

The Future of Medieval Studies

A two-day symposium on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the
Institute for Medieval Studies, University of Leeds

Thursday, 31 May – Friday, 1 June 2018

Medieval Studies has developed enormously over the last fifty years. This conference marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Leeds Institute for Medieval Studies by exploring current developments in the field. Of particular importance for the future of Medieval Studies is how we can enrich and expand the themes of our research, the environments and methods of our research, and the diversity of researchers. How can Medieval Studies be made more engaged and better reflect the world of the present and the future (and should it)?

The symposium will explore three closely-connected topics:

The diversity of the Middle Ages

What were different medieval people's experiences of social and cultural diversity, in terms of factors such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, foreignness, and sexuality? How did these factors intersect? And how can perceived medieval experiences of homogeneity/diversity meaningfully be related to people's experiences of diversity today?

The diversity of Medieval Studies

How does Medieval Studies and its constituent disciplines investigate the diversity of the medieval past? What have been the major contributions to wider historiography and theory, and where is there room for development? What interdisciplinary methodologies are open to us to explore our research questions, or what challenges do we face? In what ways has Medieval Studies promoted or inhibited our understandings of social and cultural diversity?

The diversity of medievalists

How do the curators, researchers, students, teachers and re-enactors of Medieval Studies today reflect the diversity of our present societies? What ought our aspirations for diversity be, and what have been our successes and our failures? How does professional teaching, research, and public engagement reflect or shape the diversity of medievalists?

Rather than seeking papers in a traditional format, we invite proposals from individuals or groups to run hour-long sessions of participatory activities such as:

- Seminar-style discussions
- Focused analyses of primary evidence
- Several very short presentations (maximum of 5-10 mins) followed by discussion
- Developing policies/strategies for improving diversity
- Structured small-group activities
- Assessments of critical frameworks/methodologies
- Structured debates

Please submit up to 300 words on your proposed activity by **Thursday, 1 March 2018**, indicating the following:

- Title of your activity
- Type/format of your activity

- Which of the abovementioned topic(s) you wish to address and an indication of how you think the activity will contribute to thoughts about the future of Medieval Studies
- Resources and equipment required (e.g. specific examples of primary evidence, policy documents, etc.)
- Numbers of people involved in delivering the session (names and contact details to be included if specific colleagues will be involved), and expected level of audience participation

Please be experimental, creative, and flexible! Feel free to address only a segment of one of the symposium themes, or several together. Even if you are not able to propose an activity, please let us know what issues you would like to see included or discussed. In the interest of developing a holistic and collegial discussion, there will be no parallel sessions. Instead all attendees will participate in all activities.

We have not run a symposium in this format before and it is hard to predict how many people will attend, so we look forward to liaising with session organisers as the programme comes together to ensure that sessions will work well and become greater than the sum of their parts.

Registration for this symposium will be free. Lunch and refreshments will be provided, and there will be some financial support available to support the attendance of a limited number of participants. Please direct all submissions, expressions of interest or questions to MedievalStudiesFuture@leeds.ac.uk

Organising committee:

Fozia Bora, School of Languages, Cultures, and Societies

Alaric Hall, School of English

Emilia Jamroziak, School of History/Institute for Medieval Studies

Iona McCleery, School of History/Institute for Medieval Studies

Axel E. W. Müller, Institute for Medieval Studies

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