



Deutsches
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Käte Hamburger Research Centre
Dis:connectivity in Processes of Globalisation



LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

Nature, Capitalism, and Empire

22nd Summer School in British History and the History of the British Empire
London, 29 July – 1 August 2025

Humans depend on their natural environment to satisfy their needs and wants. Natural conditions are a key factor in shaping social structures, economic practices, and lifestyles. Nowadays, the use, exploitation, and consequent transformation of nature have reached unprecedented levels, giving rise in academic and public discourse to the notion of the “Anthropocene”: the age in which human impact on earth has become so all-encompassing that its different aspects (climate change; loss of biodiversity; ubiquity of concrete, plastic, pollutants etc) will leave permanent traces on a geological time scale. This development is driven by several factors: for example, by the rise of an economic and social order characterized by profit-seeking and market exchange, i.e. capitalism, the shift towards ever more extensive and intricate technologies of extracting and processing natural resources, and the continuous growth and development of economies, i.e. industrialization. A key driver behind these factors was the integration of all parts of the world into industrial capitalism by means of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization. In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the British Empire stood at the centre of these fundamental developments.

This summer school will engage with the history of nature and capitalism in the British Empire and the independent nations emerging from it, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Our tutors, Professors Samita Sen (Cambridge) and Tirthankar Roy (LSE), will discuss key questions regarding the relationship between imperialism and colonialism, capitalist/industrial development and the increasing degradation of nature.

The summer school is a part of the on-going collaboration between the German Historical Institute London and the Ludwigs-Maximilian University, Munich. The course convenors are Professor Alexander Engel (LMU Munich) and Dr Indra Sengupta (GHI London).

The course will take place in London on 29 July – 1 August 2025. It is aimed at advanced BA or MA students of history or other related subjects at all German universities. An interest in the history of the British Empire and the history of capitalism and/or environment is desirable.

Please note: Selected participants will be expected to attend all the classes. The course language is English and participants will be required to study the mandatory readings (around 15 chapter/article length pieces) to prepare for the classes. The readings will be sent out a few weeks ahead of the course.

The course is open to students from all German universities. **However, a separate selection process applies to students from the LMU who should directly contact the convener Professor Engel.** LMU students will participate in the summer school as part of an “Vertiefungskurs/Aufbaukurs Globalgeschichte” in the 2025 summer semester; see LSF for further information and details on the application process.



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Students outside LMU, please apply in writing by **Friday 7 March** with the following documents:

- A cover letter of 1-2 pages explaining why you wish to take part in the summer school;
- A brief letter of recommendation from your supervisor;
- A list of courses you have attended and exams you have taken

The organisers will bear the cost of accommodation in London and sandwich lunch will be provided on the days of the summer school. It may be possible to make a small contribution towards the cost of travel to London. Unfortunately, we are unable to cover any other costs.

Please send us your application as a **single PDF file** and by email only to Dr Indra Sengupta i.sengupta@ghil.ac.uk