

[The Role of the Humanities in Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy: A CALS "Unprecedented" Webinar \(1/21\)](#)

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Type:

Event

Date:

January 21, 2022

Location:

Pennsylvania, United States

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Public Health, Literature, Humanities, History of Science, Medicine, and Technology

Penn State's Center for American Literary Studies presents

The Role of the Humanities in Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

Friday, January 21, 2022, Noon-1:00 p.m. EST via Zoom

Register [here](#).

https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sV4yrP4kS3-R3dCBBY2A_g

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email
containing information about joining the webinar.

COVID-19 remains an ongoing public health threat in the United States, despite widespread availability of effective vaccines. The anti-vaccination movement has been characterized as a disingenuous partisan ploy underwritten by far-right

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politicians and media outlets, but those who refuse vaccination are not all willfully ignorant or dangerously misinformed—that is, the causes of vaccine hesitancy are multifarious and complex. Beginning from the premise that the humanities are uniquely equipped to confront such complicated social, political, and ethical matters, this webinar will explore the causes of, and potential solutions to, vaccine hesitancy from a variety of disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) perspectives.

Panelists:

James Phelan, Distinguished University Professor of English and Director of Project Narrative, The Ohio State University

Phelan has devoted his research to thinking through the consequences of conceiving of narrative as rhetoric, an effort that has recently taken him to the emerging subfield of narrative medicine. Among his many books are *Reading People, Reading Plots; Narrative as Rhetoric; Living to Tell About It; Experiencing Fiction; Reading the American Novel, 1920-2010*; and *Somebody Telling Somebody Else*. Since 1992, Phelan has been the editor of *Narrative*, the journal of the International Society for the Study of Narrative. In 2021, the Society named him the recipient of its Wayne C. Booth Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dennis Yi Tenen, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Tenen's research and teaching focus on various topics including literary theory, the sociology of literature, media history, and computation narratology. The author of *Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation* (Stanford University Press, 2017), he is currently writing a book on the creative limits of artificial intelligence. Tenen serves as Project Lead for "Increasing COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence," an initiative funded by a grant from Columbia World Projects.

Janet Lyon, Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Penn State

Lyon is an affiliate of the Rock Ethics Institute and director of Penn State's Disability Studies Minor. She publishes on modernism and disability, focusing especially on

the emergence of “disability” as a category in the modernist period. Lyon is a former registered nurse.

Moderator:

Jess Rafalko, Graduate Student, Department of English, Penn State

This webinar is part of the 2020-22 CALS “Unprecedented” Webinar Series.

<https://cals.la.psu.edu/programs-series/unprecedented-a-cals-webinar-series>

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