Introduction to Early Modern History

Aim

This course is the first of the mandatory courses within the master programme in Early Modern History. The purpose of the course is to introduce you to early modern Europe and to a number of key historical processes that shaped the period. The purpose is also to present and problematize several important concepts that historians use to analyse the period. Another objective is to introduce practical reading and writing tools that can help you succeed with assignments and exercises.

Learning outcomes

A student who successfully completed the course will be able to:

- Describe different ways to define the early modern period and to assess the consequences of using the different definitions in research.
- Describe similarities and differences between the early modern period and previous and later periods in history. Thereby the student will be able to discuss the distinguishing features of the early modern period.
- Describe a number of key concepts and processes, which historians use to interpret the early modern period.
- Broadly describe economic, political, cultural and social developments in different parts of Europe during the early modern period and furthermore to describe variations in these developments.
- Use a number of practical tools to read and arrange scientific literature, and to write academic papers.
- Use an adequate reference system, and to describe the rules concerning plagiarism.

Content and instruction

The course focuses on different parts of early modern history in Europe, but also on providing students with a number of reading and writing skills or strategies that will strengthen their abilities to complete various assignments and exercises. The course consists of lectures and seminars and it will end with a written exam. You will meet several teachers, all specialists on different aspects of the early modern period.

To achieve the learning outcomes, you are required to attend lectures and seminars and to take active part in the discussions by prepared contributions and by constructive responses to other participants’ contributions. Attending the lectures and seminars is mandatory; absence will require extra written assignments (2–3 pages).

The course starts with an introductory lecture and a seminar that focus on defining the early modern period and what separates it from both previous and later periods in
history. The lecture and seminar will also address and problematize the programme’s strong focus on European developments. Following the seminar, a number of lectures and seminars that detail a few central processes and concepts will provide a broad overview of the period. At the final seminar, students will work on and practice practical reading and writing skills. The course ends in early November with a written exam.

**Assessment and grading criteria**

Attending lectures and seminars is compulsory; in case the student is unable to participate, she or he has to submit a more extended written reflection on the topic (2–3 pages). Grades will be given in accordance with the Swedish grading system, using *Pass with honour* (VG), *Pass* (G), and *Fail* (U).

**Grading criteria**

*Fail (U)*

Does not meet the requirements of G.

*Pass (G)*

The student attends lectures and seminars, and presents assignments at the seminars. The student also does the written exam. The student can adequately explain in writing the meaning of key concepts and processes.

*Pass with Honours (VG)*

The student attends lectures and seminars, and presents assignments at the seminars. The student also does the written exam. The student can clearly explain in writing the meaning of key concepts and processes and is able to make comparisons between different cases.
# Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 5 Sep. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>MH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 Sep. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION I: CHRONOLOGY AND CAUSALITY</td>
<td>CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 18 Sep. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION II: RELIGION</td>
<td>MH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 25 Sep. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION III: CULTURE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE</td>
<td>MÅ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 2 Oct. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION IV: TRADE AND COMMERCE</td>
<td>MH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9 Oct. 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION V: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS</td>
<td>MÅ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 15 Oct. 15:15-17:00</td>
<td>EXTRA SESSION: WHAT DIFFERENCE DO WOMEN MAKE? LECTURE BY PROF. CARMEN SARASUA, UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA</td>
<td>GUEST 22-1017</td>
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<td>Wednesday 16 Oct 10:15-12:00</td>
<td>SESSION VI: SERVANTS</td>
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<td>Wednesday 23 Oct. 13:15-15:00</td>
<td>SESSION VII: FISCAL STATES AND WAR</td>
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<td>Monday 28 Oct. 15:15-17:00</td>
<td>SESSION VIII: PLAGIARISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 30 Oct. 13:15-15:00</td>
<td>SESSION IX: READING AND WRITING HISTORY</td>
<td>MH</td>
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## TEACHERS

Course Coordinator:  
Professor Margaret Hunt (MH)  
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Professor Maria Ågren (MÅ)  
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018–471 1535

Associate Professor Christine Ekholst (CE)  
Room 1/2026  
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018–471 7022
Sessions
There are a number of different sessions during the course. Some sessions start with a lecture where the teacher presents a broad overview of the topic and discusses different perspectives in the existing literature. There will also be small assignments that the students will work on and discuss with the teacher. Other sessions will focus on assignments that the students will work on before and then discuss during the sessions. The purpose of the assignments is to increase the students’ comprehension of the literature and to foster their ability to relate the literature to general historical contexts. Some assignments may also include primary sources, which the students will analyse with the help of the literature. The final session focuses on the students’ practical reading and writing skills.

Exam
The written exam focuses on some of the key concepts and processes that are crucial to understand the early modern period.
LITERATURE


Margaret Fell Fox, *Womens Speaking Justified, proved and allowed of by the Scriptures* (1666). 16 pp


READINGS FOR EACH SESSION

THURSDAY 05 SEPT.  INTRODUCTION TO EARLY MODERN HISTORY (MH)

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPT.  SESSION I: CHRONOLOGY AND CAUSALITY (CE)
Jacques Le Goff, Must We Divide History into Periods?, pp. 1-132.

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPT.  SESSION II: RELIGION (MH)
Margaret Fell Fox, Women’s Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scripture (1666) 16pp.

WEDNESDAY 25 Sept.  SESSION III: CULTURE (MÅ)

WEDNESDAY 02 OCT.  SESSION IV: TRADE AND COMMERCIALIZATION (MH)
Olaudah Equiano, Interesting Narrative (1799) (See study questions for parts you can skip or skim)

WEDNESDAY 09 OCT.  SESSION V: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS (MÅ)

TUESDAY 15 OCT.  Special Session:  Guest Lecture by Prof. Carmen Sarasua of the University of Barcelona “What Difference do Women Make?  The Occupational Structure in a late Industrializing Country.  Spain 1700-1914” (no additional readings)
Wednesday 16 Oct. Session VI: Servants (MÅ)

Wednesday 23 Oct. Session VII: Fiscal States and War (MH)

Monday 28 Oct. Session VIII: Plagiarism and how to avoid it (MÅ)
No readings.

Wednesday 30 Oct. Session IX: Reading and Writing History (MH)
Readings to be announced