



Education reforms seminar series presents

Dr Susannah Wright, Oxford Brookes University

“Morality and Citizenship in English Schools
 1897-1944: Secularists and Educational Reform”

November 4, at 2.30 p, CET on zoom



Susanne Wright is a Senior Lecturer in Education Studies in the School of Education. She joined the School as Research Fellow, in 2007, before becoming a Senior Lecturer in 2009. She teaches in the BA Education Studies, the MA Education and also supervises PhD students. Her main research and teaching interests relate to the history of education and childhood, with a focus on themes such as secularism, war and peace. She is one of the three editors of a peer-reviewed journal, *History of Education*. She is currently a member of the Research Grants Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and is research group leader of the 'Humanistic Perspectives' research group of the School of Education.



Timetable for the lecture

- 14.30-14.35: Opening - the purpose of the network and the lecture series v. Johannes Westberg
14:35-15:00: Mini lecture by Susannah Wright
15.05-15.10: Short break
15.10-15.20: Two respondents open the floor with a short comment and a question each
15.20 - : Answers followed by open discussion
15.55-16:00: Summing up and info about next month's seminar

Morality and Citizenship in English Schools 1897-1944: Secularists and Educational Reform

In this talk I will draw on my research into a secularist minority who attempted to influence and reform English schooling from 1897-1944 through promoting secular approaches to moral education and education for citizenship. I will discuss the ways in which secularists attempted to enact this reform (through establishing their own pressure groups like the Moral Instruction League, or through engaging with larger groupings (like the League of Nations Union) with predominantly Christian norms. I will examine what they aimed to achieve, both specifically in terms of the teaching and learning in schools, and more broadly in terms of their visions of a wider society and what it meant to be both a national and international citizen, picking up on common aims but also divisions among secularists. A final section will consider responses to secularist efforts. As a small minority in a predominantly Christian country, it is unsurprising that many of their arguments were rejected or ignored (though at times they received surprising levels of support). I argue that their significance might lie in their ongoing impact on educational debates about values in schools and the ideological foundations of education for citizenship. Even in a predominantly Christian country, they ensured that Christian norms could not be taken for granted and the call for secular alternatives had to be acknowledged. . .

About Susannah Wright:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/templates/pages/staff.aspx?wid=&op=full&uid=p0075157>

Recommended reading:

S. Wright, *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches, 1897-1944* (Palgrave, 2017)

S. Wright, *Educating the Secular Citizen*, Social History Society Exchange blog post, 19 November 2018, https://socialhistory.org.uk/shs_exchange/educating-the-secular-citizen/

Registration:

Registration for the zoom session till November 3, 2020: l.van.der.weerd@rug.nl