

“Historical theory, methods and research ethics”

The Norwegian Research School in History (NRSH)

	Monday 6th March <i>UiO, Blindern, Niels Treschows hus, 12th floor</i>	Tuesday 7th March <i>UiO, Blindern, Niels Treschows hus, 12th floor</i>	Wednesday 8th March <i>Norwegian National Library (NB)</i>	Thursday 9th March <i>UiO, Professorboligen</i>	Friday 10th March <i>UiO, Georg Sverdrups house before lunch</i>
9:15-10	Welcome, opening session	Essay seminar	Digital history workshop at the Norwegian National Library, full day	Seminar 5: Research ethics in historical research	Seminar 7: Ethics: History and the Right to Privacy Svein Atle Skålevåg, Liudmila Nikanorova and Synne Corell of HL-senteret
10:15-11	Seminar 1: «How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Theory» by Toufoul Abou-Hodeib , UiO.	Seminar 3: Regina Grafe, EUI			
11:15-12	Cont.	Cont.			
12:00-13:15	Lunch with ‘Walk and talk’	Lunch with ‘Walk and talk’	12-13 Lunch	Lunch	Lunch Election of student representatives to the NRSH Steering Committee.
13:15-14	Seminar 2: Regina Grafe, EUI	Essay seminar	Exhibition in the Historical Map Center at the Norwegian National Library	Seminar 6: “De-Shamanizing Siberia” Liudmila Nikanorova, UiB	Group discussions on ethics in the individual PhD projects; some time in the plenary to sum up
14:15-15	Cont.	Seminar 4: Must we divide History into periods? David Brégaint, NTNU	Cont, digital history	Cont.	Essay seminar
15:15-16	Essay seminar:	Cont.	Cont, digital history//data management?	Essay seminar	Concluding plenary
16:15-17	Essay seminar		Essay seminar	Essay seminar	
	Dinner 18:00			Tapas 17:00	

Abstracts for modules (reading lists and texts are available in Teams)

Seminar 1: « How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Theory» by [Toufoul Abou-Hodeib](#), UiO

What is historical theory? How is it different from a theory or philosophy of history? And who needs theory when the facts can speak for themselves? Focusing specifically on social theory, this lecture looks at what role theory plays in history writing and research. Looking beyond what is regarded in the discipline as the empiricism/theory dichotomy, the lecture re-familiarizes the idea of theory by looking at some of the theories and concepts commonly taken for granted by historians. It further looks at how such assumptions influence both the selection and interpretation of facts. On the other side of this issue, several questions then arise: how does one link facts to theory without subordinating the former to the latter? What constitutes the starting point for thinking theoretically about one’s own work? And what relationship do sources, concepts, and theories have to each other? The lecture

addresses these questions by looking at a text that crosses the disciplinary boundaries of history and the social sciences (Mitchell). The lecture concludes by looking at some of the methodological implications historical theory has for understanding the formation of an archive and for archival research.

Seminar 2: Pending

Seminar 3: Pending

Seminar 4: «Must we divide History into periods?» by [David Brégaint](#)

The periodization of the past is fundamental to our understanding, to the construction and transmission of history. Yet, it is neither a neutral nor an innocent act, but the result of choices. This lecture aims at reflecting upon the categorizations of the past into different time periods. On which criteria do we organize periods, their starting point, and their end? What meaning do these periods have to each other? How do we perceive events and how do these participate in the construction of historical meaning? Why and how do we give names to periods of time. These questions have profound methodological and theoretical implications to the study and transmission of history. Through the examination of examples from both pre-modern and contemporary history, we will engage into a reflection on time periodization from a pedagogical/educational and research perspective. The lecture includes questionnaire, text commentaries and group discussion.

Full day, Wednesday 9th March: Digital history, in partnership with the Norwegian National Library

“What does the digital shift mean for historians?” This workshop explores some of the key methodological questions historians encounter when we start using digital tools to answer historical questions. It will also provide training in using digital source materials. What opportunities and problems arise with the digitalization of sources? How do tools and programs affect the questions historians ask? Is there anything in the algorithms that make some knowledge or some analyses unintelligible or opaque? We will also historicize the phenomenon. What is the history of Digital Humanities? Who were the actors that brought us here? Could it have been different? Should it? Furthermore, are there any particular ethical issues that arise or become more acute when historical materials are digitized?

The course will also address how the National Library works with ethical issues related to privacy when they make their collections available and in what ways such issues changes character when collections are digitized.

Seminar 5: Research ethics - a joint session with the supervisors in history

This part of the course introduces the Norwegian system for research ethics and discusses research ethics for historians. It also dwells into a set of issues related to assembling research material and in particular the question of oral sources and the principle of informed consent.

Seminar 6: “De-Shamanizing Siberia” by Liudmila Nikanorova, Open University

For this session, I invite fellow researchers to the conversation about Siberian shamanism. I will address the notions of ‘Siberia’ and ‘shamanism’ as colonial imaginaries and challenge them through a critical reading of scholarships about the area that has continuously attracted scholars and travelers in search for Siberian shamanism – Sakha Sire [Sa. ‘the Sakha Land’, also known as the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic]. English ‘Siberia’, as well as Russian *Сибирь*, are the colonial markers of Russian invasion beyond the Urals from the 16th century, which was the start of the long-lasting journey of the concept that continues to bear the burden of European thought and history to this day. In religious studies, Siberia rings immediately another key imaginary – shamanism. The term shaman was reserved to Siberian practitioners to mark their assumed ethnic and civilizational difference. Thus, shamanism became one

of the imagined commonalities of the peoples grouped by Eurocentric thinkers into ‘tribal’, ‘primitive’, ‘aboriginal’, ‘indigenous’ peoples in English and Naturvölker (“in contrast” to European Kulturvölker). To this day, Sakha people are grouped by scholars into these categories and Sakha practitioners into a shaman in scholarships produced in non-Sakha languages. Inspired by the writings of scholars, who challenge universality of established Western colonial knowledges (L.T. Smith, W. Mignolo, C. Walsh, E. Said), I will demonstrate how decolonial questions guide my investigation and reflect on the theoretical and methodological work behind the research.

Seminar 7: discusses an ethical problem in historical research, first part will be jointly with the Workshop on Research Ethics for Supervisors in History

“History and the Right to Privacy” by Svein Atle Skålevåg, UiB, Synne Corell, HL-senteret, Christine Myrvang, BI, Liudmila Nikanorova, Open University, Kjetil Jakobsen, Nord.

The right not to have one’s personal matters disclosed or publicized is protected by international and national law. The principle restrains governmental and private action that threaten the privacy of individuals. Historians work with real people, some alive, some dead a (very) long time, others have close relatives who are alive. Sometimes our interest is in the person’s professional lives, in other cases lies in their private sphere. Some of the historical subjects are elites; others are “normal” peoples. Some interest us because they have been victims of crimes or injustices; others are perpetrators. Others interest us because they have been sick, have a particular sex or belong to a minority group. We sometimes use aliases when writing about historical persons, in other instances historians will use real names. What legal rules and ethical norms regarding the right to privacy apply to historical research? Do dead people have a right to privacy? In which situations should we hide identities for ethical reasons, and in which cases should we identify persons (in text, images and sound)? Who should decide? How do institutions responsible for archival collections handle the right to privacy, and in what ways will the digital shift create new challenges?

This session includes a group discussion on your reflections on your own projects.