

## **CfP: Watching Covid - The Pandemic on Screen**

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

June 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021

Location:

Germany

Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Film and Film History, Humanities, Popular Culture Studies

### **Watching Covid - The Pandemic on Screen**

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a boon and a burden for television. Stay-at-home and self-isolation orders collectively banned entire swathes of the population to their sofas, who then turned to television and the internet for both news and entertainment. Streaming services saw an increase in subscriptions, which remained high even after lockdown measures were lifted. At the same time, the pandemic forced the television industry to delay, suspend, or even cancel productions of many TV programs altogether. When it became clear that the virus was an obstinate presence, television writers and producers faced the decision of whether or how to incorporate this new reality into their storylines. This decision has often constituted a dilemma in understanding what audiences want, and how to confront the challenges Covid-19 brought in an increasingly politicized environment. Audience-reliant day- and night-time television grappled with empty studios and crewless hosts temporarily filming from their homes. The circumstances changed audience-reliant television formats and fully blurred the lines between videos on the internet and high-production-value television.

This edited collection will explore the changing role of television during, and in the wake of, the Covid-19 crisis, as well as how the pandemic has already become part of the narrative of numerous TV series. We invite proposals offering analysis in these developments on the structural level of TV production as well as the representational level. On the structural level, how have TV networks and streaming services responded and are the changes long-lasting? We welcome analysis concerning traditional plot/presentation models, the incorporation of new safety protocols, filming location selection, and further structural/format changes to the industry. On the representational level, we are interested in the incorporation of the pandemic into storylines concerning:

- A focus on individual drama (e.g., characters succumbing to or recovering from the virus and adjusting to their new social realities)
- The politicization of the virus
- Social inequalities that were exacerbated by the virus itself, containment measures, and/or exposed by the global vaccination campaigns

We would also like to encourage papers that discuss whose perspective has been, or will be, favored in regards to gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, socio-political and/or religious affiliation.

Lastly, our call for papers also aims to broadly incorporate how audience-reliant television participated in, and addressed, post-truth discourse, as well as its audience engagement on various social media platforms.

Abstract Deadline: **June 30th, 2021**

Please submit your abstracts on the subject of Watching Covid to [watching.covid.tv@gmail.com](mailto:watching.covid.tv@gmail.com) by **June 30th, 2021**. The full article should be between **5,000-7,000 words (incl. references)**. We ask that contributors focus on English-speaking TV productions. This includes scripted programs, such as films and TV series of any genre, and non-scripted programs, such as reality shows, documentaries, and talk shows.

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