

[Deadline Extended: CFP for Insecurity Conference, Center for 21st Century Studies, UW-Milwaukee](#)

Announcement published by Maureen Ryan on Friday, January 11, 2019

Type:

Conference

Date:

May 2, 2019

Location:

United States

Subject Fields:

Digital Humanities, Environmental History / Studies, Humanities, Immigration & Migration History / Studies, Popular Culture Studies

DEADLINE EXTENDED:

To submit a paper for the conference, please send your brief CV (1-page) followed by an abstract (up to 250 words) in one PDF file by **Tuesday, January 15, 2019** to Richard Grusin, Director, Center for 21st Century Studies, at c21@uwm.edu.

This conference proposes the concept of “insecurity” as one of the governing logics of economic, political, and social life in the West at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. Insecurity picks up on, and challenges, several key concepts of 21st century studies, especially “precarity,” “securitization,” and “resilience.”

The notion of insecurity has affinities with, but is more capacious than, “precarity,” which has been used by cultural, economic, and sociopolitical theorists to describe the structural vulnerability that runs through the complex historical formation of labor under which we operate today. Like precarity, insecurity manifests itself in terms of diminished access to housing, food, healthcare, and other vital human and social welfare resources. Both precarity and insecurity address the increasing economic inequality of the 21st century, in which the gap between individual and corporate wealth and the income of those who work (or are unable to work) for a living grows increasingly vast and unbridgeable. Our definition of insecurity begins with and is predicated upon the structural economic injustice and precarity that predominate in our present historical moment, but expands the concept of precarity from its primarily economic meaning to include affective, environmental, and geopolitical concerns.

Insecurity also picks up on and challenges the basic premises of “securitization,” which refers to the burgeoning structure of state and non-state surveillance that has proliferated in the US and globally after 9/11. In fact, it would not be mistaken to insist that rather than making populations, transportation, and information systems more secure, securitization systematically *produces insecurity*—evident most dramatically in the treatment of refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers across the globe, but also in the increased danger of cybercrimes or cyber war, terrorism, climate disasters, global epidemics, and economic crashes.

Political theorists and legal scholars have identified the “insecurity state,” which gets at some of what

Citation: Maureen Ryan. *Deadline Extended: CFP for Insecurity Conference, Center for 21st Century Studies, UW-Milwaukee*. H-Announce. 01-11-2019.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/3549094/deadline-extended-cfp-insecurity-conference-center-21st-century>
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

we mean to address. But we mean as well to take up the way in which surveillance and securitization generate both individual and collective feelings of insecurity. These are experienced in a highly securitized daily life, in which the ubiquity of social media, data mining, GPS tracking, and other surveillance technologies enables the collection of unfathomable quantities of data in the name of securing the state from named and unnamed threats which are themselves produced by the apparatus of securitization.

We also intend insecurity to challenge the broadly transdisciplinary concept of “resilience,” which has emerged in the discourse of 21st century neoliberalism as a successor to ideas of stability and sustainability. Resilience begins from the notion that shock, crisis, and trauma are not exceptional states, but rather the condition of individual and collective existence under crisis capitalism. The unstable economic cycle of bubbles and crashes, like the unstable alternation of geopolitical state formations between authoritarian and participatory forms of governance, have proved favorable for the concentration of wealth and power among a ruling elite across the globe. Such shocks and crises test the system to see if it is resilient enough to survive their inevitable disruption—they work as physical shocks that impact humans and nonhumans as actants in the world. Rather than strive for just, stable, and sustainable structures, resilience aims to produce physical, social, and psychological systems that will be able to bounce back from their vulnerability to the shocks, crises, or traumas that will invariably befall both individuals and collectives.

Resilience operates in a multiplicity of spheres. Insecurity is its unspoken counterpart. It is because systems are inevitably vulnerable and subject to periodic crises, shocks, traumas, and breakdowns that they are built to be resilient in the first place. Like securitization, then, resilience generates insecurity rather than eliminates it. By focusing on insecurity, we hope to shine a light on the ways in which purported attempts to make us secure and resilient work to have the opposite effect by making insecurity the default state of life in the 21st century.

We seek proposals for 15-20 minute papers, which could address any of the following topics:

- refugees, migrants, and border security
- precarious labor
- gender/sexual insecurity, the erosion of trans rights and the increasing visibility of sexual assault
- climate, water, and ecological insecurity
- food insecurity
- housing insecurity
- resilience and insecurity
- psychological insecurity
- securitization, cybersecurity, hacking, surveillance
- data insecurity
- national, geopolitical, and technological insecurity
- health care security, global biorisk
- the security state
- economic insecurity, global financial markets, and the threat of collapse

Confirmed plenary speakers for the conference are: **Neel Ahuja** (UC Santa Cruz), **Jennifer**

Doyle (UC Riverside), **Annie McClanahan** (UC Irvine), **Mark Neocleous** (Brunel University London), **Safiya Noble** (USC), **Naomi Paik** (Illinois), and **Saskia Sassen** (Columbia).

Contact Info:

Contact Email:

c21@uwm.edu

URL:

<http://www.c21uwm.com/insecurity/call-for-proposals/>