



*Bakers and bread deliverers with their carts, all employed by bakery J. Molenbeek (Nieuwegracht 29, Utrecht). Photo by unknown photographer, c. 1935. X 161550, Collectie Het Utrechts Archief.*

# N.W. POSTHUMUS INSTITUTE

INTERUNIVERSITY  
RESEARCH MASTER COURSES IN  
GLOBAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL HISTORY

# FOREWORD

Dear (future) Research Master student,

Economic and social history is a scientific field buzzing with energy and creativity. This brochure invites you to become part of our research community. Social and economic historians are eager to connect the study of history to the grand themes of today's world, such as economic growth and inequality, slavery, migration, resilience and vulnerability to hazards, and issues of social cohesion and integration. Social and economic historians combine an awareness of the relevance of time and context with a readiness to apply concepts and techniques developed in the social sciences.

The N.W. Posthumus Institute is the Research School for Economic and Social History, an inter-university organisation in which almost 300 scholars in the Netherlands and Flanders cooperate. We offer courses to Research Master students that will help you to get to know the field and the major topics that deserve to be studied.

Participation in the Posthumus Institute brings you into contact with many inspiring researchers who will challenge you to reflect upon your own research ideas. It is also the best way to prepare for a future PhD application in economic or social history.

We hope to meet you in the Posthumus courses!

Dr Jessica Dijkman  
Scientific Director

Dr Rogier van Kooten  
Education Programme Director

# Our Courses

Details on the exact dates will be published on our website, please find the relevant info via <https://posthumusinstitute.org/rma-global-economic-social-history/>. There you will also find the application deadlines for each course, usually about 2 weeks before the start of the course.

November – February

## **Debates in Global Economic and Social History**

International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)

5 or 10 EC

February – April

## **Data Management for Historians**

Online, with final session at the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)

5 EC

April – June

## **Quantitative Methods for Historians**

Utrecht University

5 EC

July

## **Summer School**

location tba

2-3 EC



Die Hollandgänger, Drawing by F. Preller, Emslandmuseum Lingen

# DEBATES IN GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Period : November – February  
Credits : 5 or 10 EC  
Language : English  
Location : International Institute of Social History  
(Amsterdam)  
Coordinators : Dr Rombert Stapel & Dr Timon de Groot

*Why are some countries rich and others poor? When did globalisation begin? These are just a few of the questions that are tackled by social and economic historians. The rise of global history has stimulated comparisons and contrasts and has intensified scholarly exchange through numerous debates.*

The course offers an introduction into debates concerning globalisation, the Great Divergence and worldwide inequality, worldwide networks and global-local relations, and the consequences of globalisation for identity formation. The course also looks at a number of in-depth studies related to global history, such as migration, the environment, revolutions, economic growth and capitalism, and science and technology. It consists of six bi-weekly sessions at the IISH in Amsterdam, and includes lectures by various leading experts from Dutch and Flemish universities.

All students are expected to attend the meetings and to engage in discussions based on preparatory readings. In the 5 EC option students write a book review as their final assignment, in the 10 EC version they write an essay on a debate or a historiographical topic and present it during the final research seminar.

At the end of the course, all participants are expected to attend the final research seminar. During this seminar, they will present their review or essay and receive comments by fellow students.

Students are also invited to visit the annual Posthumus Conference in May or June each year. They may sign up as a discussant for a paper at the conference.

*Punch cards in use by the US Census Bureau (circa 1910). Wikimedia Commons*



# DATA MANAGEMENT FOR HISTORIANS

Period : February - April  
Credits : 5 EC  
Language : English  
Location : Online, with a final session at the International  
Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)  
Coordinator : Dr Rick Mourits



*Researchers in economic and social history regularly work with historical records, such as prices, wages, or demographic data. These historical data are studied to produce tables, graphs, and statistical analyses to get insight in historical processes. An often invisible, but crucial part of the quantitative research cycle is the transformation of rudimentary data into intelligible information. Data management and data manipulation are required to digitise, explore, clean, and operationalise otherwise unintelligible data.*

The aim of this course is to provide research-oriented history students with a thorough introduction into data management and introduce them to R and Linked Data. As such, the course provides essential background to students working with quantitative historical data and allows students to understand, organise, and report on data management processes without, however, the use of advanced quantitative methods. To do so, the course concentrates on four objectives:

- Understanding the quantitative research cycle and data pipelines
- Critical evaluation of data
- Basic understanding of programming in R and SPARQL
- Being able to report on data management

In addition, the course emphasises transparent data management by using open access software, sharing scripts, and producing small data stories.

*Allegory of arithmetics, book illustration by unknown artist from  
Gregor Reisch, Margarita philosophica (1503).  
Wikimedia Commons*



# QUANTITATIVE METHODS FOR HISTORIANS

Period	: April - June
Credits	: 5 EC
Language	: English
Location	: Utrecht University
Coordinator	: Dr Vigyan Ratnoo



*Social and economic historians often employ statistical analyses to study patterns in their data. When combined with historical insights, these quantitative methods allow researchers to consider a wide range of explanations at the same time.*

To acquaint students with quantitative research, this course offers a thorough introduction of statistics, aimed at research master students interested in economic and social history. It focuses first on getting the basics right: what is the aim of statistics, which types of variables are there? Then, it discusses how quantitative data can be used to describe and explore historical patterns, and to test theories about these patterns.

Of course, the questions historians address often require the study of several variables or a detailed analysis of chronology. Regression analysis is an invaluable tool to use quantitative data for such questions. Accordingly, the final weeks of the course introduce students to regression analysis, allowing students to engage with quantitative literature in the field and providing a foundation for further in-depth study of regression analysis.



*Bathing people near Scheveningen, c. 1908.  
Collection The Hague City Archives. Public Domain.*

# POSTHUMUS SUMMER SCHOOL

Period : July  
Credits : 2-3 EC  
Language : English  
Location : tba  
Coordinators : tba

*Annually, the N.W. Posthumus Institute organizes a summer school for RMA students on a specific and relevant theme in social and economic history. Examples of such themes are: disasters, migration, female labour, the welfare state, or slavery. Ailed to do so, is a topic that increasingly draws attention from historians.*

The summer school is a one-week event that familiarises students with recent research on the theme. They gain insight in the central academic debates on the topic, discover the main methods and source types employed, and acquire the skills to use them in their research. In other words, the summer school allows students to acquire the knowledge and skills to develop their own research ideas on the theme and select and use the methods and sources to carry out the research. More detailed information on the theme of the upcoming summer school is published on the Posthumus website at the latest in January of each year. In principle, the summer school takes place in the first week of July.

Seminars are scheduled in the mornings and include discussions of the literature, explorations of primary sources, lectures by guest speakers and an excursion. Students are expected to attend all seminars and prepare for them via readings and assignments. They develop a research idea related to the course topic and present this idea in the form of a poster presentation on the last day. For the 3 EC option, students additionally conduct a pilot study assessing the research potential of a body of sources and submit a 3,000 word report within three months after the summer school.

Time investment for the 2 EC option is c. 56 hours (16 hours preparation in advance, 40 hours during the summer school). Additional time investment for the 3 EC option is c. 28 hours for the pilot study and the report..

## OTHER TRAINING ACTIVITIES

In addition to the courses that are tailor-made for them, the N.W. Posthumus Institute organises several other training activities that may be interesting for Research Master students. Occasionally, the N.W. Posthumus Institute organises 'Masterclasses' for PhD candidates, which are, in some cases, open to Research Master students too. In this training activity, a well-known 'master' shares knowledge with a small group of students. Masterclasses focus on a particular subject, theme or research concept.

As a Research Master Student you are also very welcome to attend the annual Posthumus conference or the workshops and seminars organised by our fellows. These, and our other activities, will be announced in the electronic newsletter of the N.W. Posthumus Institute. If you wish to subscribe to our newsletter, please visit [www.posthumusinstitute.org](http://www.posthumusinstitute.org).

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Posthumus Research Masters Courses are open to students pursuing a Research Master in either History or a similar discipline such as Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, or Geography. Advanced students who are not enrolled in a Research Master programme but who do have PhD plans can also apply. These students should, however, be recommended by the contact person at their institution (see next page). The courses are complementary, but can also be followed separately. Graduates who have successfully engaged in the Posthumus network are highly qualified to apply for a PhD position in economic or social history.

### Application procedure

If you would like to apply for (one of) the courses, fill in the application form on [posthumusinstitute.org](https://posthumusinstitute.org). Please note that the deadlines for applications for each course lie about 2 weeks before the start of the respective courses; you will find the exact start dates on our website: <https://posthumusinstitute.org/rma-global-economic-social-history/>. If you have questions or would like more information, please send an e-mail to the Office Manager: [posthumus@uu.nl](mailto:posthumus@uu.nl)

### Reimbursement of travel costs

If you live quite far from the location where the course meetings are held, please inquire at the Posthumus Institute about the possibility of receiving some reimbursement for your travel costs.



## WHOM TO CONTACT?

If you have any questions concerning the Posthumus Institute, you can always send an e-mail to [posthumus@uu.nl](mailto:posthumus@uu.nl). If you prefer to have personal contact with a staff member you already know, you can contact one of the people below.

University of Amsterdam - Dr Justina Wubs-Mrozewicz

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Professor Petra van Dam

University of Antwerp - Professor Tim Soens

Vrije Universiteit Brussel - Professor Wouter Ryckbosch

University of Groningen (Arts) - Professor Hilde Bras

University of Groningen (Econ.) - Professor Herman de Jong

Eindhoven University of Technology – Professor Erik van der Vleuten

Erasmus University Rotterdam - Professor Ben Wubs

Fryske Akademy - Professor Hanno Brand

Ghent University - Professor Thijs Lambrecht

Internat. Institute of Social History - Professor Ulbe Bosma

Leiden University - Professor Marlou Schrover

Maastricht University – Dr Joris Roosen

Radboud University - Professor Jan Kok

Utrecht University – Professor Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk

Wageningen University - Professor Ewout Frankema

# STATEMENT

We want our students, staff, and any other person or party involved with the N.W. Posthumus Institute to feel at ease, mutually respected, and included. In case you may be approached in a manner that you consider undesirable, e.g. harassment or sexual harassment, discrimination, aggression, violence or bullying, do not hesitate to contact one of our Confidential Advisors or one of our staff members to talk in confidence about the matter and the steps to be taken to help you feel safe again. You can do this even as a witness: social safety is something we are all responsible for. We understand that stepping forward takes courage; keep in mind that your signals may not only help to solve your own situation, but may also prevent others from future harm.

The confidential advisors will explore possible solutions together with you, and will point out appropriate institutional support if necessary. The advisors will also register complaints and report to the Executive Committee and the Scientific Director, so appropriate action can be taken. It goes without saying that every step in this process will occur in consultation with you and is based on anonymity.

You can find the names and contact details of our current Confidential Advisors on the contact page of our website,  
<https://posthumusinstitute.org/contact/>



*Market vendors at Utrecht market, 1925, by unknown photographer, X 96365, Collection Het Utrechts Archief (Public Domain)*

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