

[CFP: Narrating “New Normal”: Graduate Student Symposium](#)

Announcement published by Ruepert Jiel Cao on Tuesday, September 8, 2020

Type:

Conference

Date:

September 5, 2020 to December 1, 2020

Location:

China

Subject Fields:

Communication, Digital Humanities, Graduate Studies, Journalism and Media Studies, Research and Methodology

What is “new normal?” As the COVID-19 pandemic sickens millions, isolates billions, and brings economies to a standstill around the globe, the phrase has entered the everyday lexicon of governments, news, and social media, with many regarding the ensuing widespread shift of basic human activities online – school, shopping, work, and socializing – as a “new normal.” Yet, the phrase “new normal” itself is not new. Governments, corporations, and institutions readily deploy “new normal” to legitimize regulations, laws, and policies that ensure organizational survival in crisis, thereby relegating the people whose uncertain livelihoods they normalize as expendable. After the 2008 financial crisis, American economists declared reduced consumer spending due to chronic underemployment as “new normal.” In 2014, PRC President Xi Jinping described steadily diminished GDP growth as a more stable “新常态” — a direct translation of “new normal” that Chinese state media now regularly employ to allay public panic about economic volatility. As a malleable signifier designed to manage expectations, “new normal” weaves itself into visions of a stable post-crisis future as though normalcy requires only minor adjustment to major disasters.

Through its widespread circulation and vernacularization, “new normal” normalizes precarity and obfuscates the uncertainties wrought by crises, especially for those who cannot simply adjust. However, everyday netizens also use the narrative of “new normal” to convey their current experiences and imaginations of the future, whether hopeful or pessimistic. Novel articulations of “new normal” emerge as human activities and relationships shift online. Empowered by inexpensive technology and broadcasted to mass audiences through social media networks, ordinary people have become global storytellers with the capacity to weave affecting stories of “new normal” that effect how the concurrent epidemiological and political upheavals will shape human society.

We invite graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to present their research on digital and moving image stories and storytelling about “new normal(s).” We ask how internet users, film and media makers, institutions, governments, and other cultural organizations narrate “new normal” as a way of shaping reality, producing knowledge, and making emotional sense of drastic change. What, indeed, is “new normal?” What does it mean for something new to be normal? What stories do people and organizations tell about “new normal?” Who tells these stories, and how are these stories told?

To submit a proposal, please send an extended abstract of no more than 500 words, 2-page CV, and email address for correspondence to gstjournal@hkbu.edu.hk by **December 1, 2020**.

Citation: Ruepert Jiel Cao. *CFP: Narrating “New Normal”: Graduate Student Symposium*. H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/6401655/cfp-narrating-%E2%80%9Cnew-normal%E2%80%9D-graduate-student-symposium>

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Results will be emailed by January 15, 2021. Draft full papers (approximately 6000 words) will be uploaded and shared amongst presenters before the conference. The Centre for Film and Moving Image Research (FMIR) in the Academy of Film at Hong Kong Baptist University will offer need-based financial support to participants at the discretion of the conference organizers. Selected papers will be published in special issue of *Global Storytelling: Journal of Digital and Moving Image*.

Contact Email:

gstjournal@hkbu.edu.hk

URL:

<https://research.hkbu.edu.hk/page/detail/532#CFP1>