

1st Complutense Conference on International History

Faculty of Geography and History, Complutense University of Madrid
15-16 April 2027

Call for papers



"Autofreier Sonntag" in The Netherlands, 4 November 1974. Nationaal Archief.

International history has undergone one of the most dramatic transformations over the past decades. Initially conceived as the study of political elites and the foreign policy of nation-states, the field is now open to a wide range of topics and actors: from the role of inter- and supranational institutions and non-state actors to that of broader structures of power such as imperialism, (de)colonization, and capitalism.

Diplomatic practice(s) have become a critical part of this development. What constitutes power is, as Jan Melissen has shown, an opportunity to question the boundaries of nation-states, incorporate new actors, and cast light on the way states have historically projected themselves.¹

Renowned historians have shaped this shift. Glenda Sluga has highlighted the highly interdependent nature of economic and political relations in international affairs, emphasizing the degree of permeability of these factors in constituting a

¹ Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy. Soft Power in International Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

transnational public sphere.² Laurence Badel, Frank Costigliola and Todd H. Hall, for their part, have also highlighted subjectivity and emotions as critical analytical tools in the study of international relations.³ Postcolonial and gender perspectives are likewise a growing strand although, as Badel and Susan Pedersen point out, much work remains to be done in this area.⁴

The result today is an international history field that is less interested in defining itself than in connecting with the forces and complexities of the 21st century. What “the international” means today is a question purposely left unresolved. As Kristina Spohr has noted, national and international cooperation studies are now rejecting rigid theoretical and methodological separations between global, national, regional, and local levels of analysis.⁵ Thomas Bender, Daniel Immerwahr and Charles Maier have also produced some of the most influential reinterpretations of United States history from a global perspective by challenging triumphalist narratives and blurring the lines between nation-state and empire.⁶ These approaches have all facilitated the incorporation of the international dimension into national contexts, illuminating on the complexities and ambiguities of individual national histories. The history of the Franco regime and the Spanish democratic transition is a testament to this.⁷

Regional studies have not become any less important during this process. Indeed, one of the most exciting questions in the field is to determine what Europe means today to itself and the rest of the world. Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol, Kiran K. Patel, and Laurent Warlouzet are among the many historians whose work has contributed to rethinking European integration through a wide range of analytical lenses, including multilateralism, institutions, multilevel governance, political cultures, financial networks, civic associations, urban development, and environmental concerns.⁸

² Glenda Sluga, ‘Globalizing Publics and the Future of Political History. Comment on the Forum’, *American Historical Review* (AHR) 129, n.º 2 (2024): 625-27.

³ Frank Costigliola, *Kennan: A Life between Worlds* (Princeton University Press, 2023); Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy. Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Cornell University Press, 2015); Laurence Badel, *Écrire l’histoire des relations internationales contemporaines, XVIIIe-XXIe siècle. Genèse, concepts, perspectives* (Armand Colin, 2024).

⁴ Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians. The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Laurence Badel, “Auxiliary” Jobs? French Women’s Multiple Entry Pathways into Diplomacy, 1900–1947”, *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 35, n. 3 (2024): 432-55.

⁵ Kristina Spohr, ‘Contemporary History in Europe: From Mastering National Pasts to the Future of Writing the World’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 46, n. 3 (2011): 506-30.

⁶ Thomas Bender, *A Nation among Nations. America’s Place in World History* (Hill & Wang, 2006); Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire. A History of the Greater United States* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019); Charles S. Maier, *The Project-State and Its Rivals: A New History of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Harvard University Press, 2023).

⁷ Juan Carlos Pereira Castañares and Juan Manuel Fernández, eds, *La política exterior y la dimensión internacional de la transición española. Testigos y protagonistas (1976-1986)* (Thomson Reuters, 2016).

⁸ Kiran Klaus Patel, *Project Europe. A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Kiran Klaus Patel, ‘Between Collapse, Integration and Co-Transformation: Universalist and Particularist Economic Ideas and Practices in Europe Since the 1970s. An Introduction’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 32, n.º 4-5 (2025): 415-34; Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol, ‘Accidental Neoliberalism: Democratic Accountability in the Making of the Euro, 1957–92’, *Contemporary European History*, 2025, 1–19; Laurent Warlouzet, *Liberty*,

Celebrating the diversity of international history and creating new spaces for discussion is the ultimate goal of this conference. With a focus on 20th-century history, the event will be organized around the following thematic areas:

- **Diplomacies and diplomatic practices**
- **European integration**
- **Social movements, violence, and vulnerabilities**
- **Decolonization and postcolonial history**
- **Institutions and political cultures**
- **Gender, sexuality, and emotions**
- **Transnational and intellectual networks**

The conference will take place at the Faculty of Geography and History of the Complutense University of Madrid on **15–16 April 2027**. Participation will be **in person only**. **Please note that the organizers are unable to provide funding for travel or accommodation expenses.**

The event aims to provide an opportunity for the presentation of new and original research. In this spirit, it welcomes submissions from **doctoral candidates and scholars who have completed their PhD within the last five years**. English and Spanish will serve as the official languages of the event.

Proposals should be submitted through the following **Google Forms** link (<https://forms.gle/2Gm7mhJb5izwMsuX6>) and must include:

- Full name, paper title, and institutional affiliation (if applicable).
- The thematic area to which the paper is submitted.
- An abstract of no more than 500 words, including a brief historiographical discussion of the topic, the primary sources employed, and the main findings of the research.
- A short CV (maximum 10 lines).

The **deadline** for submissions is **30 September 2026**.

Any questions about the conference can be directed to the organizers via email: cchistoriainternacional@gmail.com

Organising Committee:

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