

CALL FOR PAPERS

# BRITISH STUDIES IN A BROKEN WORLD

MODERN BRITISH STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
5-7 JULY 2017



MBS  
BIRMINGHAM

[www.mbsbham.wordpress.com](http://www.mbsbham.wordpress.com)  
[modernbritishstudies@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:modernbritishstudies@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

# BRITISH STUDIES IN A BROKEN WORLD

Modern British Studies at Birmingham invites proposals for panels showcasing new research on all aspects of British history from the 18th century to the present. At a moment when many of the core strands of modern society, culture, politics, and economics have been called into question, it is time to explore how we make sense of Britain's past and the value of thinking historically in public life.

The intersecting challenges prompted by the European Union referendum make these issues more pressing than ever. Taken together, the fallout of Brexit, the criticism of 'expertise', and ongoing discussions about our 'postcolonial present' challenge our thinking about British history and the historian's public status. What does it mean to study Britain's past at a moment of crisis? What value does historical thinking have as an intellectual, public and political endeavour? How should we engage across disciplines to make sense of modern Britain?

These questions are prompted by the time and place in which we work. While we welcome proposals that reflect explicitly on the historical contexts for the present crisis, Modern British Studies at Birmingham encourages panels and papers interrogating these questions from a range of thematic, chronological, and disciplinary vantages as well as sessions showcasing new research. Building on the exciting contributions at Rethinking Modern British Studies in 2015, this conference provides a forum to showcase diverse work, explore new methodologies, and prompt engaged conversations between those working across disciplines on Britain since the 18th century.

The conference offers a space for intellectual engagement and conversation around individual panels and round tables. In addition, we will organise plenary panels around three themes:

- Fluid Presents, Turbulent Past
- Crossing Disciplines, Making Studies
- Public History, Engaged Historians



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Confirmed plenary panellists include Gurminder Bhambra (University of Warwick), Antoinette Burton (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Pamela Cox (University of Essex), Lucy Delap (University of Cambridge), Caroline Elkins (Harvard University), Margot Finn (University College, London), Leela Gandhi (Brown University), Fredrik Jonsson (University of Chicago), Hayden Lorimer (University of Glasgow), and Peter Mandler (University of Cambridge).

Modern British Studies invites proposals for ninety-minute panels and round tables related to the conference's themes or showcasing cutting edge research across the field. Panel sessions should include at least three speakers (and a chair), but we welcome larger groups where appropriate (for round-table sessions).

Panel proposals may follow traditional formats or take new approaches: please get in touch with the organisers to discuss alternative formats, such as workshops, reading groups, or teaching-focussed sessions before submitting a proposal. Panels featuring scholars from a range of career stages, especially including postgraduate researchers, are strongly encouraged.

The 2015 conference opened with a postgraduate and early career workshop that started a conversation about the relationship between the material conditions of academic labour, precarity and the job market, and the research produced by younger scholars. That conversation remains urgent today. The 2017 conference will begin with another PGR and ECR workshop which will have a separate call for papers. This is in addition to the main conference and we encourage submissions to both.

The Conference will charge a fee to cover registration and food and drink costs. As in 2015, however, we will be offering 100 free registrations for postgraduate students, ECRs on short-term contracts, and the unwaged once registration opens.

## PANEL PROPOSALS

Panel Proposals should include:  
Session Title, Session Abstract (c. 300 words), List of Participants, and Abstracts for individual papers where appropriate (c. 300 words each).

## THE DEADLINE FOR PANEL SUBMISSIONS IS 28 FEBRUARY

Proposals can be submitted via the Modern British Studies blog. [www.mbsbham.wordpress.com](http://www.mbsbham.wordpress.com)

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