and Secondary Sources

Roadmap: students will have familiarized themselves with their sources, read and/or listened to pertinent materials (e.g. such as relevant podcasts or literature to review). Each group must record (3 minutes maximum) visit and give a short feedback in class.

4. 15 March (Ruxandra)

2nd Podcast meeting: How to transpose your content to the podcast: technical aspects

Roadmap: students proceed with more concrete and/or fine-grained analysis of their sources and conceptualize how to cast key insights and voices into their script.

4/bis. 15 March (16:30? TBC)

Methods and Methodology in International History

Roadmap: students are also able to articulate their preliminary Research Question(s) and narrow options (in writing) as to the appropriate podcast format, audience, historical perspective and angle of analysis.

5. 22 March **5-7pm** (ATTENTION time change!)

3rd Podcast meeting: From Sources to Voices and Scenario Development

Roadmap: students 'play' with their material, such as by bringing recording samples and/or rudimentary scenarios to be discussed with course instructors/assistant.

6. 29 March

Groups work on the primary sources. We do not meet up in class!

Roadmap: Students evaluate the state of advancement of their production process and adjust course as

necessary.

7. 5 April

NO CLASS: HOLIDAYS

8. 12 April

Professors Bilotft and Mohamedou: Suggestions and recommendations on how to write the Mémoire thesis.

Roadmap: students draft their preliminary production log (as work-in-progress, see p. 5) and request further clarifications and guidance on scenarios as necessary.

13 APRIL INTERNATIONAL HISTORY FORUM DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE NOTES ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE SPEAKER

16 APRIL SEND THE SCRIPTS TO RUXANDRA AND RAHEL TO GIVE THEM TIME TO PREPARE THE REVIEWING OF THE SCRIPTS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE ON 19 APRIL.

9. 19 April groups supervised by Ruxandra (12:15-14:00); groups supervised by Rahel (16:30-18:00)

4th Podcast meeting: Reviewing Scripts.

10. 26 April

On oral presentations, eloquence (individual and collective presentations) and based on the *International History Forum* which takes place on Tuesdays afternoons - the exercise will be based on the professor Julia Tischler's presentation of 13 April 2021, title TBC.

11. 3 May

The Internet and how it can shape our research – pros and cons

Roadmap: Students update production log, revise scripts and prepare first recordings in preparation for 10 MAY podcast session (reviewing first recordings).

12. 10 May

Students have a first (complete) draft recording to be listened to by teacher/assistant/partner/external audience (written feedback)

13. 17 May

Writing history, writing histories: what history would you like to write? And Why?

Roadmap: students solicit feedback, make any necessary adjustments for the production of the final podcast version and update their production log accordingly

14. 24 May

On the importance of reading novels, of going to the cinema or to theatre.

The final podcast and production log are due on the 24 May at 4:00pm Geneva time. All the production logs will be circulated to the entire class so that everyone is aware of what all the different projects entailed.

15. 31 May 16:30 to 19pm, TBC

ORAL GROUP PRESENTATION OF THE PODCASTS – IN THE PRESENCE OF PARTNERS

This session last longer than the usual two hours.

The students present their final podcast to the entire class, teaching staff as well as interested partners. This presentation includes the podcast itself (8min), the production team's commentary (5 min) and addressing any questions or feedback from the audience.

Important information:

- ***During the course of the semester the class will be invited to attend public events, lectures or seminars that pedagogically fit with the purpose of the seminar. Students will have to attend them, as they will be an integral part of the seminar.***
- ***Master students taking this class have to attend the International History Forum on***

Tuesday afternoon (when scheduled). Their presence is compulsory and related to the contents of this class.

- ***Podcast tutorials are compulsory***

Description

This applied research seminar aims to introduce Master's students in International History to a broad range of historical and contemporary research and relevant methodologies.

The workshop revolves around the "how" question and engages with fundamental themes: How do historians conduct research? How do they overcome method and methodological difficulties? How to write a master dissertation in International History? A key objective of the course is to expose students to various research skills and approaches involved in historical and policy analysis.

This ARS introduces an experimental dimension. Rather than classic seminar papers, the final assignment will be a collective audio podcast. The podcast is a collective endeavour working on an archive based on a specific request from a partner. Partners can be institutions, private companies, international organizations, academics, think tanks, public, or private archives, etc. Some podcasts are based on primary sources, but this is not systematically the case. The students will design, record, edit and present their podcast in small groups of 3-4 participants. In a series of podcast training sessions, the students will be taught how to realise a podcast by a group of qualified specialists. They will also have to engage with the specific requests of selected partners. The quality of their historical analyses will determine their final – collective – grade.

Historians often remain ignorant on how to work collectively. This seminar is designed to enhance transferrable skills such as the negotiation of ideas and of the research design, the division of labour, time-management and the ability to communicate and build on the strengths of each group member, and compromise and deal with possible disagreements. These skills will prove useful regardless of whether participants pursue an academic career. Professional activities both within and beyond academia increasingly entail collective work.

Another specific feature of this seminar is that contrary to the Master's thesis (Mémoire) and contrary to seminar papers, the ARS podcast project is not designed by the student alone, but elaborated by a partner (a *commanditaire*) in conjunction with Graduate Institute faculty. The partner defines their objectives, preferred methodology and expected outcomes of the research in a project brief. The assigned nature of the research question and the related constraints, are of academic and professional interest. Navigating an assignment defined by a partner, with strings attached is more challenging when it comes to thinking critically. The course and the project will allow the students to acquire specific skills, useful after the end of the Master program in different professional contexts.

The first session will be entirely devoted to the setting up of groups and detailed explanations on the assignment. Time-management will be of crucial importance and even if there are not many assigned readings for this seminar, students will have to spend many hours in the archives, find their own secondary readings, do desk research or conduct interviews.

Grading

Class Attendance	10%
Production log	30%
Podcast and oral presentation	60%

* *Class Attendance* includes presence in class, at the archive visits (if they will take place), and at tutorial sessions.

Further specifications

The list of partners and their briefs is not included in the syllabus.

Required and optional readings and/or podcasts for this seminar will be uploaded on Moodle. Each group will have to work on a specific bibliography and will be asked to comment and motivate the choice of its selected reading in the production log.

The production log and the podcast script

While a quality final podcast is the end-goal, the 'how' behind it is critical. Working on the podcast entails working on a **script** which will be verbalized (designed, edited, fine-tuned and recorded) into an 8-minute podcast, but also keeping a detailed and annotated **production log** (5-7 pages, excluding appendices), which elaborates on the *how* by way of explanations, reflections and relevant annotations (references, footnotes, endnotes). While the teaching staff will give detailed feedback on the quality and feasibility of each script, the production log also helps to evaluate, and if necessary, adjust the production process. The production log does not have to be a perfectly flowing story, but it must include complete and intelligible sentences that provide:

- Description and selection criteria of primary and secondary sources and complete bibliography
- Historiographical relevance, especially of the sources selected
- Key methodological decisions (e.g. deciding the research question, angles of analysis, historical perspective, choice of voices, music or background sound, etc.)
- Justification of podcast format and choice of audience
- Key challenges (e.g. be they methodological, technical, temporal, ethical or 'team work' practicalities)
- Important academic reflections (e.g. synthesizing key insights from the research; reflecting on possible further avenues for research; offering more insightful analyses on the potential of some archives, on possible connections, on fundamental gaps or flaws in the documentation examined)
- Appendices, which must include the final script and any other relevant information (visuals of sources, story boards etc.).

Until its final submission, your production log is 'work-in-progress' and must be periodically updated.

Podcast requirements

While the script and the production log are integral to the production process, the final podcast must respect the following criteria:

- Length: 8 min
- Format: MP3 (or similar)
- Interplay of voices (e.g. more than one voice/person present in the podcast)

The final podcast and production log are due on the 24 May at 4pm Geneva time. All the production logs will be circulated to the entire class so that everyone is aware of what all the different projects entailed.

All groups must present their final podcast to the entire class, teaching staff as well as interested partners on the final day of the seminar, 31 May. This presentation includes the podcast itself (8min), the production team's commentary (max 5 min; before or after the podcast; free in terms of style) and addressing any questions or feedback from the audience.

Only the final podcast versions and presentations are graded and members of a team will generally receive the same grade. This aims at stimulating the common interest of the group to achieve the best possible result and enhance the team-spirit.

The evaluation matrix

The matrix below lists key evaluation categories and criteria

	Insufficient	Satisfactory	Excellent
Content	The object of analysis is not clearly identified or its relevance not highlighted. The podcast mobilizes concepts in an inconsistent way. No clear link between course materials (e.g. archives) and the podcast.	The object of analysis is unclearly identified or its relevance is weak and tangential. The concepts used for the analysis are defined in an imprecise way or mobilized in an inconsistent way. There is an adequate link between course materials and the podcast.	The object of analysis is clearly identified and its relevance stated. The concepts used for the analysis are engaging and well defined, and mobilized in a coherent and relevant way. Through its analytic insights and historical perspective, the podcast stimulates further thinking and debate. The link between course materials and the podcast is original.
Theoretical dimension	The research question, the angle of analysis and the argumentation lack clarity and logic. The podcast does not belabor any analytic insights/historical perspectives.	The research question and the angle of analysis is defined in an imprecise way. Analytic insights and/or historical perspectives are underdeveloped, or the argumentation and position are not entirely clear.	The research question and the angle of analysis angle of analysis is well defined and original, and the argumentation and position are clear and thought-provoking. Through its analytic insights and historical perspective, the podcast stimulates further debate.
Audience	The podcast does not identify a clear audience, or is not adapted to the audience it identifies.	The audience is identified relatively clearly but problematically (e.g. excludes concerned parties). The communication is clear, but adapted to an inadequate audience.	The audience is clearly and adequately identified and the communication is understandable, original and adapted to its audience.
Format	The format of the podcast is not adapted to the content and message of the podcast. The podcast does not use enough sources and mobilize enough voices (e.g. several people involved).	The format of the podcast is more or less adapted to the content and message of the podcast. The podcast does not vary sufficiently in sources used and/or voices mobilized in a way that is not too relevant.	The podcast format is adapted to the content and message of the podcast. Sources are used in a varied and relevant way and there is an original interplay of different voices.
Recording and editing	The sound quality of the podcast is poor (e. g. volume too low, background noise, uneven volume levels) and the editing is rough (e. g. steep cut), unimaginative or inconsistent. The podcast does not contain any additional sound material (e.g. interview, music, etc.).	The podcast contains additional sound material, but is not very creative or does not contain material adapted to its format. The sound quality of the podcast is average (e. g. volume too low or background noise).	The podcast is creatively designed and contains rich sound material that is well suited to the podcast format (e. g. music, etc.). The sound quality of the podcast is very good (volume and clarity).

Presentation	The podcast is too long/short, was not delivered on time and does not respect the requested format. The group's oral presentation is not clear and does not contain enough reflection.	The podcast is a little too long/short but does not exceed the tolerance of 10%. The podcast respects the deadline and format. The group's oral presentation is clear enough, but does not contain or stimulate any reflection.	The podcast fully complies with the formal requirements of length (8 min, several people involved), format (MP3 or equivalent) and deadlines. The group's oral presentation is clear and includes engaging commentary or reflection on the development process, important implications, etc.
Production log	The production log is missing, incomplete (e.g. lacking critical sections) or unintelligible. The production log does not respect the length requirements and is not sufficiently annotated.	The production log is almost complete (some parts missing), text is comprehensible but poorly elaborated. The production log is within the length requirements and annotated.	The production log is complete, elaborate and well annotated, and includes rich reflections (on the material itself, the process, historical relevance, etc.)

Suggestions

This seminar requires spending long hours in the archives or sponsor institutions. Coordination and planning are important factors and dimensions of the ARS. We suggest that students schedule meetings with the archivists, their time-slots for oral-interviews, etc. well in advance.

Podcasts Suggestions

The Ratline by Philip Sands, BBC.

[Especially the introduction for format](#)

99 percent invisible - a generalist podcast

[The Secret Lives of Color](#)

BBC Radio 4 broadcasts - storytelling by historian

[The Romanian wave](#)

Radiolab – a generalist podcast

[Truth and Cannonballs](#)

Podcast on/involving archives

[Lost in the Stacks](#)

[Keeping collections](#)