

SUMMER SCHOOL

Jews and Christians between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean: Co-existence and Conflict 600-1800 CE

23 July-3 August 2018 | CERES, Bochum, Germany

About the Course

The course will introduce its students to the ways in which Jews and Christians interacted in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa, especially Ethiopia, and the Indian Ocean in the period between 600-1800 CE. This is the topic of a research project aiming at establishing a new area of study – relations between Jews and Eastern Christian communities from the rise of Islam to the end of the eighteenth century. The study of inter-religious dynamics is anchored in the framework of pre-modern cultural history concerning a vast geographical area that encompasses seemingly disparate lands from Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, through West Asia and the Caucasus, to South India, all connected through trade and travel.

The course has two aims:

- 1) to introduce the interested researchers/students into the required skills and methods (linguistic, philological, archaeological, ethnographic, and historiographic) that are needed for the exploration of this new field;
- 2) to disseminate the results of the JewsEast research project

It is open to researchers, doctoral and MA-level students of religion, history and culture who would benefit from a deeper understanding and the reconceptualization of inter-religious relations, especially between Jews and Christians, in these zones and from presenting their own research for feedback within such a context.

Participating students will be invited to deconstruct various stereotypes, including the “civilizational model” and that of a “clash of civilizations”. Instead, it proposes to see the history of Jewish-Christian relations in “entangled” cross-cultural, trans-regional contexts and to avoid ethnocentric or nationalist biases. It will teach how complex identities and interreligious communities were formed just prior to the rise of Islam through the eighteenth century and, toward the end of the course, briefly consider how these perspectives should affect our examination of these issues in the present.

There will be three different types of classes, namely

- 1) introductory informative classes
- 2) theoretical classes,
- 3) classes teaching particular skills and methods.
- 4) Depending on student interest and availability of staff, reading sessions in the source languages. If available, these will be limited to students with advanced intermediate – advanced/fluent skills in the language (participants must at minimum be able to read texts in the chosen language with a dictionary). While guidance and assistance will be available, these sessions would be primarily an opportunity to read and exchange ideas about relevant sources in their original form/language rather than formal, systematic instruction in that language. If made available, some introduction to Garshuni-Malayalam and Judeo-Arabic will be provided for those with a background in Malayalam or Arabic.

The level and the manner of interaction will vary between introductory, theoretical, and skills and methods classes.

The introductory classes will serve to orient and familiarize participants with the various regions, their histories, and the specifics of pre-modern Jewish-Christian relations in them, along with the primary source materials available for studying them. Theoretical courses will be aimed at overarching, comparative issues for the study of pre-modern Jewish-Christian relations in the “East” and include but are not limited to: concepts of alterity; processes of cultural transfer; constructions and impositions of identity; material culture, trade and social relations, apocalyptic, polemics placed in the broad context of religious exchange and conflict within these regions and also in comparison with medieval and early modern Jewish-Christians in Western Europe and Byzantium.

Skills and methods courses will introduce students to basic manuscript skills including palaeography in the various languages of the sources: Ge‘ez, Malayalam and Garshuni Malayalam, Syriac, Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew and Armenian; approaches to art historical and archaeological sources; problems of dealing with oral sources for pre-modern history.

How to Apply?

Applicants should submit:

- 1) **a statement of interest**, explaining their reasons for wishing to take the course; previous background in one or more the areas and histories of the region(s) under study.
- 2) **a list of languages** which the applicant has studied and to what level of ability: a) basic (some knowledge of alphabets and grammar); b) intermediate (completed study of all grammar and can read basic texts with a dictionary) c) advanced (can read medieval and early modern texts with a dictionary) d) very advanced/fluent (can read most texts without a dictionary and has native or near native ability in the language) and/or **indication of art historical or other types of training in material culture and archaeology**. *No previous knowledge of relevant languages, art history or archaeology is required in order to be accepted to the course, however this information will assist us in tailoring the classes to the students’ abilities and needs.
- 3) **a curriculum vitae, or resumé** including **a list of publications, if any**
- 4) **a research proposal** (maximum 2 pages) indicating what research the applicant is doing or wishes to do for which this course would be relevant, and **which the applicant will present to the rest of the**

summer school participants (20 minute oral presentation) if accepted. Those accepted will be expected to have their presentations ready by the time the course begins.

- 5) **Indication of whether they wish to participate in reading sessions in a source language**, and indication of their background in that language. Source languages which may be made available are: Syriac; Malayalam and Garshuni Malayalam; Hebrew; Georgian; Ge'ez; Armenian; Arabic and Judeo-Arabic. Please note again, whether such courses will be available will be dependent on sufficient student interest and time-commitment/availability of staff to conduct these.
- 6) **Application for financial aid (if needed).** Please indicate if you wish to be considered for: a) flight/travel costs; b) housing; c) housing and daily allowance stipend (see below for explanation) and whether your participation is contingent upon this assistance. Cost of health insurance (obligatory for some visas) and the cost of applying for visas is expected to be borne by the applicant, however, if such costs constitute a barrier to participating, please let us know.

Applications should be submitted electronically to: Prof. Alexandra Cuffel, e-mail: alexandra.cuffel@rub.de
- Please indicate in the heading of your e-mail that you are applying for JewsEast summer school, and attach the relevant documents for your application. If there are any difficulties with the attachments, you will be informed.

Applications should be submitted NO LATER THAN: February 15, 2018. Applicants will be informed whether they have been accepted by March 2018.

Who May Apply?

The course is aimed primarily at doctoral and advanced, research-oriented MA students. Post-doctoral researchers may be considered. In special cases, advanced, highly motivated BA students may also be considered. The course is open to Ruhr University students as well as international applicants, however, both must complete the full application. There are currently no set language requirements apart from good knowledge of spoken and written English in order to apply, however, students already having some of the basic skills necessary for working in these regions and sources will be in the best position to benefit from the course.

Costs, Funding, and Accommodation

Costs:

Tuition – 0

Flight/travel – varies according to point of origin. The main airport nearest to Bochum is Düsseldorf.

Accommodation (estimated) – 910 euros for 14 nights.

Living expenses (estimated) (food (20 euros a day) plus inner-city travel (70euros for the 2 weeks)) – 380 euros for the entire 2 weeks. Lunches are provided by the summer school free of cost to participants.

Accommodation:

Accommodation will be made available in a hotel in downtown Bochum. We will book rooms for the participants, unless instructed otherwise. Students will need to take the local subway train (U35) to Universitätstr. 90a or they may walk (20-30 minutes). More specific information will be provided upon acceptance.

Funding:

Funding, both partial and full is available for applicants. Priority will be given to the most highly qualified MA and doctoral student applicants in need of funding. Local students may apply for living expenses only.