



PhD seminar RSPH "The Politics of Political History"

Arnhem and Ravenstein, June 7-8, 2018

Invitation

Dear PhD candidates,

On 7-8 June 2018, we will conclude the year 2017-18 for the Research School for Political History with a two-day seminar at the Openlucht Museum in Arnhem and in Ravenstein at the Soeterbeek conference venue of the Radboud University Nijmegen. At this occasion, we will introduce some innovations to the RSPH programme for PhD students: an excursion organised by the PhD council, a modification of the set-up for the individual presentation and the new "break-away sessions".

The "politics of political history" in general and the controversial "canon of Dutch/national history" in particular constitute the recurring theme of the seminar: in the visit to the exhibition, the pub quiz and the keynote by prof. Hester Dibbit on the first day as well as in the workshop on the second. The core theme of the seminar is the tension between academic and public history. Thus, we first visit the canon exhibition at the Open Lucht Museum. Next, the pub quiz and the workshop provide interactive modes of discussing these issues in-depth. More often than not, your own PhD thesis will raise eventually similar issues of valorisation (and its limits). The participants' knowledge of the Dutch history canon will be tested in the competitive pub quiz. The creative workshop allows the participants to hone their debating skills and decide the fate of one or more monuments in the Netherlands.

In the programme for Soeterbeek, we have reserved one hour per **presentation**: 15 min for the paper, 15 min for the two commentators and an ample 30 min for discussion. Feedback on the style of the presentation will be given individually in the margins of the seminar. Please note: The presenter is explicitly asked to position his/her research in the framework of a broader field of study, a framework defined beforehand by the senior commentator. The connection to a broader framework should make it easier for other PhD students to partake in the subsequent discussion and gain new insights for their own project.

A new RSPH format is the **break-away session**, a break from a day of plenary debates and presentations. The PhD students will meet in small groups of five or six to discuss the lessons they have learned and skills acquired so far in their PhD research for one of the challenges below. The outcome of the session for each group is a one-page hand-out (do's and don'ts) for ReMA-students who are bound to encounter the same issues and could profit from the shared experiences of the PhD students.

1. Digital tools: In political history, the use of digital tools (beyond sophisticated search engines) may not be as obvious and indispensable as it is in some other fields of historical study. How to minimize the risk of embracing a digital tool that either requires a lot of training or is outdated by the time the thesis is completed.



2. International comparisons: Unlike political scientists, multi-case comparisons are unrealistic for political historians. How to integrate an international-comparative dimension into your project without producing an excessive workload or losing the focus of the project.
3. Oral history and interviews: Political historians typically use open or semi-structured interviews. How to interview a political actor or eyewitness, usually many years your senior, without either blocking new insights or completely buying into the interviewee's narrative.
4. C.V. building: Participating in a number of conferences and, if possible, responding to one or two calls for conferences papers is a valuable addition to your academic experience and to your CV. How to choose the right conferences, challenging but manageable?
5. Analysis and synthesis: Ideally, most PhD students would prefer to complete their (archival) studies and the analysis of literature and sources, before they commit first thoughts to paper. In reality, writing shapes your understanding of the research topic and helps identify methodological and conceptual problems. How to effectively manage the transition of from analysis (research) to synthesis (writing)?

Last, but not least, some practical matters. Participation is free of charge for PhD candidates registered with the RSPH. You have to register for the seminar before 1 June 2018 and specify if you have a Museumjaarkaart. The research school has reserved accommodation for you in Soeterbeeck. If you would like to make use of this arrangement, please register for the hotel as well, **before 1 May 2018**. After this date, the option for the rooms will be cancelled. You can register for the seminar and for the hotel by sending an email to Annejet Landman (bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiegegeschiedenis.nl). Please note that admission is on a first come, first serve basis.

In sum, the two-day seminar offers a whole range of interesting elements - both well-known and new - brought together for you by the PhD candidates' representatives on the RSPH board and the director of studies.

We look forward to meeting you,

Margit van der Steen
Ido de Haan
Wim van Meurs
PhD Council



Seminar programme

Thu. 7 June		
-14:30	Arrival at Openlucht Museum	Nederlands Openluchtmuseum (The Netherlands Open Air Museum) Hoeflerlaan 4, 6816 SG Arnhem
14:30-17:00	Guided tour of the museum and the exposition "The Canon of Dutch History"	
17:00-18:00	Transfer to Ravenstein	Conference venue "Soeterbeek" of Radboud University Nijmegen Elleboogstraat 2, 5371 LL Ravenstein
18:00-18:30	Pub quiz "The Canon of Dutch History"	PhD council
18:30-20:00	Dinner	
20:00-21:30	keynote: prof. Hester Dibbit (EUR, invited)	Chair
Fr. 8 June		
09:00-10:00	Creative workshop "(Re)moving Monuments in the Netherlands"	Wim van Meurs
10:00-11:00	Presentation by Wouter Klem: "Political Cooperation in Europe prior to WW II"	15 min. presentation, 15. min for two commentators and 30 min. discussion.
11:00-11:30	Coffee break	
11:30-12:30	Break-away session	In working groups of 5-6 PhD students
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	Presentation by Chiara Candaele: "Practices of Transnational Child Displacements (Belgium 1945-1980)"	15 min. presentation, 15. min for two commentators and 30 min. discussion.
15:00-15:30	Coffee break	
15:30-16:30	Presentation by Jorrit Steehouder: "Economic Blueprints for Europe, 1930-1960"	15 min. presentation, 15. min for two commentators and 30 min. discussion.