

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

“ENTER THE CROWD”
MASS COMMUNICATION
IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Florence, 12 April 2019

The 2019 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 multifaceted connections between communication and the crowd in early modern English literature, language and culture. John Stow’s *A Survey of London* (1598) provides a narrative of a crowded city whose identity was being shaped by masses of people arriving from outside the city boundaries. In the early modern period, the crowd is associated with contradictory ideas of uniformity and disorder, coherence and monstrosity, and with potential sovereignty. It embodies a cultural space of variability and instability, reflecting contemporary social and political anxieties. In a context shaped by urgent nationalistic political agendas, public communication and rhetoric played a vital role. To investigate the nexus between communication and the crowd means to explore arenas of debate and political control, representations of collective identities and leadership, but also networks of relationships. The theatre was itself a potent medium of mass communication.

The goal of this Conference is to develop an understanding of the various ways in which the tie between public communication, politics and collective identity is inscribed in early modern English literature and culture.

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

- representations of the crowd in early modern writing
- rhetoric and politics in theoretical treatises
- the rhetoric of public communication in proclamations, speeches, sermons
- public discourse and the construction of class, gender, national identity
- church regulations, the construction of the citizen(s), and dissenting voices
- communication and mass control in drama
- language as *instrumentum regni*

- narrative strategies in polemical writing
- rhetoric and propaganda across genres
- visual propaganda
- representations of mass leaders and historiography
- shaping/questioning collective identities
- the orator and popularity
- theatre, communication and audiences
- crowds, networks and urban spaces in early modern writing

Select Bibliography:

- Anderson B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983.
- Hopkins, L., *The Cultural Uses of the Caesars on the English Renaissance Stage*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008.
- Low, J, Myhill, N. (eds), *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama 1558-1642*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Munro, I., *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and its Double*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Peltonen M., *Rhetorics, Politics and Popularity in Pre-revolutionary England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Richards J., Thorne A. (eds), *Rethoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, London-New York, Routledge, 2006.
- Shepard A., Withington P. J., *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Shnapp J., Tews M. (eds), *Crowds*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Stage K., *Producing Early Modern London: a Comedy of Urban Space, 1598-1616*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2018.

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 maximum 20-minute paper), explaining the content and intended structure of the paper, and including a short bibliography;
- abstracts are to be submitted by Friday 23 November 2018 by email to giuliana.iannaccaro@unimi.it and lucabaratta85@gmail.com;
- all proposals will be blind-vetted. The list of selected papers will be available by Friday 21 December 2018;
- 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.iasems.org/?page_id=2)

For further information please contact Luca Baratta (lucabaratta85@gmail.com)