GSA Conference 2020: YMAGINA, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Network

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YMAGINA, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Network

Call for Papers GSA Conference 2020

The German Studies Association (GSA) will hold its 44th Annual Conference from October 1-4, 2020, in Washington, D.C. (USA).

YMAGINA, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Network, invites submissions from scholars in any field to one of the following panels. Graduate students are encouraged to apply, and submissions from all fields and areas of study are welcomed.

Please submit one-page abstracts (max. 500 words) for papers dealing with topics 1, 2, 3, or 4. If you wish to apply with a full panel (topic 5), please include abstracts (max. 500 words) of all three panelists and, if known, names of the moderator and/or commentator. Please also submit a short rationale for the panel, including a panel title. Please note that GSA rules do not allow for more than two participants on a panel to be from the same institution. Submission deadline for all panels is January 31, 2020. Please send your submissions to Jonathan Martin (jsmart5@ilstu.edu), Aleksandra Prica (aprica@email.unc.edu), and Christian Schneider (christianschneider@wustl.edu).

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL SCHOLARS SUBMITTING PROPOSALS MUST BE MEMBERS OF THE GSA AT THE TIME OF THEIR SUBMISSION. You can join the GSA at: https://thegsa.org/members/join

PLEASE ALSO REVIEW THE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AT: https://www.thegsa.org/conference/submission-guidelines

PANELS

1. Beginning and End

Beginning and end are fundamental categories of cultural organization and orientation. They frame individual and collective existence, they regulate experiences of continuity and discontinuity, and they structure historical and literary narratives that cope with eluding origins, the passing of time, and finality. This panel invites contributions from scholars of medieval studies who examine the implications of beginning and end from a literary, historical, philosophical, or theological point of view. Possible topics include the significance of beginning and end in medieval time concepts (eschatology, apocalypse, linearity, teleology, contingency, finality), in orders of knowledge, history and society (genealogies, *origo gentis*, philosophies of history) and with respect to historical semantics, narratology, and genre. We welcome papers that emphasize a conceptual approach or deal with historical case studies or literary examples.

2. Frauds, Forgeries, Misrepresentations, and Deceptions

In 1494, Sebastian Brant noted in his satire *Das Narrenschiff* that the world wants to be deceived. This panel explores the place of frauds, forgeries, misrepresentations, and deceptions in history, literature, art history, religion, political writings, and philosophy in the Middle Ages. A focus lies on how frauds alter reality, unsettle notions of identity (e.g., original vs. copy) and how they evoke a hermeneutics of suspicion, decoding, and disclosure. Papers may deal with the political impacts of "fake news," the bending of facts in chronicles and historiographies, the emergence of categories like "proof" in relation to fraudulent works of art, deceptions in courtly romance, *Maeren* and *Minnesang*, and how they relate to semiotics and aesthetics, or with one of the many motifs and prototypes of misrepresentation like the impostor, the false prophet, the adulterer, and the trickster. We welcome papers that emphasize a conceptual approach, deal with historical case studies or literary examples.

3. Ignorance and the Unknown

Ignorance—or "the intentional and the unintentional bracketing out of unknowns"

(Matthias Gross)—has in recent years become an increasingly studied topic. While its epistemological, cultural, social, and political relevance seems obvious, "ignorance studies" have so far largely been limited to the natural and social sciences and hardly ever adopted a historical perspective, focusing instead on (Western) societies of the late 20th/early 21st centuries. Especially from the perspective of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, however, the topic offers promising points of entry: for example, discourses on *stultitia*, *simplicitas* (both negative and positive) and *tumpheit*; related literary figures such as the fool; the *docta ignorantia* of Nicholas of Cusa; apophatic speech in medieval mysticism; professions of nonknowledge on the part of authors or narrators, right up to questions of knowledge distribution in medieval and early modern narratives, etc. Papers in this panel may deal with ignorance, nescience, and nonknowledge in any of its historical or literary guises and in various social, cultural, and epistemic areas of the medieval and early modern periods.

4. Intertextual Dialogue in Pre-Modern Literature

A striking feature of medieval and early modern literature is the way in which it is constantly referring to other works of literature. A work of pre-modern literature can both derive authority and set itself apart by positioning itself vis-à-vis other works and authors, and it can engage in what we might today call world-building. This can take the form of extended *Literaturexkurse*, of copying lines or forms verbatim, of making connections between characters in different works (for instance in *Heldendichtung* or Arthurian romance), of using previous works as models from which to derive the form of one's own work, and in many other ways. This panel invites papers that investigate the many ways in which pre-modern literature uses the works and words of others. Possible topics include intertextuality in the service of world-building, the transformation of previous models in new works, and literary feuds.

5. Open Topic

For scholars whose work does not fit under any of the above rubrics, but who wish to attend, please submit a one-page paper proposal on any topic related to the German Middle Ages. You may also suggest a full panel, which usually consists of three speakers, a commentator, and a moderator. Please note that GSA rules do not allow for more than two participants on a panel to be from the same institution.