

Summer School

Environmental History: European and Global Perspectives

17-19 September 2025

Convenors: Professors Glenda Sluga and Corinna Unger

Offered by the EUI Department of History, the Summer School intends to provide participants with ideas on how environmental history can be brought into conversation with research on European and global history in the early modern and modern periods. For example, we will investigate the ways in which European encounters with the early modern world can benefit from studying how notions of 'exotic' nature informed (or misinformed) colonial policies and approaches. We will study the role and perception of natural resources in mid-twentieth century international discussions about global trade and economic policies. Furthermore, we will analyze the history of transregional and transnational environmental protection efforts and their contributions to the emergence of a sense of planetary responsibility and international climate governance efforts.

Contributions by leading environmental historians will be combined with hands-on research opportunities. Participants will have the chance to work with digital visual sources related to environmental themes housed in the Historical Archives of the European Union. They will also be able to present their own research projects and receive feedback from their peers.

Presentations

The history of environmental history: Who writes environmental history, why, and how?
Prof. Corinna Unger, EUI

Planetary history, the history of capitalism, and the environment
Prof. Glenda Sluga, EUI

Environmental history sources in the Historical Archives of the European Union
Dr. Valérie Mathevon, HAEU

Knowing the environment in nineteenth-century Latin America: Humboldt, Darwin, and the less 'great men' of science
Dr. Tomás Bartoletti, ETH Zurich

Italian fascism and African colonial environments between planning and disarray (1922-1943)
Dr. Roberta Biasillo, University of Utrecht

Famines, epidemics, and environmental catastrophes in East European and Eurasian history
Dr. Karolina Koziura, EUI

Protecting and developing natural resources: the oil palm in West Africa
Dr. Giovanni Tonolo, University of Florence

Seeing from the Sea: Anticolonialism and Environmentalism in Oceania
Dr. Emma Kluge, University of Exeter

Group work: archival research sessions

The summer school will entail several research sessions, based on digitized archival holdings of the Historical Archives of the European Union.

These include textual, visual, and oral history sources from the European Court of Justice, the European Investment Bank, the European Environment Agency, and others.

Participants will carry out group work and design posters to present their findings.