

**Call for Papers**  
**BSLS Winter Symposium 2026**  
**Alternate Histories of the Body**  
**January 30, 2026**

In recent years, diverse fields related to literature and science studies, such as the medical humanities, critical neurodiversity studies, and the study of the haptic, have been re-evaluating the human body, its histories, and the impact of those histories today. At the same time, fields such as feminist theory, critical race theory, trans studies, and disability studies have deployed embodied perspectives to re-evaluate how we understand history and historical narratives. This one-day symposium invites abstracts for twenty-minute papers on these alternate histories of the body, broadly construed, from scholars working in literary studies and adjacent fields such as the medical humanities, history, and philosophy. We welcome proposed contributions that explore forms and formats beyond the conventional conference paper and that incorporate elements of creative practice, autoethnography, and embodied meaning-making. The symposium is open to all and we particularly invite contributions from early career researchers, independent scholars, and practice-led creators and researchers.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Re-evaluating medical history and narratives of illness
- Neurodiversity and neurodivergence in literary studies
- Histories of racialization, racism, and embodied resistance
- The body in historical fiction and speculative fiction
- Bodyminds and embodied forms of knowledge
- Intersections between human and more-than-human bodies
- The senses in literature
- Specific body parts in history, e.g. the Victorian hand
- The body and genre, value, and canonicity
- Queer, trans, and crip temporalities and embodiment
- Prosthesis, trans-humanism, and extensions of the body
- Histories of affect and affective histories

The symposium will take place online on January 30, 2026. In addition to panel presentations and discussions, it will include a keynote by Dr Aanchal Vij (University of Sussex), author of *Narratives of Nostalgia and Repair in American Comics and Literature: (Dis)abling Exceptionalism* (Palgrave, 2025). As part of the symposium's efforts to centre embodied knowledge and to approach knowledge production as an embodied act, the day will also include a hands-on workshop on "Experiencing Academia through the Body" by Dr Francesca Young Kaufman (Beatha Coaching). The symposium will be free to attend for all.

The symposium is organised by Dr Adele Guyton (FNRS - UCLouvain) and Dr Lloyd Meadhbh Houston (University of Cambridge). Please send **250-word abstracts** to **adele.guyton@uclouvain.be** and **lh819@cam.ac.uk** by **November 21, 2025**. Acceptances will be sent in early December.

We are committed to making the symposium as accessible and inclusive as possible. If you have any access requirements you would like us to be aware of, please feel free to include them with your abstract submission.