

## **CFP: "BACK TO THE FUTURE: VISIONS OF TOMORROW IN HISTORY"**

Discussion published by Kevin Baker on Thursday, December 6, 2018

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

May 3, 2019

Location:

Illinois, United States

Subject Fields:

Humanities, History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Environmental History / Studies, Economic History / Studies, Popular Culture Studies

Graduate Student Conference - Friday, MAY 3, 2019

Location: Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

**Proposal deadline Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

The “The history of the future” can, at first, seem like a contraction in terms. But the past several years have seen increasing scholarly interest in the study of past futures. Not only are utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic visions of the future interesting in their own right, but they also offer historians a lens to reexamine core disciplinary issues of contingency and historical change. Looking at the hopes and fears people had for future can tell us about their priorities and reveal what kind of change they considered possible or likely.

The future was (and is) the site of political contestation. Scientists, politicians, avant-garde artists, science fiction writers, revolutionaries, environmentalists, parents, teachers, religious figures, and corporations all have had different ways of knowing, envisioning, and shaping the future. Debates over what the future should be like—and whether humanity will be around to see it—continue to animate debates to the present day.

Building on these themes, this conference invites submissions from historians working in all fields and scholars of related disciplines seeking to answer these and related questions:

- How have representations and definitions of the future changed over time?
- How can we historicize the concept of “the future?” Are there reasons why cultural depictions of the future and debates about its shape seem more salient and urgent at certain historical moments?
- What scientific, artistic, and religious approaches have been used to imagine and predict the future?
- How have governments, firms, institutions, social movements, and individuals sought to manage uncertainty about the future?
- How have families and communities envisioned and tried to shape the future through the training of children?

The conference will take place on **May 3, 2019** on Northwestern's campus in Evanston, Illinois. The keynote speaker will be Professor W. Patrick McCRAY, a historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara, author of *The Visioneers: How a Group of Elite Scientists Pursued Space Colonies, Nanotechnology, and a Limitless Future*(2013). You may read more about Professor McCray at <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/w-patrick-mccray/>and <http://www.patrickmccray.com>.

Please send a paper proposal of no more than one page (250 words) to conference convener Kevin Baker [using this form](#) by **Monday, January 28, 2019**. A committee of Northwestern history faculty will select papers. Upon acceptance, conference papers of 10-12 pages will need to be submitted by Friday, April 19, 2019, in time for review by faculty panel commentators. Conference presentations will be limited to 10 minutes to encourage discussion.

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<https://goo.gl/forms/gt7Y55tL83mxy2Rq1>