

## ADVANCED SEMINAR DATINI-ESTER FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORIANS

2026



Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia economica "F. Datini"  
and  
European School for Training in Economic and Social Historical Research (ESTER)

### Call for Papers

The Fondazione **Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini"** and the **European School for Training in Economic and Social Historical Research (ESTER)** announce their eleventh jointly-organized **Datini-ESTER** Advanced Seminar for economic and social historians on 10-16 May 2026, in Prato (Italy). The topic of the seminar is:

#### **"From craft guilds to unions"**

**ESTER**, established in 1991, is an international postgraduate network incorporating more than 60 European Universities. **ESTER** organizes research training in the form of both the annual Research Design Course for starting PhD-students and a series of Advanced Seminars on special themes within economic and social history.

**"F. Datini" International Institute of Economic History** was founded in 1967 by Federigo Melis and Fernand Braudel. The aim of the Institute is the study of pre-industrial economic history (thirteenth-eighteenth centuries) and the creation of a space for historical culture, making comparison between different methodologies and schools of research easier and supporting young scholars during their formative years.

The topic of the **Datini-Ester** seminar is closely related to the theme of the congress yearly organized by the **"F. Datini" International Institute of Economic History** and devoted in 2026 to *Trade associations in the economy of pre-industrial Europe (12th–18th centuries)*. **The 2026 Datini-Ester seminar will deal with** Craft guilds and unions. We particularly welcome papers on the development of trade associations, their functioning in terms of providing education, quality control, and social security, as well as exercising political influence and restricting competition. Papers may cover topics such as the emergence of craft and merchant guilds, their disappearance and eventual replacement by unions. We also welcome papers devoted to the way employers and managers organized the production process.

**We welcome scholars working on both the macro and micro level. Papers can cover any relevant aspect and any period from Antiquity until today.**

**Participants in the Datini-ESTER advanced seminar can receive 4 ECTS credits.**

### **Description and organization of the Advanced Datini-ESTER Seminar**

The seminar is jointly organized by the members of the board of the Datini-Ester Seminar: Guido Alfani (Fondazione Datini), Ben Gales (ESTER), Jaco Zuijderduijn (ESTER), Francesco Ammannati (Fondazione Datini). The members of the board, together with other colleagues, specialist in the field, will participate in the seminar as instructors.

The Datini-ESTER Advanced Seminar consists of two complementary parts:

- a) **the participation in the international Datini congress (LVII Settimana di Studi)**, devoted in 2026 to *Trade associations* in the economy of the pre-industrial Europe (12th-18th centuries). The congress will be held in Prato, from May 10 (opening 18.00 with the inaugural speech in the municipal building) until May 14 (afternoon) 2026. For information on the congress: <https://www.istitutodatini.it/temi/eng/temi57.htm>

- b) **a two-day workshop** from May 15 (morning) until May 16 (late afternoon), in a reserved room of the [Datini Palace in Prato](#).

The workshop will bring together a number of senior researchers from different countries. Prior to the workshop, students will be asked to prepare a paper. They will have the opportunity of presenting their research project dealing with one or more core problems of their research field and discussing them with both senior researchers and other fellow students. Each paper will be presented by the author during the seminar and then examined and discussed by one of the participating students and by one of the instructors, after which a general discussion among all participants will take place.

The students will be guests of the Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini" from Sunday May 10 (in) until Sunday May 17 morning (out). On May 16, at the end of the seminar, the students will receive diplomas attesting their participation in the Datini congress and Datini-ESTER. **The diplomas will be delivered only to the students who will take part BOTH in the Datini congress AND the seminar.**

Besides providing a feedback opportunity for ongoing projects, the seminar will provide the opportunity to attend the international Datini congress, and foster cooperation between economic and social historians coming from different countries.

**This Advanced Datini-Ester Seminar is open to 15 PhD-students and Post-Docs (who finished their doctorate less than five years prior to the seminar).**

## Applications and admission:

Students should [apply online](#), and present a 800 words abstract of the content of their paper dealing with economic exchanges.

A first selection of students (by ESTER and Datini) will take place on the basis of the abstracts. After this stage, students who are accepted will be asked to draft their research paper.

The final admission to the course depends upon the following points:

- the student must meet the deadline for submission of his/her paper (whose deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2026);
- the paper must be of sufficient academic quality and the level of the English used in the paper must be sufficient.

The language of the papers, such as that of the seminar, will be English.

## Dates and location

The Advanced Seminar will take place in Prato, Italy, from May 10 (Sunday with the **inauguration of the congress**) to May 16 (Saturday), so the day of arrival will be Sunday May 10 and the departure Sunday morning May 17. Both the students and instructors will meet on Sunday evening (10<sup>th</sup> of May) at 7 pm o'clock for a dinner together (the place to be defined). **The seminar will start on Friday 16 at 9 am.** Students wishing to participate are requested to send their application no later than the **15th October 2025**. To this purpose the students will use the [online form](#). The selection of students will be completed by the end of October 2026. Deadline for submission of papers by accepted students is **March 15th 2026**. Following that date, the papers will be made available to all participants.

Application forms are available on the ESTER website

<https://posthumusinstitute.org/>

## Dates: a summary (2025-26):

July 2025 - Call for Applications

15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 - Deadline for Applications

31<sup>st</sup> October 2025 - Selection completed, applicants informed

15<sup>th</sup> March 2026 - Deadline paper submission

31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 - Papers online for reading

10<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (morning or afternoon): arrival in Prato

10<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (18.00 inaugural speech in the municipal building)

10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May (afternoon) 2026 – International Datini Congress

15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (late afternoon) – Advanced Seminar

16<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (end of the seminar) delivery of diplomas

17<sup>th</sup> May 2026 (morning) departure

## **Funding**

Costs for accommodation and catering will be covered by the organizers. The organizers will not cover travel costs (possibly covered by students' home institutions). Travel arrangements to and from Prato have to be organized by the selected participants themselves.

The workshop will be funded by the **Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini"** and by the **ESTER Graduate School**.

## **Contact**

For inquiries concerning this course, please contact ESTER:

ESTER/N.W. Posthumus Institute

Faculty of Arts

P.O. Box 9103

The Netherlands

E-mail: [\*\*posthumus@uu.nl\*\*](mailto:posthumus@uu.nl)

For inquiries concerning the hospitality in Prato, the students have to contact the secretary of the Datini Institute on the dates of their arrival and departure:

Letizia Finocchiaro - Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini" di Prato

E-mail: [\*\*letizia@istitutodatini.it\*\*](mailto:letizia@istitutodatini.it)