



The Betty Behrens Seminar on Classics of Historiography

The seminar offers a unique opportunity for students and scholars to reflect on great historical works and engage in discussion with renowned experts.

It will endeavour to underline the importance of the classics of historiography for their relevant intellectual function in creating critical political thought.

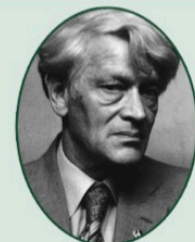
Classics



De vita Caesarum
[The Twelve Caesars]
(121)
Suetonius



'Ajā'ib al-Āthār fī 'l-Tarājim wa-'l-Akhbār
[History of Egypt]
(1805-1821)
Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti



The Making of the English Working Class
(1963)
E.P. Thompson



**Lent
Term 2026**

Where

Richard Eden Suite, Clare Hall,
West Court, Cambridge

Speakers

YOUSSEF M. CHOUEIRI
Visiting Professor of History
London School of Economics and Political Science

EMMA GRIFFIN
Professor of Modern British History
Queen Mary University of London

ANDREW WALLACE-HADRILL
Emeritus Director of Research and Honorary Professor
University of Cambridge

Convener

DAVIDE CAEDDU
Fellow Commoner and Life Member, Clare Hall, Cambridge
Professor of History of Political Thought, University of Milan



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



CLARE HALL
CAMBRIDGE

The Seminar

The seminar will take place between the 26th of February and the 19th of March 2026 and will consist of three meetings. The charming and fresh atmosphere of the Richard Eden Suite in Clare Hall, West Court, Cambridge, will be the location for the discussions.

How it works

Each meeting is composed of about two hours. The guest speaker will introduce the classic by talking for half an hour. After that, each participant may briefly express their understanding of the work by addressing some questions to the other participants and the guest speaker. In order to be ready for the dialogue, everyone might read some pages of the work under scrutiny.

The selection of pages is chosen by the guest speaker and is downloadable from the Clare Hall website: clarehall.cam.ac.uk

Refreshment

Before and during each seminar, coffee and tea will be available. After each event, the participants will enjoy a further informal exchange of viewpoints over a glass of juice or wine.

How to sign up

There are a few posts available to guarantee the close dynamics of the discussion and the full involvement of the participants. Those interested can even apply for just one meeting.

To attend the seminar, please register via eventbrite.com

For further information

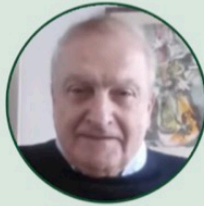
davide.cadeddu@unimi.it

Programme

Thursday
26 February 2026

2pm
Registration

2.15pm
Seminar
“*Ajā'ib al-Āthār fi 'l-Tarājim wa-'l-Akhhār*”
[*History of Egypt*]
by Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti



YOUSSEF M. CHOUEIRI

Thursday
12 March 2026

2pm
Registration

2.15pm
Seminar
“*De vita Caesarum*”
[*The Twelve Caesars*]
by Suetonius



ANDREW WALLACE-HADRILL

Thursday
19 March 2026

2pm
Registration

2.15pm
Seminar
“*The Making of the English Working Class*”
by E.P. Thompson



EMMA GRIFFIN

Purpose

The seminar offers a unique opportunity for students and scholars to reflect on several great historical works and engage in discussion with renowned experts.

As we know, a classic is recognized as such insofar as it retains its value as an intellectual and cognitive tool, helping us to gain an understanding of the past as well as the present from a particular cultural viewpoint. Classics still have the capacity to resonate and speak to us about current problems. They produce perspectives that are implicitly comparative and dynamic, thanks to the historical dimension passing through both them and us.

These considerations are even more relevant when we speak about the classics of historiography because the same historical dimension is present on several more levels. These classics challenge us to contemplate some historical problems which are only fully understood when properly contextualised. In the same way, even the classic itself can fruitfully produce its own intellectually provocative value when read through the eyes of the present but interpreted with a historicist approach.

The seminar will endeavour to underline the importance of the classics of historiography for their relevant intellectual function in creating critical political thought.

