

Prof. Tom Cohen (York University, Canada, tcohen@yorku.ca)

Personal involvement

1. Have you personally taught Microhistory at university level? What kind of courses they were? What was the students' response to this course or these courses? **I have taught microhistory with considerable success on undergraduate levels one and three, not as a subject but as an academic exercise inside a larger year-long course.**
2. These courses formed parts of what module or unit of education? Were they compulsory or optional for students? **Always optional.**
3. In which languages have you taught these courses? **English**
4. Do you think that there is interest from the part of students in being enrolled in an MA in Microhistory in English? **The Canadian MA is flexible, and students do assorted things under one big banner. I could see their taking a microhistory seminar, as, for instance, with me they took an oral history seminar, and applied the lessons there to their research elsewhere in the program.**
5. Do you personally intend to take part in teaching a joint international MA in Microhistory in English? **I could visit such a project at some point. I don't see plugging my university in.**
6. Have you got colleagues who would take part in teaching in a joint international MA in Microhistory? Who are they? Have they explicitly declared their willingness or you just suppose that they might participate? **Interesting question. I have not explored this with my Canadian colleagues at York. A few of them fit the model; I have one who is quite brilliant, who is working on the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber and Ishi, the last man of his indian tribe in California. Anyway, if you get a project rolling, I think that some of us North Americans would happily visit and join the teaching now and again. István, as you know Tom Robisheaux and I are gathering a group to meet at Duke this coming fall.**

Institutional involvement

7. Would your university be interested in taking part in such a venture? (Please on this point base your reply on the responsible declaration of the relevant office or officer of your university. Eötvös University, for example, have a Vice-Rector for International Affairs.) **We have a VP International and also a dean for internationalization, a good friend of mine, an historian of Iraq.**
8. If your university's attitude to such a programme is not outright negative, what framework would be acceptable for it? Does your university insist on giving an MA degree itself? Would it consider teaching courses that are part of an MA accredited elsewhere? Would it be part of the difficult process of the accreditation of a joint degree? **York would not pay us to teach for you but would be happy to see us do it on somebody else's penny, or for love, not money. York is keen on international links of all sorts.**
9. Does your university run English-language BA or MA or PhD programmes in History? Is there a chance that Microhistory be integrated into such a programme instead of establishing a full-fledged MA specially for Microhistory? **We would install courses, not an MA *tout court***
10. If your university is willing to try to embark on the accreditation of a joint MA degree or its own MA degree in Microhistory, what are the prerequisites of such a procedure in your country? Approximately how much time does it need? **Our push at the moment is "public history" – not quite the same thing. We push that way because the market for professors has gone dry and our PhDs need other lines of work, in communications, museum work, the public realm, planning and so on. But I think we will try to keep things flexible. We have no obvious younger cohort of microhistorians in our department, just scattered profs with modes of writing.**

Contents and formalities

11. If your university would teach courses of an MA accredited by another university or courses of a joint international MA, what tuition fees does it expect to receive? **I don't know**
12. Are there any examples of a joint BA or MA programme at your university? What is its institutional framework look like? **York has arrangements with the two other Toronto universities, in joint programs, with courses in one or another school, on the local institutional budget, and students paying tuition to their own school. I believe.**
13. What makes an MA in your system of education? How many semester of teaching, how many courses and credits, how many seminars and lectures, and how is the writing of the thesis integrated into the studies? Which are the rules followed in giving marks to students? **12-month MA, two semesters of classes and a summer research paper, is normal. Six half-year seminars, no lectures. Marks are by the prof but the research paper has two profs grading it and a third to break a dispute if one arises. One prof guides the research paper rather closely and is one of the two to grade it.**
14. Does your institution has experience in or established practices as for building online courses into its curricula? Do you personally think that such courses might make a part of a joint international MA in Microhistory? **We do on-line for undergrads. Not seen it done for grads.**
15. According to you, which courses should form parts of a joint international MA in Microhistory? Which subject areas should not be omitted from the curriculum? **Aha! Interesting! Students need to read the best microhistories, obviously. And they need to "do it" – they need to practice, under the guidance of a skilled practitioner. So they need to sit with rich sources and work through all the stages of decoding, building a chronology, finding out where the holes are, trying to plug them, defining the context, scrambling for contextual information, devising a narrative scheme, and a voice, and inventing a literary model for exposition. This is the pedagogy; it is powerful and exciting. Often it works best with teams, competing for the best model.**
16. Are you personally willing to teach any of these courses? Which one? And have you got colleagues in your university who are willing to teach any? **I could do such a thing some time. Other colleagues: I would have to ask.**
17. If so, would you teach an online course? Have you got experience in that? Is your institution technically prepared to make this possible? **I have never done on-line. I could learn. I much prefer real people in a real room, over coffee, if that can be arranged. Community is good and on-line is a weak substitute, but sometimes one has to fall back on it.**
18. Could you be personally involved in teaching a course (for example an online course or an intensive course, as a guest lecturer or in any other way) even if your institution abstains from this future cooperation? **I could do things.**
19. Which are the courses that your institution would be willing to take the responsibility for? **This is hard to imagine.**
20. How such a curriculum should be put together from the point of view of the students? Should they travel from one participating institution to the other spending each semester in a different country? Or should they stay at their degree-giving mother university and leave for other participating institutions for intensive courses? Maybe instead of travelling, the widespread use of online courses should be advocated? Should travelling to other institutions for a semester be offered to students as optional? **This is interesting to ponder in this age of Skype. Ideally, people travel. It is just richer. Sometimes travel is hard. I am still left with my model that the best learning is via doing, and the best doing is shared. Now I did once have a microhistory in Toronto linked with a class at Boston College, to general excitement. But the collaboration was finite. One might try harder, with more advanced students, and develop a richer collaboration. My model, if one went online, would be shared projects across distance. Now this has a language problem, in that Nordics don't read Magyar and vice versa, so how to share a set of documents unless somebody is willing to translate a lot of things into a shared language? Unless a German affair worked for everybody. Another model is to keep the teams working in a national language, so Hungarians could do a Hungarian history, together, and explain it to their non-Hungarian fellow students, and so on.**

Other

21. Which are the financial schemes applied to student and teacher mobility in your institution? Can we use it for the purposes of running an joint MA in Microhistory? **We pay our people to work at our place, and just let them go do things away when that works out.**
22. Please add your comment which you would like to make but have not yet had the chance to do so.

I will talk to York colleagues about this and see who is interested.