

## [CFP: Viral Memes : Research and Reflections on the Coronapocalypse](#)

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Call for Papers

Date:

August 1, 2020

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United States

Subject Fields:

Contemporary History, Humanities, Popular Culture Studies, Public Health, Social Sciences

### **Viral Memes : Research and Reflections on the Coronapocalypse**

No event since the recent millennium, itself an “event” only in the sense created by expectationalism, with Y2K being a paradigmatic “non-event,” has activated apocalyptic sensibilities to the extent that COVID-19 has done. Its impact has been global, multifarious, and multivalent. In many places, it has impacted every area of life, and there are very few places where it has not spread: as of June 4, 2020, the only nations reporting no COVID-19 cases were various Pacific islands, Turkmenistan, and North Korea. In distinction to previous pandemics with cultural impact, the most recent of any significance being the HIV/AIDS pandemic, COVID-19 has been swift and pervasive, without immediate association to any specific sub-population or vectors beyond the aged and vulnerable. In its relation to influenza, it has evoked historical consciousness of, and inevitable comparisons to, the “Spanish flu,” and it has activated all of the tropes associated with pandemics in contemporary expectation, as well as apocalyptic and even post-apocalyptic aesthetics. Perhaps its most significant distinction to any previously recorded pandemic is the rapidity and thoroughness with which it can be studied and with which interpretations of that data and research can be deployed for diverse purposes. Similarly, contemporary communications and information technology have allowed for real-time global communication during, and concerning, the pandemic. Consequently, with the current reopening of some physical centers of academic research, and the nearly immediate, still persistent, massive availability of online reference tools, this seems an appropriate time to issue this call for papers with the intention of assembling a comprehensive collection of research related to the impact of the pandemic in every area of contemporary life and from every academic perspective. We are open to receiving papers from any discipline in the humanities, social science, and related fields, whether mono-, multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinary. Similarly, we anticipate considerable interest in any and all areas of popular culture studies, including all entertainment and journalistic media along with any other areas of the academic study of popular culture. Further, inclusive of (but not exclusive

to) political science approaches, we are interested in analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on the domestic politics of any nations, and also on the international political consequences of the pandemic.

These possible categories of submission are not intended to be constraining, and we would welcome any other submissions that fit the general parameters here described; any selected area of work can be surveyed as well as evaluated in some particular detail. Ideally, in addition to specialized and specifically focused research, we would also like to receive general surveys of each of the foregoing in order to introduce and situate the more specific research that we also receive, and so if you are qualified to write such a general survey for a particular academic discipline or inter/trans disciplinary field, or survey the pandemic's impact on a specific form of entertainment or journalistic media, or popular culture (or a particular subculture), please let us know. In the event that you wish to propose such an introductory survey, instead of a standard abstract, please submit a proposal describing and/or summarizing how you would structure such a survey. Please also include a CV, specifying previous relevant work and otherwise detailing your qualifications in the field of interest.

Finally, there are two specialized research areas in which we already have particular interest, to which much of the foregoing may apply, but they also could be considered as separate fields and therefore distinct categories, both for introductory surveys and for specific submissions. One includes the area of conspiracism and related research. The other encompasses approaches to the impact of COVID-19 on, or its significance to, minority populations, ethnic relations, racial projections, and so forth. Note that conspiracism is here intended as the examination of accounts labeled as conspiracy theory (or the examination of their labeling as such). We do not intend to ourselves evaluate any proposed models as conspiracist, and so any positions expressed in any area of research will be judged on their own merits.

Unless you are proposing a general introductory survey as described above, please submit a 500 word abstract along with a CV and any relevant background information to [georgejsieg@gmail.com](mailto:georgejsieg@gmail.com) and [trayers.shane@gmail.com](mailto:trayers.shane@gmail.com) . In both cases, all proposals should be received by **August 1, 2020**.

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