



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Poverty in an Early Modern European City	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Rūta Miškinytė	Faculty of History, Department of Ancient and Medieval History (2026)

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
Bachelor	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face to face	Spring	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: Advanced English language proficiency (C1)	Co-requisites (if relevant): -

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	133 h	32 h	101 h

Purpose of the course unit		
This subject will address the history of poverty in a premodern urban setting, with the secondary focus on the experience of Early Modern Lithuania. The main goal is to introduce the students to the history of poverty in the 16th–18th c. European cities, and to acquaint them with the most important concepts and paradigms regarding the history of the poor. The case study of poverty in the Early Modern Vilnius will be presented throughout the semester, and it will serve both as an example of this particular field of study and as an introduction to the broader history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After completing this course, the students will not only be familiar with the framework of the history of poverty but also will be able to critically evaluate modern discourse and concepts regarding the poor that are prominent today.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
1. The students will be acquainted with the basic concepts of the field of history of poverty.	Lectures and discussions in the classroom; individual reading and seminars; preparing an essay on a chosen topic; a tour in Vilnius, visiting subject-relevant places and landmarks.	1. Active participation in the seminars throughout the semester.
2. The students will be able to understand and critically evaluate the historical background to the modern processes regarding poverty and marginalization.		2. An essay.
3. The students will learn about the history of Vilnius and Grand Duchy of Lithuania by studying some of the most vulnerable members of its urban society.		3. Final exam.

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
I. History of poverty in Europe: 1. Introduction. Poverty from the Later Roman Empire to the end of Middle Ages: context, landmarks and shifts. 2. Changing attitudes: poverty in the wake of Confessionalization. 3. <i>Seminar</i>. Medical care and poor relief in Catholic and Protestant Europe. 4. Causes of poverty and the urban poor. 5. <i>Seminar</i>. Poverty, mobility and gender.	6		4				10	33	Independent reading, analysis of literature, preparation and participation in the seminars, writing an essay.
II. Case study of Vilnius: 1. Vilnius: a Western city on an Eastern frontier. 2. Charity networks and the urban poor. 3. Legislating begging: a case of controlling the poor. 4. <i>Seminar</i>. Poor relief in Early Modern Vilnius. 5. Society and the poor: almsgiving, participation, in-/exclusion, discourse. 6. <i>Seminar</i>. The case of poor participation: godparenthood. 7. A tour to the landmarks, related to the history of the poor in Vilnius.	10		4				14	34	Independent reading, analysis of literature, preparation and participation in the seminars, writing an essay.
III. Enlightenment and poverty: 1. Disciplining the poor: the Early Modern welfare state and the Great Confinement. 2. <i>Seminar</i>. Enlighteners on the poor and almshouses. 3. Reforming the charity and poor relief networks in practice. 4. <i>Seminar</i>. Poverty in Eastern Europe.	4		4				8	34	Independent reading, analysis of literature, preparation and participation in the seminars, writing an essay.
Total	20		12				32	101	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Active participation in the seminars	30	During each seminar	The total assessment of the participation in seminars will make up 30 percent of the final evaluation – this comprises 3 points total of the final evaluation (10 points being the sum). The evaluation will depend on student's efforts while preparing for the seminar, reading given material and participating in the following discussion. 3 points: completing given reading assignments for each seminar, active participation in the discussions, raising questions of importance, demonstrating the knowledge in each topic. 2 points: completing given reading assignments for each seminar but failing to actively participate in the discussions or participating in the discussions without fully completing given reading assignments. 1 point: failing to show up to more than one-third of the seminars or little knowledge on given topics, little-to-no effort put into completing given reading assignments, no participation in the discussions in the classroom. 0 points: failing to show up to at least half of the seminars.
Written assignment	30	Scheduled deadline towards the end of the semester	The total assessment of the written assignment will make up 30 percent of the final evaluation – this comprises 3 points total of the final evaluation (10 points being the sum). 3 points: a well-argued, informed and structured essay of required length, with a thorough analysis and original interpretation of the selected literature or sources followed by original conclusions. 2 points: a moderately well-argued and structured essay, lacking in length, original interpretation of the selected literature or original conclusions. 1 point: a sloppy text without a clear structure, significantly lacking in length, original interpretation of the selected literature, without any conclusions. 0 points: failing to present the assignment on time or using large language models (<i>ChatGPT</i>, <i>Claude</i> etc.) to produce the text instead of writing it by themselves.
Exam	40	At the end of the semester	The total assessment of the written assignment will make up 30 percent of the final evaluation – this comprises 4 points total of the final evaluation (10 points being the sum). 4 points: excellent knowledge on the topic of poverty in the Early Modern period, all answers are correct, minor errors may occur. 3 points: good knowledge on the topic of poverty in the Early Modern period, however, major errors may occur in some of the answers. 2 points: average knowledge on the topic of poverty in the Early Modern period, major errors occurring throughout the answers. 1 point: little relevant knowledge on the subject of poverty in the Early Modern period, major errors occurring throughout all the answers. 0 points: failing to show up to the exam.

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
PULLAN, Brian	1999	'The Counter-Reformation, medical care and poor relief', in Grell, O. P. and Cunningham, A. with Arrizabalaga, J. (eds) <i>Health Care and Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Europe</i> , pp.17–38.		Routledge
GRELL, Ole Peter	1997	'The Protestant imperative on Christian care and neighbourly love)', in Grell, O. P. and Cunningham, A. (eds) <i>Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe 1500–1700</i> , pp.42–63.		Routledge
SILVESTER, Lesley	2012	'The Experience of Single Women In Early Modern Norwich: 'Rank Beggars, Gresse Maydes and Harlots'', in Scott, A. M. (ed) <i>Experiences of Poverty in Late Medieval and Early Modern England and France</i> , pp.85–106.		Routledge
HITCHCOCK, David	2021	'The vagrant poor', in Hitchcock D., and McClure J. (ed) <i>The Routledge History of Poverty, c. 1450–1800</i> , pp.60–78.		Routledge
FRICK, David	2006	'"Since All Remain Subject to Chance." Poor Relief in Seventeenth-Century Wilno'.	<i>Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung</i> , 55(1), pp.1-55.	https://www.zfo-online.de/portal/zfo/article/view/8542/8541
BOSSY, John	1984	'Godparenthood: the Fortunes of a Social Institution in Early Modern Christianity ', in von Greyerz, K. (ed) <i>Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800</i> , pp.194–201.		George Allen & Unwin
SWIFT, Jonathan	1737	<i>A proposal for giving badges to the beggars in all the parishes of Dublin. By the Dean of St. Patrick's.</i>		https://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_a-proposal-for-giving-ba-swift-jonathan_1737/mode/2up
DIDEROT, Denis	2020	'Poorhouse', Clark, C. C., and Dunn Henderson, C. (trans.) in <i>The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project</i> .		Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/did2222.0003.731/--poorhouse?hi=0;rgn=main;view=fulltext;q1=Law
Recommended reading				
LINDBERG, Carter.	2003	'Luther's struggle with social-ethical issues', in McKim, D. K. (ed) <i>The Cambridge Companion to Marthin Luther</i> , pp.165–178.		Cambridge University Press
LYNCH, Catherine A.	2004	'Behavioral Regulation in the City: Families, Religious Associations, and the Role of Poor Relief'.	<i>Social Control in Europe</i> ,	https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/30/edited_volume/chapter/1178184/pdf

			Vol. 1, pp.200–219.	
FOUCAULT, Michel	1973	<i>Madness and Civilization. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason</i> , pp.38– 64.		Vintage Books
DEW, Ben	2024	'Conceptions of Polish and Russian poverty in the British Enlightenment', O'Flaherty N., and Mills, R. J. W. (eds) <i>Ideas of poverty in the Age of Enlightenment</i> .		Manchester University Press https://www.manchesterhive.com/display/9781526166784/9781526166784.00014.xml
LINDENMEYER, Adele	1996	<i>Charity, Society and the State in Imperial Russia</i> , pp.7–47.		Princeton University Press