

Call for Papers

The International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ISECS) invites applications from scholars in all fields of eighteenth-century studies within the context of a one-week International Seminar for Young Eighteenth-Century Scholars.

Formerly the East-West Seminar, this event brings together each year young researchers from a number of countries. In 2006, the meeting will take place in Gotha (Germany) and will be organized by the German Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (DGE18J) and the Research Center Gotha.

The Seminar will be held from **Monday August 26th to Friday August 30th 2013** in Gotha, under the direction of Martin Mulsow (Universität Erfurt).

This year, the theme of the seminar will be:

Exploring the Early Modern Underground: Freethinkers, Heretics, Spies

Framing the issues.

What do freethinkers, alchemists, heretics, criminals, counterfeiters, spies, magicians, radicals, and members of secret societies have in common? It seems that such individuals operated partly or fully within the “underground”, and that overlapping and exchange between them took place, or may have taken place. One can define “underground” as the social space within which individuals’ dealings and identities are systematically veiled, often in order to avoid persecution. This field of inquiry has hitherto been divided between distinct domains of scholarly expertise, which have only rarely taken cognizance of each other, e.g. the research into the *littérature clandestine* (carried out by historians of philosophy specializing in the Radical Enlightenment), the historical study of criminality (a prominent branch of social history and historical anthropology since the 1970s), the religio-historical study of sects (conducted by theologians and historians), the study of censorship (the domain of book historians), and historical political science (focusing, for instance, on the Jacobins), to say nothing of specialized research into the history of magic, alchemy, economic history, and other fields of inquiry.

Seldom has a comprehensive consideration of the “underground”, with all its diversity and overlapping, been undertaken. In 1996 Peter Burke sketched a “Map of the Underground”, but this concept has yet to be carried out fully. It seems, therefore, fruitful to undertake an interdisciplinary and methodologically reflective investigation of the “underground”. The

seminar will offer young scholars an opportunity to present and discuss their own work, and so to explore pertinent strands connecting their discipline with others, working on related aspects of the “underground”.

The eighteenth-century underground doubtlessly differed from that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Robert Darnton’s studies have shown how reduced book prices and the expansion of readership, together with the new ideas of the Enlightenment, had enabled the clandestine book-market to flourish across political borders. The work of Jonathan Israel and John Pocock have allowed us an insight into the broad spectrum of contents and the varieties of different cultures of the Enlightenment, which are mirrored in the varieties of underground cultures. What local peculiarities offer themselves for investigation? What particular conditions of censorship and concealment?

1. Practices of the Underground: secrecy, anonymity, pseudonymity, encryption, and allusion.

The Underground developed its own practices, concerning especially “publishing” and the dissemination of ideas. To these belong writing “between the lines”, the art of allusion, publishing anonymously and pseudonymously, the use of invisible ink, and encryption. But what logic was there behind these tactics? When did one publish anonymously, and when under a pseudonym? Did the choice of the latter entail meaning and intertextuality? What were the consequences of the underground’s opacity for its agents? What reactions did they elicit (rumours, insider knowledge, lexica of anonymous works)? Can we trace within the eighteenth century a development in the practices of secrecy – new encryptions or new forms of communication?

2. The contents of the Underground: radical critique of religion, blasphemy, political subversion, and heterodox spirituality.

The content-related reasons for expressing one’s view in secret were varied; they range from fear of revenge, in the case of personal defamation (or even a book review) to the risk of persecution tempted by revolutionary agitation against Church and Crown. Did clandestinity ensure that the communicated contents were particularly substantial and high-minded (since, unlike open publications, one needn’t have taken precautions), or were there perhaps also particularly “popularised” clandestine texts, aiming at potential proselytes? In the seminar we will be especially interested in overlaps in such subject-matters. When and why did the Radical Enlightenment link itself with pornography? When did political critique coalesce with defamation? How did philosophical theory and religious spirituality overlap? Where did the inconspicuous crossovers between diplomacy, espionage, and learned exchange lie? When did secret learning become a trade in secrets? When did freethinkers stumble into criminal circumstances?

3. Persecution and socialisation: censorship, police, and secret societies.

How does the Underground’s rationale look from a sociological perspective? To what extent did censorship, prohibitions, and persecution contribute to the shaping of the Underground? Were certain groups driven into the Underground? How did censorship and the authorities in

each case define what was allowed and what is forbidden? Did the eighteenth century witness a structural transformation of censorship? How did the persecuted find each other in the Underground and how did they communicate? Did they use certain rituals, distinctive marks of identification, or secret languages? How did the formation of groups occur clandestinely? In what walks of life (religion, politics, criminality, and commerce) did a clandestine formation of groups take place in the Age of Enlightenment? Which locations were used therefore (inns, lodges, salons, back rooms)?

Recommended literature:

Peter Burke: A Map of the Underground. Clandestine Communication in Early Modern Europe, in: Günter Gawlick und Friedrich Niewöhner (Hg.): Jean Bodins Colloquium Heptaplomeres, Wiesbaden 1986, pp. 186-200.

Sylvie Aprile und Emmanuelle Retaillaud-Bajac (Hg.): Clandestinités urbaines. Les citadins et les territoires du secret (XVIIe-XXe), Rennes 2008.

Robert Darnton: The Literary Unterground of the Old Regime, Cambridge, Mass. 1985.

Submission of Proposals

The seminar is limited to **15 participants**. The proposals (approx. 2 pages, single-spaced) should be based on an original research project (e.g. a doctoral dissertation) that deals with one of the aspects mentioned above. Because this is a seminar rather than a conference, each participant will be given **approximately one hour** to present the texts and questions that will then form the basis of a group discussion.

Preference will be given to scholars who are at the beginning of their academic career (PhD or equivalent for less than six years). The official languages are French and English.

Applications should include the following information:

- a brief *curriculum vitae* with date of PhD (or equivalent)
- a list of principal publications and scholarly presentations
- a brief description of the proposed paper (approx. 2 pages, single-spaced)
- one letter of recommendation

Travel and Accommodations

Travel and hotel assistance will be provided (in part or in full) by the organizers who reserve plane tickets and rooms. Lunch will be served on site; the cost of evening meals is covered by participants.

Proceedings

As is the case each year, the proceedings of the seminar will be published by Honoré Champion Éditeur (Paris) in the "Lumières internationales" series.

Deadlines

We invite submission of proposals; the deadline for abstracts is **March 31, 2013**. All applications should be sent by mail, the postmark attesting to the date of mailing, to the following address:

Prof. Dr. Martin Mulsow
ISECS-Early Career Seminar
Forschungszentrum Gotha der Universität Erfurt
Schloss Friedenstein, Pagenhaus
99867 Gotha