



Dirk Langendijk, Anti-British demonstration in Rotterdam (1781).

This workshop is on entirely new work for me, a biography of an unknown Dutch woman called Marguerite Wolters who headed a Europe-wide spy agency for nearly twenty years (1771–1790). She sold her intelligence exclusively to the British government, who used it to consolidate its rising superpower position in the world, especially in the aftermath of the disastrous American Revolution. I am still in the research phase of this project. In the talk I'll speak about some of its key challenges. These include language difficulties, handwriting difficulties, and sheer volume – there are more than 10,000 pages of her intelligence in Britain's National Archives. I'll speak about the mixed blessings of Generative AI in solving these issues. The biggest problem, however, is in getting to know a subject who by definition did not want to be known. Biographies of spies amplify issues common to much historical biography.

Spying on a Spy: A Dutch Agent for the British, Marguerite Wolters, 1723–1800



Professor Kate Fullagar FAHA is Professor of History at the Australian Catholic University.

Details

Thursday 26 February
2026, 11am–12pm

In person

Seminar room 6.71,
Level 6, RSSS Building,
146 Ellery Crescent,
ANU

Zoom

[bit.ly/
BioWorkshop2022](https://bit.ly/BioWorkshop2022)

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