



Call for Papers
Apply by March 31, 2017

Political Pasts and Democratic Futures: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

A Day-Long Conference
Thursday 1st June 2017
Institute of Advanced Studies
University College London

Conference Theme

The year 2016 has further discredited the notion that Western democratic societies have reached the end of history. At a time when liberal democracy seems to be resting on ever more precarious foundations this conference seeks to spur an interdisciplinary conversation about the manifold ways in which political futures can and have been imagined. How have people in the past envisioned the future of democracy? What might be learned from these intellectual imaginaries for our political futures? Where and how are democratic futures reinvented and built today?

This conference aims to build on current work that highlights the historicity and plurality of democracy –whether as an idea, a political regime, or a practice. We particularly welcome contributions that explore the construction of democratic imaginaries beyond the strictly political realm, for instance through moral, aesthetic, scientific, or commercial enterprises.

This conference is organised by the [Planetary Futures](#) research group at UCL's Institute of Advanced Studies. We are therefore keen to bring together scholars from a wide array of disciplinary and methodological commitments whose work might address the planetary or inter-planetary as an object of study or as a scale of inquiry.



Papers might address any one of these or related topics:

- The stakes of adopting the planetary, the international, the cosmopolitan and/or the global as scales of inquiry.
- Competing definitions and scalar differences in the imagining of political futures.
- Issues of national sovereignty and territoriality, polarities and divisions, borders and boundaries in imaging or imagining the futures of democracy.
- To what extent does space exploration invite us to challenge central categories of political thinking (such as the state, sovereignty, the people, etc.)? How does it spur us to rethink traditional notions of democratic governance?
- The political implications of new technologies and technologies of the future as invented now and in the past: forms of measuring, mapping, representing, coding, sharing and disseminating information that encompass a vision of the future or that have the power to shape our political and socio-economic future.
- Political, moral, aesthetic, techno-scientific, or commercial representations and constructions of democratic futures as planet-wide endeavours
- The history of futurity, the history of notions of the future, including but not only the history of science fiction as socio-political imaginaries.
- Fear of the future as a politically potent emotion. Apocalypse and catastrophic visions of the future. Narratives of individual and/or collective survival and the endurance of democracy.

Application

Applications should include:

- Title of proposed paper
- Abstract (maximum 500 words)
- CV
- Contact information

Please send your application as a single PDF by **March 31, 2017** to:
democraticfutures@gmail.com

Contact

For further queries, please contact:

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