



RESEARCH SCHOOL FOR POLITICAL HISTORY (RSPH) | ONDERZOEKSCHOOl POLITIEKE GESCHIEDENIS (OPG)

# RMA training program 2022-2023

Version date: 16 June 2022

## *Introduction*

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The Research School of Political History (RSPH) aims to offer research master students in the history of politics and the political a high-quality training program supervised by some of the leading scholars in the field working in the low countries.

The RSPH training program is open to all students enrolled in a research master in history at a Dutch university. Our courses are designed to complement and deepen the research master study program, focusing on the historiographical, thematic, conceptual and methodological aspects of political history.

The RSPH program brings you into contact with fellow research master students at other universities, with Phds, junior and with senior researchers in the field of political history. It offers an excellent preparation if you are interested in pursuing a dissertation and a career in political history.

The program of the RSPH for Research Master students offers training in the following competencies:

- Knowledge of, and reflection on the current state and future of political history
- Knowledge of current debates, theories, historiography and methodologies in political history and adjacent fields of research.
- Reflection on the position and characteristics of political history in interdisciplinary research cooperation.
- Methods and techniques of research in political history.
- Oral and written reporting and participation in academic, political and public debates.
- Skills in the use of heuristic tools and techniques as well as digital humanities.

This document contains all the necessary information about the courses on offer and how to register.

In addition to our RMA training program, research master students are warmly invited to take part in other activities organized by or in close cooperation with the RSPH, e.g. master classes, seminars and conferences. Stay informed of our activities by visiting our website or subscribing to our newsletter.

Come and join us!

## How to register?

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The RSPH program is open to all students enrolled in a research master history programs at a Dutch university. Students need to register for the RSPH at the beginning of their research master program via the program director of their own Research Master program (who has to submit the names of registered students at the beginning of the academic year).

As registered student at the RSPH we expect you to follow an individual program of 10 ECTS in total. If for any reason you wish to earn more (or less) credits, a specific arrangement can be made in consultation with the director of studies of the RSPH.

As soon as you have decided to join the RSPH training program, we kindly ask you to give notice of the courses and (if already applicable) other activities you want to participate in via [bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl). Please include the following information in your e-mail:

- Your full name
- Your home university
- Your research master
- The courses and/or summer school you intend to follow (including EC)

## Credits and certificates

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At the end of each course / summer school the participants will receive a certificate, specifying grade and credits that have been obtained. The courses have a study load of 3 - 5 ECTS (=140 hours) However, if your research master demands you to obtain 6 ECTS, it is possible to ask the supervisors to expand the requirements for the final assignment (+28 hours) for an extra credit.

By way of exception, an additional credit point (to a maximum of 3 ECTS) can be earned by actively participating in and writing a report about a platform activity of the RSPH (e.g. the opening, a seminar, master class or conference). In case you want to consider this, please send us a reasoned proposal via [bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl).

## Schedule of the training program

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<i>Semester 1</i>		<i>Semester 2</i>	
	ECTS		ECTS
Introductory course: What is political history (Nov-Dec)	5-6	Course Back to the source Political History Unraveled (Feb-March)	3-5
		Summer school (July)	3-5
Optional: active participation in a RSPH platform activity (1 EC; max. of 3 EC)			

### **Opening of the Academic year – the history of ‘ordinary citizens’ and their relation to power**

Date: 23 September 2022

Location: Trippenhuis, Amsterdam

The beginning of a new academic year is marked by the annual RSPH opening event. The theme of this year’s opening is writing the history of “ordinary citizens” and their relation to power. Harm Kaal (Radboud University) and Marnix Beyen (University of Antwerp) will deliver an introduction, after which journalist and author Marcia Luyten will give a lecture and discuss the theme.

Since the opening offers a sneak preview of the summer school scheduled at the end the academic year, all research master students are encouraged to attend!

## *Course descriptions*

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### **C.1 Introductory Course: What is Political History?**

*Supervisors:* dr. Peter van Dam and dr. Jeroen van Zanten (University of Amsterdam)

*Course period:* 1<sup>st</sup> semester | November – December 2022 (week 45-50) | 6 meetings

*Credits:* 5 – 6 ECTS

*Registration:* before 15 September 2022 ([bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl))

What is political history? Among historians and social scientists definitions of and approaches to political history have diverged immensely. In this course, students explore approaches relevant to the history of politics and discuss the conceptualization of political history and the use of key concepts.

Participants in this course will learn:

- How to define and analyze key concepts in the history of politics;
- How to evaluate historical studies from a conceptual and theoretical perspective;
- How to use and incorporate key concepts in the analysis of sources for the study of the political history

Themes and concepts to be discussed include the concept of the political, power & state formation, political culture, international politics, citizenship, politics beyond the nation and civil society.

The course will be taught in Dutch or English (depending on the language skills of the participants).

### *Requirements*

- Participation: students have to be present and prepared.
- Preparing a discussion: a weekly discussion is prepared and introduced by a selected group of participants.
- Pitch and book review: at every meeting, one or more students pitch (ca. 2 minutes) a historical study which she or he deems a good example of what political history is or should be. A more extensive review of this study is handed in in writing (1000 words max.) a week after the initial pitch.
- Final paper: Participants write a paper of 3000 words, which answers the question of this course: What is political history?

## C.2 Back to the Source: Political History Unravalled

*Coördination:* dr. Carla Hoetink (Radboud University; RSPH Director of Studies)

*Supervisors:* researchers of Huygens ING

*Course period:* 2<sup>nd</sup> semester | February 2023 – March 2022 (weeks t.b.a) | 5 meetings

*Credits:* 3 – 5 ECTS

*Registration:* before 15 December 2022 ([bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl))

Long gone are the days when political history was only described from official state documents. In today's historical practice a great deal of attention is paid to multi-perspectivity, seeking opportunities to hear different voices. No one doubts the relevance of looking beyond the text and incorporating visual, auditory and material sources. In addition, new approaches and rapidly developing digital techniques shed fresh light on classical sources and open different possibilities for organizing, analyzing and presenting sources on a larger scale. What does this mean for writing political history today?

In this course, students develop a broad view of the potential of resources to analyze the history of politics and the political. Students also learn to critically reflect on the limitations of various types of sources, archives, and datasets, and to recognize their 'political' nature. What were the roles of e.g. the state and social movements in collecting and archiving materials? What blank spots does this leave in the archives and analyses?

Participants in this course will:

- Gain insight into a range of sources relevant to study political history;
- Reach a next level in source critique;
- Get acquainted with new technologies to access, comprehend, analyse and manage primary sources relevant to political historians;
- Obtain the skills to use various primary sources – both physical and digital – and apply methods in a sound way.

The course will be taught in Dutch or English (depending on the language skills of the participants).

### *Requirements*

- Specific requirements t.b.a  
(you may expect weekly preparations, active participation, written reflections and a presentation to be part of the assessment)

### C.3 Summer School Writing Political History from Below: Theory and Practice

*Supervisors:* Marnix Beyen (University of Antwerp) and Harm Kaal (Radboud University)

*Dates:* 3 – 7 July 2023

*Credits:* 3 – 5 ECTS

*Registration:* before 1 February 2022 ([bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl))

The 2023 summer school is dedicated to studying politics ‘from below’. Assessing the state-of-the-art in 2013, Willibald Steinmetz and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt concluded that ‘governments, monarchs, parties, or parliaments ... still get the bulk of attention in many new political histories’. Although this still holds true today, studying politics from below or at the intersection of the ‘formal political world of representation and the informal political world of everyday life’ (Lawrence 2009) has been on the up. Testimony to this is research by political historians on petitioning, correspondence, electoral culture, public opinion formation, popular culture, the rise of the citizen-consumer, and the mass media, among other topics. In political theory and philosophy, too, the notion of ‘the people’ and bottom-up perspectives on political representation and democracy are en vogue.

Yet, those interested in such approaches to political history are confronted with a range of challenges. First of all, the lack of a shared vocabulary among political historians. Doing political history from below comes with a variety of concepts, such as ‘popular politics’, ‘the politics of everyday life’, ‘subaltern politics’, ‘ordinary politics’, and ‘public politics’. Definitions often remain vague. Second, a (supposed) lack of sources and representativeness: archives are highly geared towards offering access to high politics (institutional and personal archives) and the sources we do have are not equally distributed in terms of class, gender, ethnicity etc. Third, the interaction between the formal and informal political world is often staged and mediated, with the mass media playing a key role.

These challenges form the starting point for our summer school. In the first part you familiarize yourself with the key historiographical debates and theories on politics from below, democracy and political representation from a multidisciplinary perspective (history, philosophy, political science). The second part is dedicated to a discussion of recent research on citizen letters, petitions, protests and the mass media (printed press, radio, TV) with a focus on Western Europe. In the third and final part of the summer school you get acquainted and work with various sources and methods to write political history from below and get the opportunity to formulate or finetune your own research ideas in a collaborative setting. You can draw inspiration from ongoing research projects conducted by the tutors of this summer school in which they approach political history from below.

After completing this summer school you are able to

- Combine a philosophical, political scientific and historical approach to the topic
- Offer a conceptual and theoretical reflection on writing history from below
- Find and select sources and methods to explore political history ‘from below’

***Mission Statement Research School Political History***

*The objectives of the Research School Political History are:*

*\*Promoting the quality of research and (inter)national cooperation*

*\*Providing high quality training for PhD candidates and Research Master (RMA) students,  
the next generation in political history*

*\*Providing a platform for and representation of political historians in the Netherlands and Flanders*

*The Research School Political History is member of the Association for Political History*

<https://onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl/>

<https://www.associationforpoliticalhistory.org/>

[bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl)