

CHCS

Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines

THE CHCSC

Organisation of the CHCSC

The Centre d'Histoire Culturelle des Sociétés Contemporaines (CHCSC) is led by a director, Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu (professor of contemporary history at the Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines University), and two associate directors, Aurélie Barjonet (deputy director in charge of international relations and maîtresse de conférences [associate professor] in comparative literature) and Anaïs Fléchet (deputy director in charge of the cross-cutting project 'Transatlantic Cultures' and maîtresse de conférences [associate professor] in contemporary history).

The CHCSC's scientific policy is drawn up by its advisory board and implemented by its management team with the support of the administrative and scientific manager (Laura Faucher) the scientific development manager (Marina Imocrante) and the documentary resources manager (Maximilien Petit).

The CHCSC is one of two support research centres attached to the Institut d'Études Culturelles et Internationales (IECI) at the Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines University (UVSQ)/Paris-Saclay University (UPS). It is part of the UPS's Département Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société, and its doctoral students are enrolled in the Sciences Sociales et Humanités centre of the Ecole Doctorale Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société Paris-Saclay.

A cultural history research centre

The CHCSC began as a fledgling team in 1992 and obtained the status of 'équipe d'accueil' (government-funded research unit) in 1994 (EA 2448). It is the only research centre in France whose activities focus specifically on the cultural history of the contemporary period (late 18th century to the present day). The CHCSC understands culture as 'the set of collective representations specific to a given society' and cultural history as 'the social history of representations' While the centre is multidisciplinary in nature, the common focus of each member's research is the theme of cultural history. The CHCSC plays a key role in the study and application of this concept, not just within the UPS but at a national and international level.

A centre of excellence

In autumn 2018, a panel of experts from the Haut Conseil de l'Évaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (HCERES) wrote: 'The CHCSC has achieved a level of excellence that is recognised at local, regional and international levels in the vast and fruitful field of cultural history. Its success can be attributed to a number of factors: the scientific attributes of the academics who have led the centre since the beginning of its activity; an impressive scientific output (more than 1,400 publications, 125 scientific events); an expertise that is valued in a number of different domains of human and social sciences; an ability that is almost unparalleled in the human and social sciences to respond to calls for proposals and to obtain significant external funding (more than 1.8 million euros over the past five years); a controlled increase in interdisciplinarity that has created a well-balanced dialogue between historians, literature studies researchers, language specialists, cultural areas researchers (covering several continents), information and communication specialists, musicologists and two experimental scientists. [...] The CHCSC has thus succeeded in preserving its uniqueness as a centre for research in the cultural history (in the broadest sense) of the contemporary period while demonstrating an exceptional capacity to adapt in terms of both the material conditions of research and the evolution of research questions relating to the contemporary period (integration of the transcultural perspective).'

Awards and honours (since 2011)

- 2011 Award for scientific excellence, presented by the UVSQ on the occasion of its 20th anniversary
- 2013 INAthèque research prize for Géraldine Poels's PhD thesis
- 2014 INAthèque special commendation for François Robinet's PhD thesis
- 2015 Comité de Liaison des Associations des Dix-Neuviémistes thesis prize for Sylvain Nicolle's thesis
- 2015 Assemblée Nationale thesis prize for Sylvain Nicolle's thesis
- 2015 François Sommer prize for Grégory Quénet
- 2015 Global Scholars Grant from the Society for American Historians of Foreign Relations for Anaïs Fléchet
- 2015 Mérimée prize (funded by the town of Compiègne) for Shabahang Kowsar's PhD thesis
- 2016 INAthèque incentive award for Christophe Keroslian's master's 2 thesis
- 2017 Assises du Journalisme research prize for François Robinet
- 2019 Paris-Saclay Dissertation Prize in Humanities and Social Sciences for Coline Arnaud's PhD Thesis
- 2020 Chancellerie des Universités de Paris thesis prize for Coline Arnaud

The CHCSC team includes three IUF (Institut Universitaire de France) members (Anaïs Fléchet, Evanghelia Stead, and Alan Kahan) working in three different disciplines (contemporary history, comparative literature, and British civilisation).

A multidisciplinary research centre

Due to its very nature, the CHCSC is made up of researchers from a variety of HASS fields as well as from the exact sciences for some aspects of its scientific activities. There is a marked variety among the nine CNU (Conseil National des Universités) categories represented within the research centre, with 11 researcher/lecturer CNU members in section 22 (history and civilisations), 11 in section 11 (Anglo-American languages and literature), 5 in section 71 (information and communication sciences), 4 in section 9 (French language and literature), 3 in section 10 (comparative literature), 2 in section 14 (Romance languages and literature), 2 in section 18 (architecture [theory and practice], applied arts, plastic arts, performing arts, etc.), 1 in section 30 (diluted media and optics)

and 1 in section 68 (biology of organisms). In 2018, the HCERES's panel of experts noted: 'Interdisciplinarity is at the very heart of the Centre's work, particularly with regard to cultural flows and transfers.'

A networked research centre

Recognised in 2018 by the HCERES's panel of experts as 'one of the most dynamic research centres in France in the field of HASS', the CHCSC works with a large number of partners.

Within the IECl, it frequently collaborates with the DYPAC (Dynamiques Patrimoniales et Culturelles) research centre, which focuses on the period from Antiquity to the 18th century. Along with DYPAC, it is a member of the Domaine d'Intérêt Majeur de la Région Île-de-France's 'Matériaux Anciens et Patrimoniaux' (DIM MAP), which was certified in 2016. The CHCSC has also developed partnerships with other UVSQ research centres outside the IECl, including, since 2017, the Fédération de Recherche en Sciences Informatiques, Humaines et Sociales, which focuses on four research areas, including heritage and culture.

The UVSQ itself has established numerous research collaborations with a variety of institutions in Versailles and in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, including the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines theatre, the Montansier theatre, Port-Royal des Champs, the Lambinet Museum, the Versailles School of Architecture and its research centre LÉAV, the Archives départementales des Yvelines and the Château de Versailles. The Communauté d'Agglomération de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (CASQY) and Versailles city council (particularly its cultural affairs department) are both regular collaborators. These partnerships are complemented and extended by the UVSQ's many collaborations at regional level, especially those it maintains with major, mainly Paris-based national institutions, such as the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Musée d'Orsay and the Philharmonie de Paris.

The LABEX (Laboratoire d'Excellence) Patrima and its governing body, the Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine (of which the CHCSC is a founding member), represent another important component of the CHCSC's research ecosystem. Many of the CHCSC's regular partners (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Archives Nationales, Musée du Quai Branly, Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, etc.) are members of the Fondation, which

also supplies other more occasional partnerships (Musée du Louvre, Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation des Collections, Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France, Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée, etc.).

Finally, the merger of the UVSQ with the UPS has provided the CHCSC with a new organisational framework. The CHCSC has participated in structuring the UPS's HASS department and its School Humanités. The Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris-Saclay (whose thematic areas CHCSC helped to define) has become an important partner for the CHCSC since it was set up in 2015.

At international level, the CHCSC has built up a network of partners in Europe, North America, Latin America and Africa through the METIS network and through collaborations that have arisen from different research projects (particularly the Agence Nationale de la Recherche projects). The CHCSC attracts a significant number of doctoral students from abroad, especially as a result of its 'strong digital presence' (HCERES report, 2018).

The four main research areas:

1- Cultural and artistic production and practices

- Writing, publishing and printing
- **The Arts** (visual arts, music, and performing arts)

2- Media, images and communication

- Cultural history of the media
- Creation, mediation and reception of knowledge

3- Cultural heritage

- History and valorisation of heritage
- Heritage and environment

4- Cultural flow, cultural transfer and globalisation

- Dynamics of cultural areas
- Construction of an Atlantic space: Europe/the Americas/Africa

The CHCSC: some facts and figures

- » 42 statutory members
- » 54 academics and independent researchers, including 41 doctoral students
- » 82 associate researchers
- » 17 contracted doctoral students
- » 21 visiting researchers (2013-2018)
- » 74 edited books, 34 published conference proceedings (2013-2018)
- » 80 conferences (2013-2020)
- » 64 journées d'études (colloquia/workshops) (2013-2020)