

**Workshop *The Impact of Presidential Biography: Correcting Historiography and Entering Public Political Debates***

Friday 29 April, 2016

Time: 14.00-17.00 h

Location: Academy Building, University of Groningen, room A7

Registration (free): [biografie.instituut@rug.nl](mailto:biografie.instituut@rug.nl)

This workshop will present contributions on the subject of presidential biography: an important but also contested subgenre of biography. Contributions will discuss the history and extent of this genre, its role in historical and political sciences, and as ‘anchor points’ in the public sphere (historiography and political opinion/ideology, the ownership of history). This workshop is a kick off for an edited volume on Presidential Biography, to be published by Brill in the series ‘Biography Studies’.

The American presidential biographer Nigel Hamilton, one of the editors of the volume, has stated that biography should be considered as an important genre that can correct existing historical interpretations. In what way and in what aspects can the presidential biographer as a biographer-historian correct historical interpretations? Should the biographer-historian be seen as someone who enters political debates, when writing a presidential biography – i.e. advancing a political-historiographical agenda?

The volume will provide an overview of American presidential biography by defining and assessing it internationally. Methodological questions and the status of presidential biography within the academic sphere will be addressed. The volume emphatically seeks to investigate the role of presidential biographies in the sphere of public opinion. In what way may the biographer-historian be seen as a ‘judge’; what is the role of the presidential biographer, if any, in the active public political arena? Can examination of this role offer insight into larger questions of the ‘ownership of history,’ and collective relationships with the past?

**Speakers:**

Doeko Bosscher (University of Groningen)

David Chanoff (Boston College)

Binne de Haan (University of Groningen)

Nigel Hamilton (University of Massachusetts Boston)

Jonne Harmsma (University of Groningen)

Lindie Koorts (University of the Free State, South-Africa)

Joanny Moulin (Aix-Marseille Université)

Hans Renders (University of Groningen)