Suggestion for an international MA in Microhistory

I would like to suggest a blueprint how to launch an international MA in Microhistory. I think that the first step might be to establish a felxible framework of modules, then to identify prospective teachers and participating institutions, finally to proceed to the actual accreditation.

1. I think that it is sensible to organize the prospective MA in Microhistory in a way as flexible as possible. This may take the form of modules. Here and now, I would like to suggest a two-year MA with eight modules for the complete programme, two for each semester. Each module should be comprised of two parallel courses. Flexibility is introduced into the programme by the fact that while it is possible to teach these four courses parallelly in a semester (say 2 classes each for 15 weeks), it is also possible to teach modules in an intensive form (say 2 classes a day for 3 weeks, 5 days a week).

2. I think that we should first of all find the teachers who are pledging themselves for the first years of the programme to work together in a joint international MA in Microhistory. It seems to me sensible that the modules be put together in a way to have always a colleague responsible for a module – at least for the first years. This way, although the participation of the respective institutions is clearly preferable, the working of the programme does not directly depend on this. If one of the universities presently interested in our collaboration falls out, our colleague from that university might still teach her or his module as in intensive course at the host institution which accredits the MA programme in Microhistory.

3. To give a rough idea (and without preliminary consultations with the colleagues whom I have in mind as possible responsible persons for the modules – so please take these plan as a purely imaginary example), and leaving even blank slots inviting future collaborators, I would suggest this structure for a future international MA in Microhistory:

Year 1, Semester 1:

Module I: Introduction into Microhistory

Course 1/1: The Historiography of Microhistory

Course 1/2: The Theory of Microhistory

Module 2: Material Culture

Course 2/1: Microhistory of Material Culture

Course 2/2: Sources and Methods of the History of Material Culture

Year 1, Semester 2:

Module 3: Local History

Course 3/1: Microhistory as Local History

Course 3/2: Sources and Methods of Local History

Module 4: XXXX

Course 3/1: XXXX

Course 3/2: XXXX

Year 2, Semester 1:

Module 5: Global History

Course 5/1: Microhistory as Global History

Course 5/2: Sources and Methods of Global History

Module 6: XXXX

Course 6/1: XXXX

Course 6/2: XXXX

Year 2, Semester 2:

Module 7: Preparation for the MA Thesis I.

Course 7/1: Thesis Consultation I.

Course 7/2: A Special Course on the Subject of the Would-Be Thesis (taught by the Supervisor)

Module 8: Preparation for the MA Thesis II.

Course 8/1: Thesis Consultation II.

Course 8/2: Thesis Consultation III.

4. It is necessary that students spend thier last semester in the instutution of their supervisor in a close collaboration with her or him – or at least with the supervisor staying for this semester in the host institution of the international MA in Microhistory together with her or his student working on the MA thesis.

5. If possible, of course, a migration of students is preferred, but this presupposes the participation of not only colleagues from different universities, but also that of their respective home institutions.

6. It is preferred to teach the modules in the optimal order, but an additional flexibility lies in the fact that it is possible to bring together students who get admission to the MA in Microhistory in two successive years in the same courses, and thus teach each module only once in two academic years. This might be a good solution if the student enrollment to the programme is not sufficient.

7. Colleagues are invited to give their view on this plan – as well as indicate their willingness to participate in a future MA in Microhistory as teachers.

Budapest, 24 October 2015 István M. Szijártó