

Big-H: The First Annual Berkeley Graduate Student Conference on International History

Integration and Disintegration in International History

The Berkeley International and Global History (Big-H) committee invites graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to submit proposals for the First Annual Graduate Student Conference on International History to take place at the University of California, Berkeley, on March 4–5, 2011.

All history was the history of nation-states. In recent years, however, historians have devoted increasing attention to transnational historical themes and processes that cut across the borders of state units. But at the same time as political structures, markets, and solidarities have bound together diverse configurations of peoples across space, so too have the very same processes generated backlashes, alternative political projects, catastrophes, new forms of difference, and systemic transformations. This conference will interrogate the specific problems of integration and disintegration in international history.

Four questions will animate this conference:

First, what causes integration? Under what circumstances have the scopes of market activity, political power, cultural patterns, and ideological affinity come to encompass new and diverse populations? What role if any have particular agents played in determining the march of transnational integrations, which are often understood as products of inexorable historical forces?

Second, what forms (economic, political, legal, social, intellectual, religious, etc.) have these processes taken in specific places and times and how are these forms related?

Third, where do these processes lead? What internal or external limits do integrative projects encounter?

Fourth, how might we demarcate distinctive regimes of integration? For example, in what way if any is contemporary globalization qualitatively different from the kinds of integration that accompanied nineteenth-century imperialism or that proceeded within the earlier landed empires, such as the Roman and Mughal?

It is the intent of the conference organizers to put specialists in dialogue across the expanses of space and time in the hope that broad comparison, both interregional and intertemporal, might reveal recurrent historical dynamics. While we welcome researchers who study the general processes of international integration, we also welcome specialists in particular times and places who seek to position their work within a broader framework. Specialists from Berkeley and beyond will provide commentary on the papers. The conference will conclude with a plenary session, at which several leading scholars in the field of international and global history will discuss broad issues pertaining to the theme of the conference.

Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who are interested in participating in the conference should submit a one-page paper proposal and one-page curriculum vitae (in Word, RTF, or PDF format) to bighist@gmail.com. We will not accept panel proposals. Applications must be received by September 30, 2010, in order to be considered. Notification of acceptance will be made in the beginning of October. For additional information, please visit the conference website at <http://bighconference.blogspot.com> or e-mail the conference organizers at bighist@gmail.com.