

Call for Papers

Summer Academy on the Entangled Histories of Concepts in the Bengal to Balkans Complex (B2B)

September 4th -15th, 2023, Orient-Institut Istanbul (Teutonia)



Call opened: January 15th 2023

Deadline for applications: March 1st 2023

The Summer Academy on the Entangled Histories of Bengal to Balkans Complex invites applications for its first session which will take place in Istanbul between September 4th–15th, 2023.

The Summer Academy builds upon and seeks to strengthen the increased scholarly interest in conceptual history as a tool to analyze the discursive transformations in the broad B2B geography. “Bengal to Balkans” framework is inspired by Shahab Ahmed who drew attention to the shared cultural formations across this vast geography particularly in the post-Mongol era.

Illustrating the emergence of a field of research, several programmatic articles have been written on the particular problems and promises of conceptual history in different linguistic contexts. Building upon these developments, and as a culmination of the efforts of the organizers this Summer Academy will both identify historical evolutions and entanglements of concepts within the Bengal-to-Balkans-complex and critically discuss the theoretical implications and potentials of conceptual history in the region.

In terms of research foci, the Summer Academy aims at (1) strengthening the notion of entanglement in conceptual history, and (2) furthering self-reflectivity in and critique of the usage of established concepts. By exploring conceptual entanglements in the history of the region together, we intend to overcome the long-standing limits imposed on historical research by methodological nationalism and disciplinary boundaries in area studies. Moreover, by focusing on the history of indigenous (*emic*) concepts we aim to come up with revised and better narratives and analytical (*etic*) categories to explain the historical transformations in the wake of post-colonial interventions which challenged Euro-centric paradigms.

Critically appropriating the various approaches to historical semantics for the particular problems and research questions of the region is also a central concern for the Summer Academy. Conceptual histories of the region addresses both the paradigmatic problems and questions of area studies scholarship and also the fast growing global intellectual history. Growing number of programmatic publications in the field is evidence of this¹ and the Summer Academy is inspired by the example of two CONCEPTA summer schools, the first launched in 2006 in Helsinki and the second launched in 2017 in Mexico.

The Summer Academy intends to enhance networks of research, foster collaboration and pass on expertise to a new generation of PhD students and junior scholars whose work covers one or more of the languages of the region and are interested in working with history of concepts. Over the course of two weeks, our program will include lectures by leading scholars in the field on theory, method and sources, as well as seminars where participants will present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from the lecturers and their peers. Part of the sessions will be allocated for exploring collaboration and funding opportunities as well as potential joint projects. Research languages include (but are not limited to) **Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Greek, Urdu, Hindustani, Bengali, Kurdish, Hebrew, Judezmo, Armenian and Slavic languages, and their**

¹ Programmatic considerations include: Margrit Pernau, “Provincializing Concepts: The Language of Transnational History”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 36:3 (2016), 483–99; Alp Eren Topal and Einar Wigen, “Ottoman Conceptual History: Challenges and Prospects”, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 14:1 (2019), 93–114; Florian Zemmin and Henning Sievert, “Conceptual History of the Near East: The *Sattelzeit* as a Heuristic Tool for Interrogating the Formation of a Multi-Layered Modernity”, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 16:2 (2021), 1–26.

historical variants. Researchers from all relevant disciplines and fields (e.g. history, philosophy, literature, social sciences, area studies, cultural anthropology, the study of religion, art history, environmental humanities etc.) are encouraged to apply. The summer school supports junior participants who wish to write or further develop drafts of thesis chapters or project-proposals related to conceptual history. Senior scholars will be invited to participate and will contribute in special sessions, workshops and keynotes reflecting on the field and their area of research. A selection of participants will be asked to contribute a paper (in English) to a special issue of the series *Pera-Blätter*, published by the Orient Institut Istanbul both in print and on the platform *perspectivia.net*.

The summer academy has no topical or chronological restrictions, although we are interested in the early modern and modern conceptual formations in the nexus of religion, law and politics with an eye to the emergence and contestation of categories of the “political”, “legal” and the “religious.” We are particularly interested in works on key concepts of central importance such as “haqq/hakk” that have vast semantic fields attached to them (in this case extending also to *huquq/hukuk*).

We are eager to have a variety of academic and regional backgrounds represented and will, on a competitive basis, **provide scholarship for PhD students and Post-Docs**, taking into account both the academic quality of proposals and economic need. Participants from the global south might therefore be prioritized in funding.

To apply, please upload the following as one *.pdf document to b2b-conceptual-history.net

- Your academic CV
- A one-page statement of purpose explaining your background, your motivation for attending the academy, and a summary of your research question(s).

Make sure to state in your application if you would require financial support. Note that the Academy has **no tuition fee** but the participants are expected to arrange their own travel to and accommodation in Istanbul.

The Summer Academy will take place in the Teutonia building of the Orient-Institut Istanbul. Participant PhD students will be given a certificate of participation.

Contact

b2b_conceptual_history@oiist.net

The organizing and selection committee:

Jens Hanssen (Orient Institut Beirut/Toronto University)

Elke Hartmann (Freie Universität Berlin)

Christoph K. Neumann (Orient Institut Istanbul)
Margrit Pernau (Max Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung; Freie Universität Berlin)
Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Institute, Delhi)
Alp Eren Topal (University of Oslo)
Esther Voswinckel (Orient Institut Istanbul)
Einar Wiggen (University of Oslo)
Florian Zemmin (Freie Universität Berlin)

The academy is organised and funded in cooperation of the following institutions:

Orient Institut Istanbul; Orient Institut Beirut; Freie Universität Berlin; Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies in Delhi; Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul; American Research Institute in Turkey