**Call for Participation Abstracts**

**Speech as Protest: Being Heard and Taking up Space in the Premodern World**

Newberry Library - October 22-23, 2020  
Submission Deadline: June 1, 2020

What constitutes speech? What is a public space, and how is it policed? How are the boundaries drawn between those who want to be seen and heard, and those who want them to remain absent? This interdisciplinary symposium will address how the permeable boundaries between public presence and absence were created, enforced, and challenged in the medieval and early modern periods. Ada Palmer, professor of history at the University of Chicago and renowned author, will deliver the keynote address, “The Modern Political Impact of How We Talk about Premodern Censorship,” on Thursday evening and will participate in the final roundtable.

Through roundtable discussions and collection presentations, the symposium will explore how various premodern publics were formed and contested by a range of cultural forces. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, social mobility, public spaces, public performance, printing and censorship, control over one’s body, slavery and personhood, aural or visual representation, and tolerance or intolerance of religious sects. Submissions from across the medieval and early modern periods from a range of geographic locations and premodern fields are welcome. The symposium will frame discussions about these premodern subjects as part of a larger conversation about the ways that rights exist as cultural artifacts with premodern histories, as well as how premodern scholars can best bring these histories about premodern publics into contemporary public conversations.

**There are two ways to participate in this dynamic discussion.** Abstracts of 250 words and a short CV should be sent to renaissance@newberry.org by June 1, 2020. This symposium is planned to take place at the Newberry Library in Chicago, but it will be virtually accessible for possible remote participants if travel is restricted. Faculty and graduate students from consortium institutions may be eligible to apply for Newberry Renaissance Consortium Grants to travel to the Newberry.

- **Roundtable Discussions:** Graduate students, early career scholars, professors, and independent researchers of all backgrounds are welcome to submit a 250-word abstract to participate in a roundtable discussion. The abstract should include how the chosen premodern subject relates to the theme of the symposium. Roundtables will consist of 10-minute presentations (images welcome) followed by moderated discussion. To facilitate discussion, short pre-circulated materials, such as extended abstracts and possible discussion questions, will be submitted by panelists in advance and made available to the audience; papers will not be read aloud.

- **Collection Presentations and Digital Teaching Guide:** Graduate students and early career scholars are invited to submit a 250-word abstract proposing one item from the vast premodern collections in the Newberry Library to present at the symposium; please include an explanation of why the item was chosen in relation to the symposium’s theme. Presentations will be no more than 10 minutes and should provide context for the item and how it relates to the larger conversation. Chosen presenters will have the opportunity to participate and receive authorial credit in a related Newberry Digital Collection for the Classroom.

**Please note:** Because the Newberry Library is currently not open to the public due to COVID-19, direct any questions about the materials from the catalog that are not digitized and publicly available to the Center for Renaissance Studies at renaissance@newberry.org.

**Questions?** Please contact organizer and CRS Postdoctoral Fellow Elisa Jones at jonese@newberry.org.