



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

# PHD training program 2022-2023

Version date: 19 July 2022

## *Introduction*

---

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

The RSPH training program is open to all PhDs based in the Netherlands, Flanders or affiliated with the Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien in Münster, conducting research in the broad field of political history, history of international relations, conflict studies, military history, area studies, global history, and other subdisciplines in premodern and modern history with an emphasis on politics.

We offer an extensive curriculum of in-depth tutorials and workshops, focusing on the historiographical, thematic, conceptual and methodological aspects of political history in general and your PhD project in particular. In addition to this, considerable attention is paid to professionalization and transferable skills.

The RSPH is dedicated to creating a research environment which brings you into contact with fellow PhD candidates at other universities, postdocs and senior researchers in the field of political history. We provide excellent network and platform facilities for all researchers in political history, whether ambitious to pursue a career inside or outside academia.

The RSPH program for PhD students offers training in the following competencies:

1 **Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity:**

Students have an informed and critical awareness of the historical and conceptual underpinnings and contexts of political history as an intellectual tradition and academic discipline, and of its relationship to other fields of study. They have knowledge and understanding of the foundations and insights of other disciplines relevant to the study of political history.

2 **Theories and concepts:**

Students have specialized knowledge and critical understanding of theoretical, conceptual and analytical notions relevant to political history. They can reflect on the principal theoretical approaches to political history, evaluate the state of the art in political history, and recognize and develop innovative research orientations in political history.

3 Methods and techniques:

Students have focused knowledge and critical understanding of relevant methods and techniques for the study of political history, and the ability to apply proper methods and techniques to research problems. Students have an advanced and critical understanding of sources and data for political-historical research and their associated conceptual frameworks.

4 Communication:

Students have an informed and critical awareness of the specific methods used to communicate information about one's field in scholarly/academic and public contexts. They can use and apply the proper means of communication, suited to the aims of their scholarly and public interventions.

5 Professional Development:

Students have an informed and critical awareness of the concrete ways that the political-historical perspective can be developed in professional situations and be of benefit to society.

This document contains all the necessary information about the training activities and how to register.

In addition to our training program, PhDs are warmly invited to take part in other events 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!

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

Date: 23 September 2022  
Location: Trippenhuis, Amsterdam  
Time: 13.00 – 18.00 (including drinks)

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.

Before the plenary thematic session, there will be a meet & greet for all PhDs enrolled in the school. For PhD candidates at the start of their trajectory, this is the moment to get acquainted with the program, and meet the program directors and fellow PhDs. For advanced PhD candidates, the event offers the opportunity to catch up with each other and make plans for the coming year.

As a bonus, the thematic session following the meet & greet offers a sneak preview of the summer school scheduled at the end of the academic year. This summer school is open to both RMA and PhD students.

### *How to register?*

---

The PhD training program is open to all PhD candidates in the field of political history that are based in the Netherlands, Flanders or affiliated with the Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien in Münster. We explicitly welcome external PhDs too.

In most instances, the Graduate School of your home university takes care of your registration as soon as you indicate you want to join the RSPH. If this is not the case, or if you have any further questions regarding your enrolment, please contact us via [bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl). Please include the following information in your e-mail:

- Your full name
- Your home university
- The title and a brief description of your PhD project
- The names of your supervisor(s)

### *Work load, credits and certificates*

---

As a member of the RSPH PhD community, we assume you are willing to take full advantage of our training program. We highly recommend you follow all the tutorials and workshops on offer in year 1 and year 2 of your trajectory, given the structure of the program and the building up of competencies. This recommendation also goes for the seminars in year 3 of the training program, devoted to deepening your skills as well as to professional development. Participation in other RSPH events is optional (see schedule below).

As standard, each training activity (tutorial, workshop or seminar) is awarded with 1 ECTS for preparation and active participation. Unless stated otherwise, these training activities consists of a 3–4-hour meeting with an open discussion based on the input and research interests of the participants. Active participation is considered self-evident. Each activity requires preparation in the form of reading literature, writing a preparatory paper of ca 750 words according to the assignment given. Often you are asked to prepare in advance for commenting on the papers of your peers.

If you wish to earn more (or less) credits, a specific arrangement will be made in consultation with the director of studies of the RSPH. In case you wish to consider this, please send us a reasoned proposal via [bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl](mailto:bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl).

At the end of the program, each participant will receive a certificate, specifying the credits that have been obtained. In general, the school offers three types of certificates:

- Basic (10 ECTS)
- Regular (20 ECTS)
- Advanced (30 ECTS)

## Training schedule

---

The program is structured in accordance with the end terms and competencies:

- **Tutorials** in year 1 discuss disciplinary and Interdisciplinarity, theories and concepts, and methods and techniques on an advanced level
- **Workshops** in year 2 are devoted to the application of methods and techniques, disciplinary and Interdisciplinarity, and introduce international outreach and science communication
- **Seminars** in years 3 and 4 are devoted to the individual application and assessment of disciplinary and Interdisciplinarity, theories and concepts, methods and techniques as well as science communication and professional development.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>Opening of the Academic year</b> 23 Sept. 22		
<b>Tutorials</b>	<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Seminars</b>
1. <i>Introduction to the discipline: What is Political History?</i> 28 Oct. 22	6. <i>Advanced Thesis Design: justifying your choices</i> 7 Oct. 22	10. <i>Science Outreach and Communication</i> 4 Nov. 22
2. <i>Crucial Concepts in Political History</i> 18 Nov. 22	7. <i>Interdisciplinary Approaches</i> 25 Nov. 22	11. <i>Applied History and Current Affairs</i> 24 Feb. 23
3. <i>Methods and techniques in Political History</i> 12 Jan. 23	8. <i>Internationalization 2-day workshop Münster</i> 17-18 Feb. 23	12. <i>Professional Development</i> 14 Apr. 23
4. <i>Sources In Political History</i> 10 Feb. 23	9. <i>Advanced Thesis Design: presenting and defending</i> 21 Apr. 23	
5. <i>Themes in Political History: governmentality and gender</i> 10 Mar. 23		

## What, when and where?

---

You might be interested to know that – unless specified otherwise – all training activities

- require a preparatory assignment, send to you in advance
- take place in Amsterdam
- are scheduled at regular intervals on Fridays in the afternoon
- include a drink afterwards

### **B.1 Introduction to the Discipline: What is Political History?**

*Supervisor:* prof. dr. Ido de Haan (Utrecht University)

*Date:* 28 October 2022

In this tutorial, we will discuss the very general, yet at the same time crucial question ‘what is political history?’ The discipline of political history has changed quite dramatically in the last couple of decades. From a well-established, yet also rather stuffy history of national political institutions, it has become a vibrant study of the political as it manifests itself in a variety of places and a multiplicity of forms, and is informed by various disciplines, ranging from law and philosophy to political science and anthropology. In this tutorial, we discuss reflections on the history of ‘the political’ and invite you to reflect on your use of the term, how your research is a contribution to an interdisciplinary political history, and how you account for processes like politicization and depoliticization.

### **B.2 Crucial Concepts in Political History**

*Supervisors:* prof.dr. Annelien DeDijn (Utrecht University) and dr. Karin van Leeuwen (Maastricht University)

*Date:* 18 November 2022

Despite their crucial importance for defining a subject, concepts often receive only little attention in historical research projects. While the lessons on conceptual change learnt from scholars such as Koselleck and Skinner have resulted in the establishment of an entire subfield of conceptual history, many historians working on politics in practice are easily tempted to leave conceptual reflections entirely to these specialists. Yet, it is hard to imagine research projects in political history that do not in one or another way engage with concepts such as power, violence, rule of law, institutions, identity, colony, democracy, ideology, representation etc. PhDs working on international topics, like the history of international relations, often do work with concepts, often borrowed from the social sciences. In this tutorial, we will briefly introduce you to the various ways in which both historians and social scientists deal with the challenge to define and/or reflect upon their central concepts, and invite you to reflect upon the concepts central to your research project.

### **B.3 Methods and Techniques in Political History**

*Supervisors:* prof.dr. Dirk Jan Wolffram (University of Groningen) and dr. Joris Gijzenbergh (Radboud University)

*Date:* 12 January 2023

This tutorial is dedicated to research methods: the trajectory from historiographical debate through research questions to an effective research strategy. In this interactive tutorial, the central questions are: what is the use of historical methodology, what is your methodological approach, how does your topic legitimize your research methods, and what are the major methodological challenges of your research project? In the tutorial, PhD candidates reflect on the abovementioned questions, present their most urgent methodological bottleneck and try to find the best strategy to solve their problems together with other PhD candidates and senior researchers.

### **B.4 Sources in Political History**

*Supervisor:* dr. Marijke van Faassen (Huygens ING)

*Date:* 10 February 2023

The increasing use of digital techniques for researching both analogue and digital texts, archival sources and data clouds requires a new research methodology in which traditional knowledge is closely interwoven with digital skills. In this tutorial, an interdisciplinary team of political historians and information scientists will use case studies from their research to provide insight into this current methodological discussion and to more practically discuss ways to find, criticize, contextualise and finally prepare such complex sources to use them for research. To prepare for the tutorial, the PhD-students are requested to write a text in which they describe the digital and 'paper' sources they use in their research and reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of using them. During the tutorial, there will be ample time to interactively discuss the problems they experience and to create awareness for alternative sources to work around the problems they face.

### **B.5 Themes in Political History: governmentality and gender**

*Supervisor:* prof. dr. Geertje Mak (University of Amsterdam)

*Date:* 10 March 2023

In the final tutorial of the year, we bring together conceptualizations of the political, relevant concepts for the study of politics, methodologies and sources, by focusing on a specific theme in political history. Based on readings and presentations by senior researchers, the participants will practice the integration of these various aspects of research in political history in a coherent research outline. This year's tutorial departs from Foucault's notion of governmentality – the capacity of any administration to direct and transform the people governed. Crucial to this notion is that you cannot govern people when you do not know them, but you cannot know them if you don't have any control over them. Power and knowledge (over people) are thus entangled. As James Scott explained in his seminal *Seeing like a State*, reordering the population and the land is a necessary precondition for rule or 'development'. Therefore, categorizations – even in very mundane techniques of administration - are key to governmentality (see for example Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose *Governing the Present*). For this tutorial, we specifically consider the crucial role of gender and sexuality in colonial categorizations.

**B.6 Advanced Thesis Design: justifying your choices**

*Supervisor:* dr. Anne Heyer (Leiden University) and dr. Carla Hoetink (Radboud University)

*Date:* 7 October 2022

This Workshop poses the question: ‘What exactly am I doing and how can that be justified?’. Based on a short, advanced paper on the methodology of their projects, PhD students explore opportunities, challenges and limitations of their theoretical and methodological choices, and alternatives presented and discussed in class.

**B.7 Interdisciplinary Approaches**

*Supervisor:* dr. Iva Pesa (University of Groningen) and dr. Christian Wicke (Utrecht University)

*Date:* 25 November 2022

This Workshop looks beyond the limits of the discipline of political history. How do/can other scientific disciplines inspire and inform political history research? Which debates outside the confines of political history are of interest, and to which debates can your PhD project contribute? We will look at relevant examples of interdisciplinarity in political history research, for example, political anthropology and political economy approach.

**B.8 Internationalization**

*Supervisor:* prof.dr. Jacco Pekelder (Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien, Münster)

*Date:* 17-18 February 2023

*Please note:* this two-day Workshop takes place in Münster (Germany) and will include a social program

As a professional historian, you will have to present your research both in national and international print and at conferences. You will also want to be able to organize (international) seminars yourself. This two-day Workshop is meant to learn you how to present yourself and your research in an international context. This Workshop will result in a proposal for a symposium or a conference panel, co-created with one or two fellow PhD candidates.

**B.9 Advanced Thesis Design: presenting and defending**

*Supervisor:* dr. Maartje Janse (Leiden University) and Jan Julia Zurné (Radboud University)

*Date:* 21 April 2023

This Workshop focuses on effectively presenting your PhD project before an audience of senior political history scholars and experts in your field, and responding to comments, feedback and essential critique. The emphasis is on academic debate, Q&A and presentation technique.

#### **B.10 Outreach and Communication**

*Supervisor:* prof.dr. Dirk Jan Wolffram (Groningen University) and dr. Adriejan van Veen (Radboud University Nijmegen)

*Date:* 4 November 2022

This seminar is dedicated to the science outreach and communication – vis-à-vis both academia and the public at large – of the individual PhD projects of the participants. Invited speakers from academia, publishing, and journalism will provide information and share experiences on publishing a PhD thesis, presenting scientific results for a larger audience, and publishing in scientific journals.

#### **B.11 Applied History and Current Affairs**

*Supervisor:* dr. Harm Kaal (Radboud University), Stefan Couperus (University of Groningen) and Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University)

*Date:* 24 February 2023

This Workshop has a dual goal. First of all, it invites PhD students to reflect on the links between their research project, their research methodologies, and current affairs. Students are asked to rethink the relevance and the methodologies of their project from the perspective of current social and political concerns. What is the ‘big question’ that you are trying to respond to? Second, in interaction with people working in the sphere of policy-making, heritage, the press and think tanks students reflect on how they can develop methods of ‘applied history’, how their research can be considered ‘usable history’ for others outside academia, and/or how they may present their academic skills and knowledge to the world beyond academia, also with an eye towards their post-PhD-career.

#### **B.12 Professional Development**

*Supervisor:* dr. Carla Hoetink (Radboud University Nijmegen) and dr. Margit van der Steen (Huygens ING)

*Date:* 14 April 2023

This final seminar is dedicated to knowledge utilization, CV, finding your way to or creating research consortia and –networks, preparing for grant applications, and career opportunities outside academia. RSPH alumni will share their insights and experiences with you, their successes and – more often – their misfortunes.

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

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

<https://onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl/>

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

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