

Form and Reform (Santa Cruz, 27–29 Jul 17)

Santa Cruz, CA, Jul 27–29, 2017

Deadline: Dec 15, 2016

Courtney Mahaney

Victorianists and art historians are invited to submit proposals for the upcoming "Form and Reform" Conference, to be held on the campus of UC Santa Cruz, on July 27-29, 2017.

A conference on nineteenth-century literature, art, and history to be held at UC Santa Cruz, preceding the Dickens Universe week on Middlemarch. Keynote speakers will be Caroline Arscott (The Courtauld Institute of Art) and Ian Duncan (University of California, Berkeley).

Applicants to this conference are warmly invited – but are not required – to stay for the week on Middlemarch (see below).

All genres of Victorian literature addressed the major questions of social and political reform that characterized the period, as did many art and craft practices, genres of history writing or scholarship, and forms of popular culture. This conference will give us an opportunity to think about the "form" of reform. Current debates about form and formalism in Victorian Studies open the door to this dimension of the word "reform," and they urge us to re-consider their relation. We also invite historical papers on nineteenth-century reform movements. Ideally, such a broad topic should also suggest meta-critical questions about the period – and periodization: questions addressing the formal dimensions of conceiving our objects of study. If we can make the distinction between historicist criticism and formalist criticism, how can these engage and challenge each other afresh?

Submit a 500-word proposal and a 1-page CV to Carolyn Williams no later than December 15, 2016 (carolyn.williams@rutgers.edu). The conference program will be announced in January, 2017. Please address inquiries to Carolyn Williams or to Rae Greiner (drgreine@indiana.edu), Tricia Lootens (tlootens@uga.edu), or Elsie Michie (enmich@lsu.edu)

Topics might include:

- Historicism as form
- Form as engagement with history
- Form and genre
- The history of forms
- Forms of history
- Spatial or temporal form
- Form and politics
- Medical reform
- Sanitary reform

- Military reform
- Religious reform
- Educational Reform
- Prison reform
- Civil Service reform
- Abolition movements
- Working class perceptions of the Reform Bills
- Race and reform
- Reform and the Woman Question
- Chartism and Chartist writing
- Intersections between kinds of reform (social and literary e.g.)
- Formal properties of reform rhetoric
- Reform of the self
- Queer reform movements
- Form and realist fiction
- Poetic forms, forms of poetics
- Musical forms
- Theatrical forms
- Visual forms
- Form as mess rather than order
- Reformulations of "Victorian Studies"
- Revitalizing critical methods
- Past and present forms of academic labor
- Current reform in our professional field
- Current reforms of the University

Research Opportunities

Participants in the conference are also cordially invited to spend the week following the conference in the redwoods of central California at the annual gathering of the Dickens Universe, an international research group devoted to the study of the novels of Charles Dickens, Victorian literature and culture. The Dickens Universe's study of *Middlemarch* begins on July 30 and concludes on August 5. Confirmed speakers for the week include Dan Bivona, Jill Galvan, David Kurnick, Jos Lavery, George Levine, Ruth Livesey, Helena Michie, and Summer Star. Other speakers will be announced.

Conference participants who wish to stay on for the week will have the opportunity either to meet in a working group organized around the theme of "Form and Reform," or to meet with the Nineteenth-Century Seminar, a working group for discussion of individual work-in-progress. In other words, all scholars may use the week as an opportunity for extended discussion and scholarly exchange. For more information about the Dickens Universe, as well as the Nineteenth-Century Seminar and other working groups, please feel free to consult the Dickens Project website (<http://dickens.ucsc.edu/universe/>) or contact one of the conference organizers.

For the purposes of planning the working groups, please indicate on your proposal if you are interested in staying on for the week of the Dickens Universe to participate in one of the working groups.

Reference:

CFP: Form and Reform (Santa Cruz, 27-29 Jul 17). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 7, 2016 (accessed Dec 20, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/13896>>.