

**IASEMS**



Italian Association  
of Shakespearean and  
Early Modern Studies

## **Shakespeare and his Contemporaries**

### **The IASEMS Graduate Conference at the British Institute of Florence Call for Papers**

#### **CONVERSIONS IN EARLY MODERN BRITISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

**Florence, 20 April 2018**

The 2018 IASEMS Graduate Conference at The British Institute in Florence is a one-day interdisciplinary and bilingual English-Italian forum open to PhD students and researchers who have obtained their doctorates within the past 5 years. This year's conference will focus on the theme of conversion, a fascinating phenomenon, a promise of newness that blends elements of individual experience with larger problems of historical change.

The ideological and spiritual life of early modern Britain finds a special interpretative key in the notion of conversion, whether perceived as an individual response to a religious and political challenge, a community reaction to political upheaval, or a social change brought about by the innovations of modernity.

The goal of this Conference is to develop an understanding of conversion that will address epistemological, psychological, political, spiritual and technological kinds of transformation, perceived both as subjective and collective change. Therefore conversion is to be understood in its broadest possible sense, and not merely as a religious phenomenon.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to the following:

- forms of conversion, sacred and secular, i.e., awakening to a new faith, an intensification of existing beliefs, an embracing of a (radical) political movement, etc.
- conversional thinking and practice
- early modern textual 'conversions', i.e., from manuscript to print, from one format to another, from one genre to another
- relationships among transformation, freedom and power
- forms of religious dissent in early modern British culture
- religious change and gender
- how early modern English theatre and other theatrical practices represent, adopt, transform, relocate forms of conversion
- conversion narratives
- the phenomenon of forced conversion

- authenticity and pretense in conversion
- religious conversion as catalyst of other transformations (e.g., translation, alchemy, enthusiasm, etc.)
- technologies of transformation

Candidates are invited to send a description of their proposed contribution according to the following guidelines:

- the candidate should provide name, institution, contact info, title and a short abstract of the proposed contribution (300 words for a 20-minute paper), explaining the content and intended structure of the paper, and including a short bibliography;
- abstracts are to be submitted by Sunday 29 October 2017 by email to [ilaria.natali@unifi.it](mailto:ilaria.natali@unifi.it);
- all proposals will be blind-vetted. The list of selected papers will be available by the end of November 2017;
- each finished contribution should not exceed 20 minutes and is to be presented in English (an exception will be made for Italian candidates of departments other than English, who can give their papers in Italian);
- Candidates whose first language is not English will need to have their proposals and final papers checked by a mother-tongue speaker
- participants will be asked to present a final draft of the paper ten days before the Conference.

Selected speakers who are IASEMS members can apply for a small grant ([http://www.maldura.unipd.it/iasems/iasems\\_about.html](http://www.maldura.unipd.it/iasems/iasems_about.html))

For further information please contact Ilenia Natali ([ilaria.natali@unifi.it](mailto:ilaria.natali@unifi.it))