



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

PHD training program 2025-2026

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 PhD candidates 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 comprehensive 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.

Please note that a more detailed program will be available by the beginning of September. Stay informed of our activities by visiting our website or subscribing to our newsletter.

Come and join us!



Colonialism & Memory Wars

RSPH Opening of the Academic year 2025-2026

Meet & greet for new PhD members

Plenary meeting with keynote lecture

Date: **19 September 2025**

Location: **Spinhuis and Allard Pierson, Amsterdam**

Time: 12.30 – 14.00 Meet & Greet for new PhD members (Spinhuis, Amsterdam)
14.00 – 17.00 Plenary meeting (Allard Pierson, Amsterdam)

The beginning of a new academic year is marked by the annual RSPH opening event. This event is intended to welcome new PhD candidates, to honor the participants that have completed their Training Program, to update one another on current developments in the research field, and of course for networking.

The theme of this year's opening is Colonialism & Memory Wars. Prof. dr. Gert Oostindie will deliver this year's keynote, in which he will explore the recent resurgence of interest in Dutch colonial history within Dutch society and politics.

Meet & Greet for new PhD members

Before the plenary thematic session, there will be a meet & greet for first-year PhD candidates 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 program directors and fellow PhD candidates.

As a bonus, the keynote lecture 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 PhD candidates 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. After your first registration, we will send you a form in which you can give more details about your PhD trajectory.

Workload, credits and certificates

As a member of the RSPH PhD community, we expect 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 modules 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 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.

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

- Basic (10 ECTS)
- Advanced (5+ ECTS)

A PhD candidate qualifies for the RSPH Advanced Training Program Certificate after successful completion of a self-designed curriculum of at least 5 ECTS in total. Successful completion is understood as having fulfilled all the requirements specified for every activity.

Please note that the elements mentioned above indicate the minimum required level of advanced learning: PhD candidates can participate in activities such as masterclasses or advanced workshops as much as they want. They can also participate in workshops and other activities organized by the international research network of the RSPH, the Association for Political History.

Basic training program – schedule

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

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

BASIC TRAINING PROGRAM:		
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Opening of the Academic Year 19 September 2025 APH 2026 Münster Conference 11-13 June 2026		
1. <i>State of the Art in Political History:</i> Positioning your Project October 2025 (1 ECTS)	6. <i>International Networking</i> 2-day workshop Antwerpen 6-7 February 2026 (2 ECTS)	<i>Career Event</i> 14 November 2025 (1 ECTS)
2. <i>State of the Art in Political History:</i> Interdisciplinarity 21 November 2025 (1 ECTS)	7. <i>Academic Outreach</i> in Political History 8 May 2026 (1 ECTS)	8. <i>Advanced Research Design:</i> Presenting and defending your thesis 2-day workshop 9-10 April 2026 (2 ECTS)
3. <i>Research Design: Methods</i> in Political History 12 December 2025 (1 ECTS)		
4. <i>Research Design: Sources</i> in Political History January 2026 (1 ECTS)		
5. <i>Crucial Themes and Concepts:</i> Power in Political History April 2026 (1 ECTS)		

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
- with a minimum of 5 participants
- are scheduled at regular intervals on Fridays (unless otherwise stated, for example in case of a two-day activity)
- include a drink afterwards



Introduction to the Basic Training Program

Year 1

0. Opening of the Academic Year:

Date: 19 September 2025

Time: 12.30 - 14.00: Meet & Greet for new PhD candidates (Spinhuis, Amsterdam)
14.30 - 17.30: Plenary meeting (Allard Pierson Amsterdam)

The beginning of a new academic year is marked by the annual RSPH opening event. This event is intended to welcome new PhD members, to honor the PhD's that have completed their Training Program, to update each other on current developments in the research field, and of course also to network.

The theme of this year's opening is Colonialism & Memory Wars with a keynote by prof. dr. Gert Oostindie.

Meet & Greet for new PhD members

Before the plenary thematic session, there will be a meet & greet for first-year PhD candidates 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 PhD candidates. As a bonus, the keynote lecture 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.

1. State of the Art in Political History: Positioning your Project

Supervisors: prof dr. Ido de Haan and prof. dr. Henk te Velde

Date: October 2025 (exact date TBA)

Time: 10.30 – 17.00 (lunch included)

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

During this full-day introductory module, you familiarize yourself with the state of the art in Political History and you position your own research project in the field. This module serves as a 'pressure cooker' giving you a brief glimpse of the diverse themes and approaches that have dominated the field of political history in the past decade. You will introduce your own research and get to hear more about the projects of your fellow PhD candidates. Together, you will discuss what connects you as scholars and as historians.

2. State of the Art in Political History: Interdisciplinarity

Supervisors: dr. Iva Pesa (Groningen University) and dr. Lorena de Vita (Utrecht University)

Date: 21 November 2025

Time: afternoon (exact times TBA)

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

This module looks beyond the limits of the discipline of political history. It prompts you to think about your project as part of a bigger field. How is your project embedded in and how can it be enriched by concepts, methods or findings from other disciplines? This module is particularly inspired by approaches from the

social sciences and social history and looks at relevant examples of interdisciplinarity in political history research.

3. Research Design: Methods in Political History

Supervisor: dr. Joris Gijzenbergh (RSPH fellow) and prof. dr. Dirk Jan Wolffram (Groningen University)

Date: 12 December 2025

Time: afternoon (exact times TBA)

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

This module is focused on the operationalization of your research project. How are you going to answer the main questions of your project? How do you legitimize your methodological approach?

4. Research Design: Sources in Political History

Supervisors: dr. Marijke van Faassen (KNAW Huygens Institute), dr. Rik Hoekstra (KNAW Huygens Institute) and dr. Marijn Koolen (KNAW Huygens Institute)

Date: January 2026 (exact date TBA)

Time: afternoon (exact times TBA)

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

This module is focused on the operationalization of your research project. Which sources do you need and how can you make best use of those sources, using analogue and digital tools?

5. Crucial Themes and Concepts in Political History: Power

Supervisors: prof. dr. Susie Protschky (VU Amsterdam) and prof. dr. Annelien de Dijn (Utrecht University)

Date: April 2026 (exact date TBA)

Time: afternoon (exact times TBA)

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

This module focusses on a crucial concept in political history: power. Eminent scholars will speak about the way in which they use this concept. Their presentations will be followed by in depth discussion in which PhD candidates reflect on the way they use 'power' in their own research.

Year 2

6. International Networking

Supervisor: prof. dr. Marnix Beyen (Antwerp University)

Date: 6-7 February 2026

NB: this is a 2-day meeting including overnight stay funded by the RSPH)

Location: Antwerp

Credits: 2 ECTS

As a professional historian, presenting your research at national and international fora, both in print and at conferences, is an important part of your work. Some of you may already have gained some experience with it. The next level is to organize (international) seminars or edited volumes yourself. This two-day module is meant to upscale your ability to work in an international academic community.

7. Academic outreach in Political History

Supervisors: prof. dr. Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University) and prof. dr. Harm Kaal (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Date: 8 May 2026

Time: TBA

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Now that you have reached an advanced stage of your PhD trajectory, this module invites you to reflect upon your role as a professional, an academic and a political historian. Why is your project significant? Can you contribute to current debates or is your project relevant for policymakers? How can you make sure your reach the audience your project deserves.

Year 3

The career event and module 8 are intended for PhD candidates in their third year but are open to all participants of the school.

Career Event

In collaboration with the national research schools N.W. Posthumus, Huizinga Institute and Medieval Studies

Supervisors: dr. Carla Hoetink, in collaboration with the national research schools N.W. Posthumus, Huizinga Institute and Medieval Studies

Date: 14 November 2025

Location: IISG, Amsterdam (Cruquiusweg 31)

Credits: 1 ECTS

8. Advanced Research Design: Presenting and Defending your thesis.

Supervisor: prof. dr. Carla Hoetink (University of Groningen) and dr. Karin van Leeuwen (Maastricht University)

Date: 9-10 April 2026

Location: TBA

Credits: 2 ECTS

This module helps you to explore the challenges and limitations of the theoretical and methodological choices you have made for your PhD project. During the module, you discuss your choices with fellow PhD candidates, but you will also present your project to experts in the field

Introduction to the Advanced Training Program

Next to the Basic Training Program the RSPH offers PhD candidates a set of extra courses and activities to further complement their individual training. With effect from September 2023, these activities have been grouped into an Advanced Training Program.



Datum	Activity	ECTS
26 November 2025	Workshop Nodegoat	1
20 March 2026	Workshop Audiovisual media and digital methods	1
20, 27 February & 27 March 2026	Oral History Course	3
8–11 June 2026	Summer School Münster	5
11–13 June 2026	APH 2026 Münster Conference	1–3

Aims and End terms

The Advanced Training is based on an individual curriculum, aimed at assisting PhD candidates to position themselves as an autonomous and known colleague among the national and international community of researchers in the broad field of history of the political.

The Advanced Program builds on the end terms and competencies specified for the Basic Program and enables PhD Candidates to deepen their competencies as a 21st century skilled researcher.

The following four competencies are central to the Advanced Program

- *Advanced research skills*
Participate in workshops devoted to the advanced individual application and assessment of specific methods and techniques, such as oral history, use of data management and -analysis programs, use of AI and e-humanities, et cetera.
- *Advanced international networking skills*
Seize the opportunity to present at an international conference organized by the RSPH itself, by the Association for Political History (APH), or by another relevant academic institute other than your home department.
- *Advanced organization and outreach skills*
Seize the opportunity to organize a masterclass, workshop, seminar, conference panel, or valorization

activity, or a similar relevant activity, together with other participants in the school.

- *Advanced expertise*

Follow a masterclass staged around a state-of-the-art scholar, publication and/or theme to widen your scope of expertise.

Individual designed program

PhD candidates participate in Advanced Training Program on an individual basis and design their own curriculum.

PhD candidates are encouraged to plan their activities for the Advanced Training Program during their second and third year, so that the certificate can be granted well before the end of their project.

Initiate your own workshop or masterclass?

The OPG is always open to new suggestions for supplementing the Advanced Program. Organizing your own Workshop or Masterclass, in collaboration with others, can also be part of your own individual Advanced Training program.

Advanced Training Program: activities 2025-2026

- Advanced research skills | **Workshop Nodegoat**

Supervisors: Geert Kessels and Pim van Bree

Date: 26 November 2025

Time 13.00 - 17.00

Location: Spinhuis Amsterdam

Credits: 1 ECTS

In this workshop, historians (in training) will learn to work with the research environment Nodegoat in order to store, organize, connect and analyse their own data in a relational database – with a special eye on how to use these skills in a political historical research project. Nodegoat is a web-based research environment especially developed for the humanities and used by an international research community. Nodegoat allows scholars to build their own datasets based on their own data model and offers relational modes of analysis with spatial and chronological forms of contextualization.

- Advanced research skills | **Workshop Audiovisual media and digital methods**

Supervisors: Solange Ploeg M.A. (Radboud University)

Date: 20 March 2025

Time TBA

Location: TBA

Credits: 1 ECTS

In this full-day workshop entitled 'Politics in the living room? Political history, audiovisual media sources and digital methods', RMA and/or PhD candidates will get acquainted with the possibilities of incorporating digitised audiovisual media sources in their research. The workshop will introduce the students to an interdisciplinary approach, through tracing the overlooked use of audiovisual media sources back to certain historiographic trends. Moreover, the workshop will discuss methodological starting points and bottlenecks based on the field of discourse analysis, and discern the current state of the art at the intersection of media and political history. Finally, the workshop will introduce and familiarize PhD candidates with the Clariah Media Suite and will provide them with hands-on techniques and tools for their future research.

- Advanced research skills | **Course Oral History**

Co-organized with Huizinga Institute for Cultural history

Supervisors: dr. Susan Hogervorst (Open University, Erasmus University Rotterdam), dr. Barbara Henkes (Groningen University), dr. Dienke Hondius (VU Amsterdam), dr. Marloes Hülsken (Radboud University), dr. Norah Karrouche (VU Amsterdam)

Dates: 20 and 27 February, 27 March 2026

Location: TBA

Credits: 3 ECTS

This hands-on, interactive course for PhD candidates consists of 3 sessions. Besides practicing with preparing, conducting, and reflecting on an interview, participants discuss key theoretical notions on working with oral sources.

Before 1 December 2025 : please upload your one-page motivation for taking part in this course. Make clear what your expectations are and how you connect the course to your own research.

Friday 20 February 2026, 11.00 – 15.00 (location TBA)

Interviews – oral history as historical source

What kind of knowledge does Oral History provide? And how do individual memories relate to existing memory cultures?

Friday 27 February 2025 13.30-16.30 (location TBA)

The interviewer

What makes a good interview? What impact does the specific interaction between interviewer and interviewee have on the content of an interview? How do you deal with personal boundaries during interviews? What are good interview ethics? How does the interviewee narrate, perform and present her/himself during an interview?

Friday 27 March 2026, 10.00-16.00 (location TBA)

10.00 – 12.30 Interviewing – oral history as a method

What works well while conducting an interview, and what doesn't? What have we learnt from interviewing? In this session we listen to group presentations, share experiences and discuss how to move forward in two smaller group sessions.

13.30 – 16.00 Writing oral history

What have we learnt from interviewing? The first part of this session is dedicated to a 'shut up and write' session, guided by the lecturers.

- Advanced international networking skills | **International Conference Association for Political History (APH)**

Supervisor: prof. dr. Jacco Pekelder (Münster University)

Date: 11-13 June 2026

Location: Münster University

Credits: 1-3 ECTS (participation and presentation of paper)

International conferences of the APH offer PhD candidates the possibility to present and discuss their research. PhD candidates are cordially encouraged to react to the forthcoming call for papers.

- Advanced expertise | Summer school: **Writing (Past) Empires as National Histories: Legacies of Colonialism and Violence in the Netherlands and Germany – in an international comparative context**

Supervisors: prof. dr. Jacco Pekelder (Münster University)

Dates: 9-11 June 2026

Location: University of Münster

Credits: 5 ECTS (3 is optional)

This year's RSPH Summer School will focus on how historians have been studying Dutch and German colonialism. Especially the interaction between historical narratives and societal and political dealings with the legacies of colonialism and experiences of violence in colonial contexts are discussed.

- Advanced expertise | **Masterclasses**

The RSPH aims to organize 2-3 masterclasses each academic year. A masterclass is staged around a well-known (usually foreign) expert who visits Belgium or the Netherlands. A small group, up to 10 PhD candidates and/or Research Master students, will have the opportunity to interact intensively with the "master". The expertise of the master defines the content of a masterclass. The projects of the participants, however, are the point of departure. Participants therefore have to write a paper about their research and the problems they experience. The research of the master can be raised during the class. Note that even though each masterclass can be tailor-made, a keynote lecture or a seminar where visitors only present their papers is not a masterclass.

- Advanced organization and outreach skills | **Organize a workshop or masterclass**

The RSPH welcomes initiatives of PhD candidates to organize a masterclass, workshop, seminar, conference panel, or valorization activity, or a similar relevant activity, together with other participants in the school. For this, the RSPH offers support and funding. Please submit a proposal (400 – 500 words) to the Board of the Research School Political History via bureau@onderzoekschoolpolitiekegeschiedenis.nl.



Mission Statement Research School Political History

The objectives of the Research School for Political History are:

**Promoting the quality of research and (inter)national cooperati*

**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