

Call for Proposals: Processing the Pandemic

Submission Deadline: Friday, October 29, 2021

Organizers

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The Center for Renaissance Studies and the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the Newberry Library, and the Warwick Centre for the Study of the Renaissance are pleased to announce that abstracts are now being accepted for participation in *Processing the Pandemic*, a multi-year series of seminars and symposia that will explore how the experiences of the past may guide society's emotional and social responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The defining experiences of COVID-19 have raised new questions about how we approach the study of emotions and trauma responses—such as how communities collectively respond to traumatic events, which emotional expressions are socially valued, and whether shared emotional experiences can transcend social, cultural, or temporal divides—and the practical applications of such studies in rebuilding our post-pandemic world. Events over the past two years have called upon us to rethink many of our long-held assumptions, while the pandemic itself has starkly demonstrated ongoing social inequalities and the insidious legacies of settler colonialism and white supremacy.

How can we—as an open community of scholars, teachers, archivists, social workers, and practitioners—learn from these historical experiences and from each other in transformative transdisciplinary ways? How can such dialogues reframe existing discussions around the history of the emotions and our responses to trauma? Moreover, how can the study of peoples' responses to traumatic events before 1800 help guide our own experience of the pandemic?

Processing the Pandemic will attempt to trace new pathways to answer these questions. In two hybrid symposia and four virtual seminars, we will look to the past and present in order to explore how others have coped and navigated the complex constellations of emotions that result from such crises. **The first hybrid symposium will focus on Loss, and will take place April 14-15, 2022 at the Newberry Library in Chicago.**

More broadly, these roundtable events seek to foster open and transformative conversations on these topics between scholars, artists, and professionals in a variety of humanities fields: Native American and Indigenous studies, anti-racism and postcolonial studies, medieval studies, early modern studies, and more. We seek proposals from any field, discipline, region, or area of artistic practice that demonstrate a particular interest in how individuals and cultures have processed great crises in the past, and that are keyed to particular emotional responses. These guiding responses may include, but are not limited to the broader headings of: Loss, Melancholy, Anger and Alienation, Resolve, Vulnerability, Gratitude, Resiliency, and Hope.

The proposals can be one of two types:

1. 10-15 minute presentations for roundtable discussions on emotional responses to traumatic events before 1800, to be included in one of the two hybrid symposia.
2. 1-2 hour virtual seminars, pedagogic in nature, that would use primary sources to explore one of the guiding emotional responses and demonstrate how the experience and/or expression of this emotion in the past can inform the present (widely defined). Co-proposals are warmly welcomed for such seminars.

Please submit a proposal and a brief bio to renaissance@newberry.org by Friday, October 29, 2021.

The proposal should include:

1. Whether you are proposing a brief paper or discussion of a creative piece for a roundtable, or a virtual seminar.
2. The guiding emotion or response your contribution addresses (e.g., Loss, Resiliency, Melancholy, Anger, Hope).
3. Whether you would prefer to attend a virtual or in-person event.
4. Whether your paper/seminar might be of interest to practitioners (social workers, nurses, etc...).
5. A 300-word abstract.
6. If proposing a seminar, the primary source(s) the seminar would use.

If you have any questions about the proposal process or the series as a whole, please send an email to fletcher@newberry.org.