Time is both the matter and essence of our work as historians and crucial to our experience of the world. Yet, the sequences and narratives that result from our writing substantially differ from the subjective experiences of those who lived through these events. This MA course will explore the articulation of these two dimensions of time. Through looking at a broad sway of modern European history, we will investigate the multiple ways in which Europeans and their societies have experienced, imagined and represented time, and how social scientists have conceived and studied time as an historical object. It will bring to life the distinctive, complex and vibrant conceptions of time from the late eighteenth century to the present day, and engages with exciting recent developments in the transdisciplinary history of time and temporality.

Commencing with a chronological examination of the multifaceted experiences of time through two millennia of European history, we will then move to discuss in more detail the historiographical and conceptual approaches to time and temporality. Each class will include a discussion of primary sources through a series of objects, texts, images, sounds, and rituals that allow us to examine ambivalent sensory attitudes to temporality, the politics of time, the gendered experiences of temporality, and the relationships between time, arts and sciences. Finally, in dialogue with recent anthropological and archeological theory, the course will reflect on how theories of time allow us to reconsider the nature of historical knowledge.

Objectives

This course will allow MA students to think about time as a historical object. It will also give them a taste of the exciting recent interdisciplinary scholarship on time, and encourage them to reflect on their practice as historians.
General reading


Outline of the classes (10 weeks)

1. **Time keeping: the science of time from clepsydrae to atomic clocks**
2. **Time-discipline and productivity: the temporality of the machines**
3. **Time encounters - colonial and post-colonial times**
4. **The sociology of time**
5. **Visual cultures of time**
6. **The politics of time: the temporality of revolutions**
7. **The invention of leisure**
8. **Time is money: the economy of time**
9. **Regimes of historicity - historiography**
10. **Time and historical narratives**