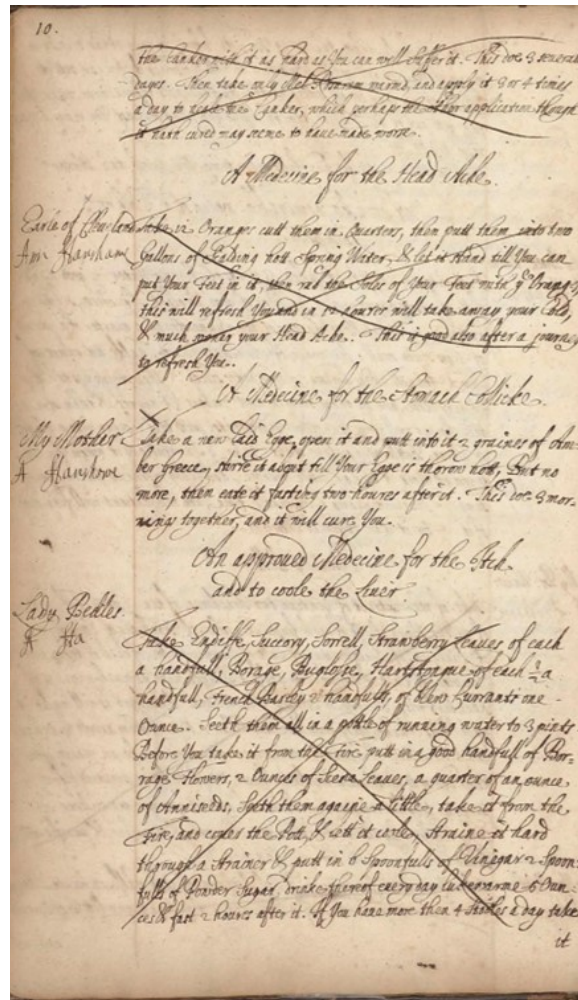


HIST21151

The Stuff of History: Objects Across Borders, 1500-1800

Zoom Consultation, June 13th 12pm

Meeting ID: 926 9877 6713



This course teaches students a brand new historical methodology: how to study history through material objects, which is a dynamic field within the discipline of History. The course focuses on the material transformations that took place in an expanding global world of goods in early modern Europe and investigates the ways in which objects shaped every dimension of people's lives, from the consumption of new spices, intoxicants (like tobacco, tea and coffee), foodstuffs and luxurious clothes from early America, India and China, to new technologies like clocks and street lights that reordered the rhythm of rural and expanding urban communities.

How is it taught?

2 x 1-hour weekly lectures

1 x 1-hour weekly seminar

How is it assessed?

1. A Day in the Life of... (1,500 words, 40%): For this assignment, you are asked to put yourself in the role of a researcher / curator at a history museum. You have been given the task of preparing a display cabinet that contains 3-5 historical objects. Your aim is to explore and illuminate daily life in the early modern period through focusing upon one particular sort of person.

2. A 2,500-word essay (60%): One essay based on seminar topics.

Indicative Course Content

Week 1: Introduction: History Through Objects

Week 2: Printed Objects

Week 3: Religion and Confessional Identity

Week 4: Objects and the Early Modern Body

Week 5: Recipes: Alchemy and Medicine

Week 6: Reading Week

Week 7: Food and Eating: Transformative Tastes

Week 8: Cultures of Intoxication: Alcohol and Tobacco

Week 9: Courtly Spaces: Courtly Matter and Animals at Court

Week 10: Fashioning the Self

Week 11: Going to Bed: Politics and a Room of One's Own

What will you learn?

- Techniques of interpreting material objects as primary sources
- The different ways that historians discuss and analyse: (1) material culture; and (2) daily life in the early modern period
- The growing circulation of and access to material goods in early modern Europe
- The way that technology transformed aspects of working and private lives during the early modern period
- The way objects were produced, consumed and circulated within Europe's expanding global borders, and the ways they shaped tastes, habits, behaviours and beliefs.

Preliminary Reading

Berg, Maxine and Eger, Elizabeth (eds), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke, 2003).

Caleresu, Melissa, Victoria Avery and Mary Laven, eds, *Treasured Possessions From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (London, 2015).

Clunas, Craig, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu, 2004).

Findlen, Paula (ed.), *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800* (London, 2013).

