



Roosevelt  
Institute for  
American  
Studies

*Pursuing the Rooseveltian Century*

# Invitation

*Roosevelt Lecture by Sara Polak  
on Friday 8 April 2022*



Sara Polak is a university lecturer of American studies and English literary studies at Leiden University.

Her research focus is on the cultural and media politics of image-making and memory-making of US presidents, and on presidents and their use of media in a broad sense.

She was a visiting fellow at Yale University and a recipient of an NWO Rubicon postdoctoral grant. She is currently working on an NWO project titled “Playing Politics: Media Platforms Making Worlds.”

Sara Polak is the author of the new book *FDR in American Memory – Roosevelt and the Making of an Icon*, just published with Johns Hopkins University Press in 2021, and upon which her Roosevelt lecture will be based.

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## FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT IN AMERICAN MEMORY

**LECTURER** Dr. Sara Polak

**DATE** Friday 8 April 2022 at 4:00 pm

**LOCATION** Filmzaal (Auditorium) Provinciehuis, Abdij 9, 4331 BK Middelburg

In polls of historians and political scientists, Franklin Delano Roosevelt consistently ranks among the top three American presidents. Roosevelt enjoyed an enormous political and cultural reach, one that stretched past his presidency and across the world. A grand narrative of Roosevelt's crucial role in the twentieth century persists: the notion that American ideology, embodied by FDR, overcame the Depression and won World War II, while fascism, communism, and imperialism—and their ignoble figureheads—fought one another to death in Europe. This grand narrative is flawed and problematic, legitimizing the United States's cultural, diplomatic, and military role in the world order, but it has meant that FDR continues to loom large in American culture.

Based on her new book, *FDR in American Memory*, Sara Polak analyzes in this lecture Roosevelt's construction as a cultural icon in American memory from two perspectives. First, she examines him as a historical leader, one who carefully and intentionally built his public image. Second, Polak looks at portrayals and negotiations of the FDR icon in cultural memory from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, arguing that he deliberately positioned himself in such a way as to allow almost any narrative to adopt him as a relevant historical example, even down to the present day.

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To attend the program, please register (preferably **before 31 March 2022**) via the following registration link:

<https://bit.ly/3Gr6cck>





This lecture is sponsored by the



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