

CALL FOR PAPERS

“ALTERNATIVE VISIONS OF THE PAST: REIMAGINING HISTORY” SEMINAR

18-19 July 2024

University of Oviedo, Faculty of Humanities

The “Alternative Visions of the Past: Reimagining History” Seminar – which will be held at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Oviedo on 18-19 July 2024 – is a two-day interdisciplinary forum open to PhD students and researchers who are working on uchronias.

In his critically acclaimed book *The World Hitler Never Made* (2005), Gavriel Rosenfeld reminds his readers of how, ever since antiquity, historians such as Herodotus and Livy have resorted to the “what if?” question, toying with the idea of different outcomes for historical events, with the aim of finding causal connections as well as interpreting the past from a moral perspective (5). This practice of revisiting and reimagining the past, at first instance attainable for every person, has spread to all sorts of areas of study and entertainment over the years —most notably historiography and literature. Consequently, the “what if?” question has manifested in several literary genres, ranging from the divergences from history as we know it in alternate histories — exploring alternative aftermaths of major events such as World War II, just like Philip K. Dick did in *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)— to the postmodern reproduction of past eras that is to be found in Neo-Victorian novels like John Fowles’ *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969), occasionally incorporating retrofuturistic elements while giving rise to what we nowadays identify as steampunk narratives.

And it is precisely through literature that these re-imaginings of the past have found their mainstream breakthrough, producing stories that have become part of the popular imagination and enabling them to take part in more contemporary media such as films, television series, videogames and various internet culture phenomena. Therefore, this seminar seeks to establish a space for scholars belonging to a wide variety of research areas who share a common goal: to introduce, discuss and expand new critical perspectives on the study of these alternative visions of the past.

Confirmed speakers:

- Dr. Javier García Rodríguez (Universidad de Oviedo)
- Dr. Juan Francisco Elices Agudo (Universidad de Alcalá de Henares).

We invite submissions for papers pertaining (but not limited) to the following topics and approaches:

- What-if narratives, alternate histories and counterfactual histories.
- Neo-Victorian and Steampunk narratives.
- Utopian and dystopian narratives in alternative visions of the past.
- Alternative visions of the past in popular culture and fan studies.
- Representations of science and technology in alternative visions of the past.
- Notions (and/or lack) of agency in alternative visions of the past.
- Emotional processes and affects in alternative visions of the past.

- Women's passions and affections in reimagined history.
- Representations of race, class, gender and sexuality in alternative visions of the past.
- Memory studies in alternative visions of the past.
- Fashion studies in alternative visions of the past.

Proposals (200-250 words, plus a brief bibliography) for 20-minute papers in English (an exception will be made for Spanish candidates of departments other than English, who can give their papers in Spanish), must be submitted alongside with a short biographical note (50 words) via email to reimagininghistory@uniovi.es **before 29 February, 2024**. Abstracts (Time New Roman, 12pt, single-spaced, following APA reference style) are expected to include the title for the paper, the speaker's name, institution and email address.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by **Friday, 15 March 2024**.

Registration details will be posted online at the end of March 2024.

Deadline for registration: 31 May 2024. No registration charges.

All delegates are responsible for their own travel arrangements and accommodation.

After the conference, selected papers will be published in a forthcoming, peer-reviewed academic monograph.

For further information, please contact the organisers, María José Álvarez Faedo and Alexia Sarasúa Gutiérrez: reimagininghistory@uniovi.es.