

XI GRADUATE CONFERENCE
IN CULTURE STUDIES
2, 3 & 4 DECEMBER 2021

THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF HOPE

Call for Papers



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The Cultural Politics of Hope

2, 3, 4th December 2021

Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Lisbon

Call for Papers

The 11th Graduate Conference in Culture Studies will focus on the concept of hope, its politics, poetics, and temporalities, and how it emerges, impinges and circulates. The conference will take place in Lisbon on the 2nd, 3rd of December and the morning of the 4th of December, 2021. The conference is organized by PhD students and researchers of the Research Centre for Communication and Culture (CECC) at the Lisbon Consortium, *Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Lisbon*.

The concept of hope has recently been re-emerging in philosophical and political discussions, as well as in literary criticism. However, how does hope relate to the present moment, when we are faced with worldwide climate and health emergencies, economic crises, increasing poverty, failed leaderships, and the rise of both old and new forms of authoritarianism? The future of democracies and equal rights are at stake, as is our own survival as individuals and as a species, prompting fear and hopelessness. Does critical thought forfeit the possibility of hope or can it produce a hope that is able to bring about change?

Often pitted as the opposite of each other, fear and hope share the assumption that the future is neither knowable nor based on knowledge and probabilities (Rorty, 1999). Unlike the certainty of a positive or negative outcome that underpins confidence and despair, fear and hope are expectant emotions grounded in doubt and therefore always part of each other (Spinoza, 2000 [1677]). Bloch's 'political hope' is what, at any given moment, we are able to consciously wish for beyond a disappointing present and the pragmatic determinism of predictions. Hope can therefore rise from desperation, grief, indignation, or anger and then "result in a specific type of mutuality based on a trust for life" (Bloch, 1996 [1959]; Anderson, 2006). Is the act of hoping positive, or is it an uncomfortable assemblage of emotions that can overlap and interact with optimism and resilience, but also with fear, suspicion, and a permanent sense of precariousness? Is hope always only projected towards the future, or can hopeful memories be a form of counter-historical practice (Rigney, 2018) that questions its linear futurity? And does not hope always-already imply eternal postponement and unattainability (Berlant, 2011), despite its ability to fuel cultural work as well as activism and resistance?

During the conference, we want to discuss how culture interacts with the concept and the taking place of hope. How can cultural works claiming or responding to

political and societal change be hopeful? To what extent can the recent positive turn in the humanities contribute to the emergence of hope, as well as to different concepts of hope? How does hope emerge during crises and times of socio-political disenchantment and to what extent does it challenge power and hegemony? What can happen when hope not only points towards a better future but changes and improves the now or the ways we remember and celebrate the past? How does hope affect groups and movements, and how does it circulate in times of fear, depression, revolt, and pandemic?

We welcome paper proposals from all research areas that address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Social hope
- The temporalities of hope
- Hope - affect, feeling, emotion, attitude
- The poetics of hope
- Hope and simulacrum/phantasm
- Hopeful memories and memories of hope
- Hope, science and technology
- Hope, spirituality and transcendence
- Digitalities of hope
- Hope and resilience
- Hope as a critical disposition
- Objects of hope
- Vulnerability and resistance in hope
- Hope and its neighboring concepts
- Hope and disappointment
- Queer hope - queer futurity
- Hope and imagination
- The translatability of hope
- Artistic representations of hope
- Literature and hope
- Hopeful bodies
- Hope and (post)colonialism
- Decolonial hope

References

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Benjamin, Andrew E. 1997. *Present Hope: Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism*. London: Routledge.

Bloch, Ernst. 1995. *The Principle Of Hope*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Castiglia, Christopher. 2017. *The Practices Of Hope: Literary Criticism In Disenchanted Times*. New York: NYU Press.

Lear, Jonathan. 2006. *Radical Hope: Ethics In The Face Of Cultural Devastation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rorty, Richard. 1999. *Philosophy And Social Hope*. New York: Penguin Books.
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 2003. *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.
Durham: Duke University Press.
Spinoza, Benedictus de, R. H. M Elwes, and Benedictus de Spinoza. 1989. *Ethics*.
Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.
Zournazi, Mary. 2003. *Hope: New Philosophies For Change*. New York: Routledge.

Keynote Speakers

Ben Anderson, Durham University, UK
Jennifer Wenzel, Columbia University, USA
Leticia Sabsay, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Mónica Dias, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

Scientific Committee

Adriana Martins (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Alex Jania (The University of Chicago)
Ana Margarida Abrantes (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Annimari Juvonen (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Daria Steiner (Justus-Liebig Universität)
Fátima Vieira (Universidade do Porto)
Fredrik Tygstrup (University of Copenhagen)
Ilios Willemars (University of Amsterdam, Universidade Católica Portuguesa,
University of Copenhagen)
Luísa Santos (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Matthew Mason (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Nina Danilova (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Paulo de Medeiros (University of Warwick)

Practicalities

We invite abstracts for individual or joint presentations using hope as a lens for the analysis of cultural objects or conceptualizing/problematising hope.

We also welcome abstracts for presentations and interventions that disrupt the formal academic ways of thinking and doing including but not limited to artistic interventions, co-creative workshops, reading groups and more.

Abstracts should be approximately 250 words long and be sent by email to **hopeconference2021@gmail.com** not later than 17th of May 2021. Notification of acceptance will be sent until the 31st of July at the latest.

After having been accepted, you will be asked to register at the conference and provide some personal details to that purpose. You will be able to do so on our website www.culturalpoliticsofhope.wordpress.com, which is under construction.

The conference will take place on site on the 2nd, 3rd and the morning of the 4th of December 2021 at *Universidade Católica Portuguesa*. Online hosting of the conference will be considered as a supplement or alternative, should any sanitary restrictions be enforced at the time of the conference.

Costs

Registration fee: 70€ - includes coffee breaks on all days and conference materials.

The Organizing Committee considers reducing or waiving a limited number of registration fees in cases of documented financial difficulties. Students of the Lisbon Consortium and FCH-PhD and CECC researchers are exempted from the registration fee.

Organizing Committee

Vera Herold (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Sarah Nagaty (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Victoria Page (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)

Contact

For more information please email: [**hopeconference2021@gmail.com**](mailto:hopeconference2021@gmail.com).