



UCL

London as a Centre of Low Countries Studies

London is indisputably the premiere centre in the English-speaking world for the study of Low Countries history and culture. London's resources in this field are truly extraordinary. Museums such as the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection, and the British Museum hold major collections of Dutch and Flemish art, including top pieces by great masters from the Golden Ages of Flanders and Holland. The Dutch and Flemish book collections are the biggest to be found anywhere outside the Low Countries. With some 17,500 seventeenth-century Dutch imprints, the British Library's holdings of early modern materials rival those in the national libraries of the Netherlands and Belgium. The National Archives in Kew contain a vast quantity of materials relating especially to relations between Britain and the Low Countries. The Institute for Historical Research (part of the University of London) hosts the Low Countries Seminar, where scholars present the findings of recent research. London also has, at UCL, the only Department of Dutch in the UK, with an MA in the Dutch Golden Age and other programmes.

The Committee for Low Countries Studies in London co-ordinates activity and facilitates the exchange of information between individuals active in Low Countries studies in London. It is composed of leading scholars plus representatives of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Embassy of Belgium in London, and Flanders House, which represents the Flemish Government. It is overseen by an Advisory Board.



Frans Hals, Banquet of the Officers of the St. George Civic Guard (1624-27), photo © Margareta Svensson, courtesy the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem

UCL – London's Global University

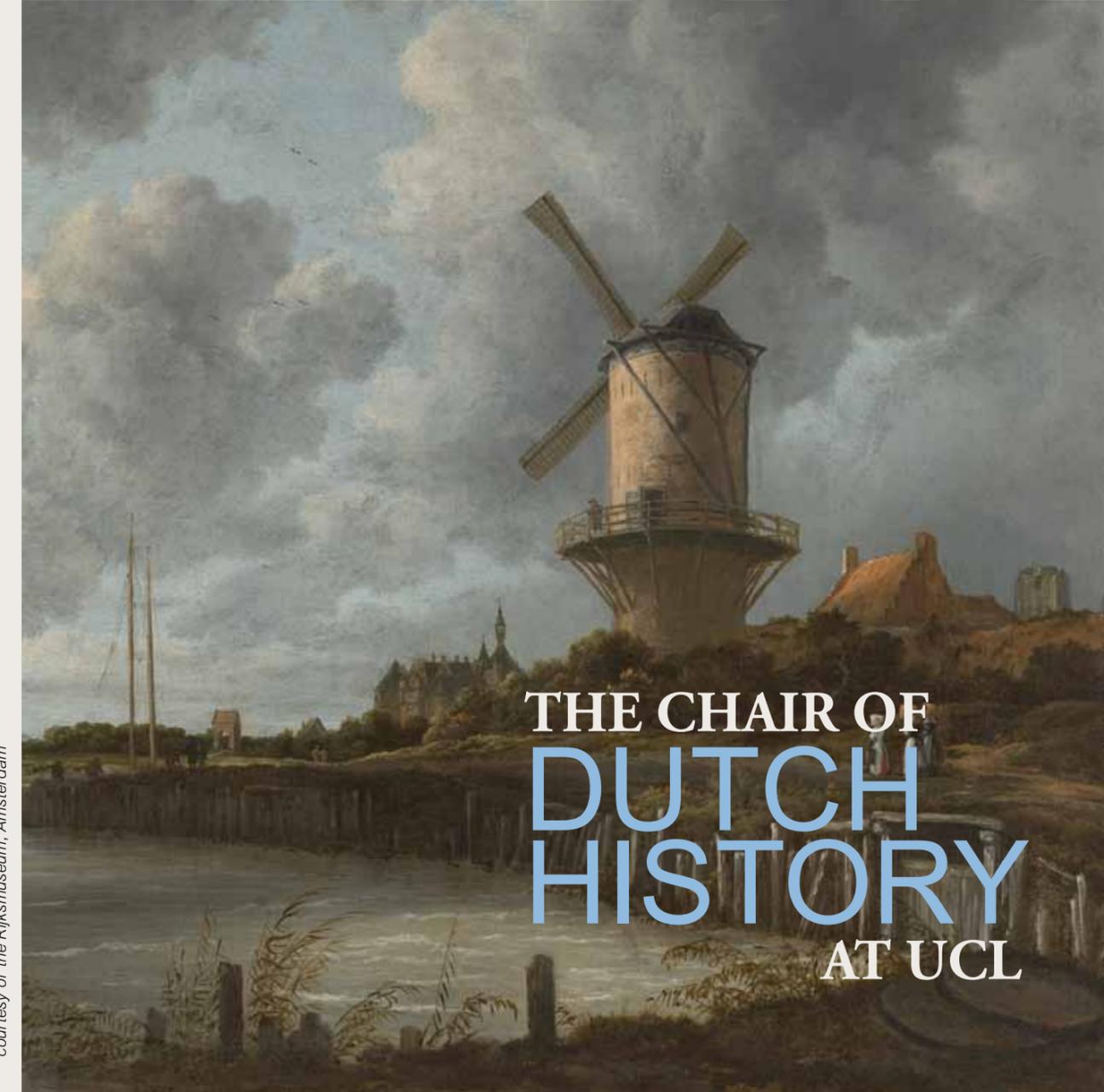
UCL (University College London) is London's leading multidisciplinary university. Based in the heart of London, with over 8,000 staff and 22,000 students, UCL's excellence extends across all academic disciplines. In the 2009 Times Higher Education QS rankings, UCL was ranked fourth in the world. No fewer than 20 Nobel prizewinners have come from the UCL community.

Founded in 1826, UCL opened up English higher education for the first time to people of any race, class, or religion. It was also the first university in England to welcome women on equal terms with men. That tradition remains alive today. UCL's research strategy commits it to addressing a series of 'Grand Challenges' in order to tackle the world's problems, like the need for intercultural understanding. Some 34% of UCL students come from outside the UK, attracted from over 150 countries around the globe.

If you would like to speak to us further about the opportunities presented by UCL's Chair in Dutch History, please contact:

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THE CHAIR OF
 DUTCH
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 AT UCL



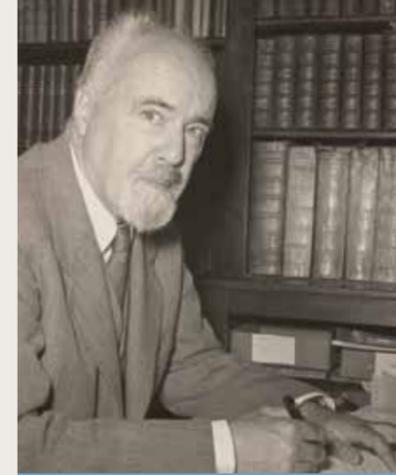
The Chair

The Chair of Dutch History at UCL has played an important role in Anglo-Dutch relations ever since it was established in 1919, in the aftermath of World War I. Along with the Queen Wilhelmina Chair in New York, it has highlighted for English speakers the contributions of the Netherlands to the development of Britain and America, conveyed the common values the countries share, and testified to the interweaving of their histories. Today, it remains central to promoting the study of Dutch history and culture abroad.

The Chair also fosters the close integration that exists between London and the scholarly and cultural world of the Low Countries. This is especially evident in the vibrant London seminar in the History of the Low Countries, which enjoys an excellent reputation among Dutch and Belgian scholars, who are regular participants. The British Library has played an indispensable role in developing the Dutch Short Title Catalogue. By inspiring and organizing Low Countries studies in London, the holders of the chair have made the University of London an intellectual companion to the Dutch universities. In addition, the holders of the chair have always been a presence on the Dutch scholarly and cultural scene.

The London Chair has enjoyed a series of highly distinguished occupants, notably the world-renowned historians Pieter Geyl, Ernst Kossmann and Jonathan Israel, who made major contributions to the understanding of Dutch history and drew international attention to the importance of that history. The current holder of the Chair, Ben Kaplan, extends this impressive tradition by interpreting Dutch religious history within a European framework and reaching out to a broad audience. His magisterial survey *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Harvard University Press, 2007) addressed one of the burning issues of our day: the possibilities for toleration in a world of strong religious beliefs. As Prof Kaplan showed, this is an issue on which the Dutch experience has much to teach us.

Widely acclaimed by reviewers, the book attracted much media attention (The New York Times, The Economist, The Nation, Times Higher Education Supplement, NRC Handelsblad, Vrij Nederland, etc.) and won the American Academy of Religion's prize for the best book in religious history.



Pieter Geyl held the Chair of Dutch History at UCL from 1919–1935

The Case for an Endowment

Financial support for the Chair of Dutch History is now urgently needed. Over its more than 90 years of existence, the Chair has always been partially funded by the Dutch government. Due to budget cuts, that funding is coming to an end in 2011, putting the survival of the Chair in jeopardy. In the past, private donors have also made important contributions, but the Chair has never had a proper endowment. Rather, it has gone from one temporary, contingent funding arrangement to another. It is time for a permanent solution. If the Chair is not to be endangered again in future, it needs to be put on a firm financial basis. We are therefore seeking a private donor who wishes to have their, or a loved one's, name permanently associated with this distinguished post and is able to provide it with an endowment at the £2–3 million level. In their honour, the Chair would henceforth be named after them.

The donor will also be honoured at UCL through a special inaugural event, announcement of the gift to international media, and membership of the Chair of Council's Circle.



Johannes Vermeer, *A Young Woman Standing at a Virginal* (c. 1670–72), courtesy of The National Gallery, London