

Call for Papers - Workshop "Trust, institutions, and capitalism in early modern Europe"

On Friday 24 April 2026, the section Economic, Social and Demographic History of Radboud University, supported by the N.W. Posthumus Institute, will host the international workshop on "Trust, institutions, and capitalism in early modern Europe", with prof. Craig Muldrew (University of Cambridge). The workshop is organized by Posthumus PhD Marte Stoffers (Radboud University).

The workshop wants to explore the relationship between the behaviours and norms of economic actors and the accumulation of credit and capital in early modern Europe. Examples of themes that can be explored include, but **are not limited to**:

- identifying the role of individuals in the creation of formal and informal institutions;
- the interactions between economic agents and organizations;
- the role of social and cultural capital for generating trust in rural or urban societies;
- the role of fiat money in economic development, or;
- the emergence of capitalism more broadly.

The workshop will be in the morning (10:00-14:30) and is open to early-career researchers (MA/PhD/Postdoc) who wish to receive feedback on their (ongoing) research. 4 participants will be invited to present their work in short presentations, after which the floor is open for feedback and discussion.

Participants are expected to precirculate a paper and read each other's papers. Submissions may take the form of draft or finished papers, or dissertation chapters written in English. As the aim of the workshop is exchange and discussion, contributions in work-in-progress form are welcome.

If you are interested in participating, please submit an abstract of max. 500 words and a one-page CV to marte.stoffers@ru.nl. The deadline for submission is 6 March 2026. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 11 March 2026. Papers will need to be submitted for precirculation by 10 April 2026.

The day before the workshop, Thursday 23 April, prof. Muldrew will present his new book *The Capitalist Self: the Social Origins of Financial Capitalism in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2025), at the ESDG seminar of Radboud University in room 9.14 of the Erasmus building from 15:30-17:00. The seminar will be followed by drinks and dinner with the speaker. To sign up for the seminar, please follow [this link](#).

Participation in the seminar and the workshop is free of charge. Participants are welcome to attend only one of the events, but participants in the workshop are especially encouraged to also attend the lecture during the seminar. For further details or questions about participation, please contact Marte Stoffers (marte.stoffers@ru.nl).

Craig Muldrew is the Professor of Early Modern Economic and Social History at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge. His research focuses on three areas. The first is the investigation of the economic and social role of trust in the development of the market economy between 1500-1700. This was published initially in the book *The Economy of Obligation* (1997) and concentrates on the centrality of reputation to financial credit, and the insecurity of wealth in a world of innumerable debts. In this work he has examined the relationship between the actual working of economic contracts and obligations in relation to the development of natural law theory and commercial society. The second area is the living standards and work of agricultural labourers in the early modern English economy, published as a monograph entitled *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness* (2011). The third area offers a reinterpretation of the Financial Revolution and redefines our understanding of capitalism as a socially constructed set of institutions and beliefs. He argues that, before a society can become capitalist, most of its members have to have some engagement with 'capital' as a thing - a form of stored intangible financial value.