

Call for Applications: Lucerne Master Class for PhD Students, 2017

When: 9 – 13 October, 2017
Where: University of Lucerne, Switzerland | Hotel Seeburg
Language: English
Application deadline: 15 May 2017

Prof. Dr. Sven Beckert

Laird Bell Professor of History, Harvard University (Cambridge, USA)

Histories of Global Capitalism

The Scholar

SVEN BECKERT is Laird Bell Professor of History in the Department of History as well as co-chair of the Program on the Study of Capitalism at Harvard University. His main focus lies on the history of the United States in the nineteenth Century, with a particular emphasis on the history of capitalism, including its economic, social, political and transnational dimensions. The combined examination of these dimensions is also at the heart of the monograph he is best known for: *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014). Other pertinent publications include *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (2016), and *The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (2010).

The Topic:

During the past few years, few topics have animated the chattering classes more than capitalism. In the wake of the global economic crisis, questions about the nature, past and viability of capitalism suddenly appeared on evening talk shows and in newspapers throughout the world. The discussion crossed most political boundaries, with conservative newspapers in England and Germany running stories on the “future of capitalism” (as if in doubt that there was such a thing), while Korean Marxists and others hammered away at an analysis of capitalism’s allegedly self-destructive tendencies. The discussion continues with unabated intensity, crossing all political, ideological and professional divides: Pope Francis is making capitalism a central theme of his papacy, while a French economist, Thomas Piketty, attained rock star status by publishing *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, an 800 page book full of tables and statistics. Partly as a result of such contemporary debates, historians, ever attuned to the world in which they live, have rediscovered the study of the history of capitalism. In their work, they have insisted on the long-term trajectory of capitalism, have emphasized the great variety of capitalism both over time and in space, have focused on capitalism’s global connections, and, perhaps most insistently, have emphasized the political, social and cultural embeddedness of economic change. Their work has created a powerful challenge to some of the naturalizing tenets that are frequently found in the discipline of economics. In this Lucerne Master Class we will explore some of these discussions, and try to come to terms with what this new history of capitalism is all about. Students’ own work will be crucial to our discussions, as are prominent texts from within what has become one of the most dynamic fields in modern historical research.

The Class

The class will begin on the 9th of October at 1.00 pm and end on the 13th of October at 1.00 pm. The daily schedule will be from 9.00 am - 12.30 pm and from 2.00 pm - 6.00 pm and on one evening (lecture & dinner) from 6.00 - 9.00 pm. There will be an afternoon for recreation in the Lucerne area. Participants will discuss Sven Beckert's recent work but also present and discuss their own projects.

Participants

The Master Class addresses doctoral students from disciplines such as History, Philosophy, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Political Science, Social Anthropology, Economics and Global Studies. Applications from international and EU doctoral students and doctoral students from Switzerland are welcome.

Costs

Tuition fee: 350 CHF

The organizing body of the Master Class, the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (GSL) at the University of Lucerne, will cover catering and accommodation expenses. We will try to cover travel expenses as well, however, this depends on the country of origin (for details please send an email to the GSL managing director, Christina Cavedon – christina.cavedon@unilu.ch). If applicants can muster support from their respective home institution, this is welcome.

What Former Participants Say

"The Lucerne Master Class is a unique experience for PhD students. It has helped me a lot both in terms of motivation and content of my dissertation. I would definitely do it again." (Daniel Bader, Heidelberg University)

"The Master Class was a one-time opportunity to discuss the work of an outstanding scholar and to get to know other PhD students working on related issues." (Sebastian Möller, University of Bremen)

"I believe that spending this week with the Master will have an impact on the rest of my academic career." (Sandra Engelbrecht, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin)

Applications

Please send your application till **15 May, 2017** to the following email-address:
christina.cavedon@unilu.ch

Questions may also be addressed to Christina Cavedon.

Please provide a short statement of motivation (no more than one page), a CV and a short description (no more than one page) of your current dissertation project. Postdocs may be admitted on the basis of individual decision.

More information: www.unilu.ch/masterclass

Support

The Master Class is supported by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland.