



WEATHERHEAD INITIATIVE ON GLOBAL HISTORY
WIGH | *A Weatherhead Research Cluster on Global Transformations*

Global history is one of the leading new approaches in recent years that has helped to transform the study of the past. The contemporary trends summarized under the term “globalization” have lent urgency to research that examines historical processes, networks, identities, and events across the boundaries of the nation-states that traditionally served as the privileged framework for much of the discipline. Historians worldwide have contributed to exciting research on the trends that so many societies have undergone together—whether economic and demographic, religious and cultural, or political and military. In the process, global history has drawn on the expertise of political scientists, sociologists, art historians, economists, anthropologists, and others.

Harvard University has among the greatest concentrations of scholars anywhere who are interested in this approach to the study of the human past. At the same time, the study of global history at the University has lacked any programmatic cohesion as a field. Sven Beckert, Laird Bell Professor of History, and Charles S. Maier, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, with the encouragement of Beth Simmons, former Weatherhead Center director, have created an institutional framework for global history at Harvard. Their goal is to make Harvard one of the world’s leading centers for research and teaching in global history.

The Weatherhead Initiative on Global History (WIGH) was the first of the WCFA’s original “research clusters” designed to build on and focus its Faculty Associates’ leadership in new directions for international study. The Center provided funding for the first three years and is the institutional home for the program—and as of the 2017–2018 academic year, the Center again provided funding as WIGH became one of the new research clusters, the Weatherhead Research Cluster on Global Transformations. As co-chairs, Professors Beckert and Maier organized a steering committee among the many faculty in history, social sciences, and from the professional schools, including the Harvard Kennedy School and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. WIGH has secured partial funding, including a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation, to allow it to continue on a long-term basis.

In 2018–2019, we will continue the popular seminar on global history and welcome a cohort of postdoctoral scholars and visiting fellows from India, Switzerland, Poland, France, and the United States. We have negotiated strategic partnerships with leading centers for global history abroad: the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar in Senegal, East China Normal University in Shanghai, University of Delhi in India, and University of São Paulo in Brazil. Embedding WIGH in a network of like-minded institutions around the globe inserts Harvard students and scholars into the networks of research on global history and provides bases for their research sojourns abroad. Global history is a global activity, and with WIGH serving as a cohesive hub, Harvard can play a key role in helping shape this cooperative endeavor.

ADMINISTRATION



SVEN BECKERT

Chair; Faculty Associate (on leave 2018–2019). Laird Bell Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard

University. United States history; comparative and international political economy; and global history.



SUGATA BOSE

Chair; Faculty Associate. Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs, Department of History, Harvard

University. History of modern South Asia and the Indian Ocean rim.



JEAN COMAROFF

Chair; Faculty Associate. Alfred North Whitehead Professor of African and African American Studies

and of Anthropology, Department of Anthropology; Oppenheimer Fellow in African Studies, Harvard University. The making and unmaking of colonial society; the nature of the postcolony; the late modern world viewed from the Global South; and southern Africa.



CHARLES S. MAIER

Chair; Faculty Associate. Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University.

Modern European history; US-Europe relations; political economy; and world history projects.



JESSICA BARNARD

Program Administrator.

AFFILIATES



EDWIN F. ACKERMAN
Visiting Fellow (spring 2019). Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Syracuse University. Political

parties; dispossession; state formation; comparative-historical sociology; and Latin America.



MARTINE JEAN
Visiting Fellow. Social, institutional, and legal history of crime and punishment in nineteenth-century

Brazil and the Atlantic World; global history of prisons; and race and citizenship in the emancipation process.



JOHANNES KNIERZINGER
Visiting Fellow. Postdoctoral Researcher, L'Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD). Extractive

industries; west Africa; raw material crises; shrinking cities; global production networks; and governance.



MARTA GRZECHNIK
Visiting Fellow. Assistant Professor, Institute of Scandinavian Studies, University of Gdansk, Poland. Colonial history

beyond the traditional colonial powers; history of the Baltic Sea region and northern Europe; and regional history.



MURARI JHA
Visiting Fellow. Assistant Professor, School of Historical Studies, Nalanda University. Early modern south

Asia; Mughal Empire; political economy; historical geography; Ganga River; Indian Ocean; and the Dutch East India Company.



STEPHEN ORTEGA
Visiting Scholar (spring 2019). Associate Professor, Department of History, Simmons College.

Mediterranean and world history; the history of emotions; collective memory; and digital humanities.