

LitSciConf call for papers

International Conference of Three Societies on Literature and Science
University of Birmingham, 10-12 April 2024

For 2024, the annual conferences of the British Society for Literature and Science (BSLS) and the European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSAeu), together with the biennial conference of the Commission on Science and Literature (CoSciLit), will be combined into a single meeting. This will be the first time that these three societies have joined together to share research at the many intersections of literature and science. The conference will be held at the University of Birmingham, UK, over 10-12 April 2024. Confirmed plenary speakers include Brian Hurwitz, Emeritus Professor of Medicine and the Arts at King's College London; Isabel Jaen Portillo, Professor of Spanish at Portland State University; and the Directors of the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research, the Birmingham Institute for Sustainability and Climate Action, and the Institute for STEMM in Culture and Society at the University of Birmingham.

In addition to the main programme, there will be tours available of the Lapworth Museum of Geology, the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Winterbourne House and Garden, and the National Buried Infrastructure Facility, with an additional optional visit to the BIFoR FACE forest research facility and the Ruskin Land forest site on 13 April. The conference will be semi-hybrid, with differential pricing for attendance in person and online and for waged and unwaged participants. Papers may be presented in person or online, and online delegates will be able to watch the plenary sessions live and recordings of papers from other panels. There will also be a follow-up session online (date to be confirmed) for all delegates, including a panel for postgraduate students specifically. For more details of the conference as planning develops, please see the conference website. For other enquiries about the conference, please email the conference organiser, Prof John Holmes (j.holmes.1@bham.ac.uk), directly.

We would like to hear about as wide a range of research on literature and science as possible, so there will be no set theme for this conference. We welcome proposals for papers of 20 minutes and for panels of 90 minutes including three or more speakers and time for questions from the audience. Individual papers may be delivered in person or online, and panels may be in person, online or combine presentations in both formats. We especially welcome panels and presentations reporting on collaborations between literature scholars or writers and natural scientists; showcasing the work of research institutes and networks; or taking stock of the state of the field in specific regions or countries. We encourage participation by scientists and creative writers as well as scholars, and we are happy to consider papers on creative writing, teaching practice and public engagement as well as research. While papers should be presented in English, we are keen to hear about literary and scientific texts and encounters in any language, from any period and from anywhere in the world.

Please send proposals to litsciconf@contacts.bham.ac.uk by 18:00 (UK time) on Friday 1 December 2023. Proposals should be up to 250 words for individual papers or up to 750 words for a panel. Please include a biography of up to 50 words per speaker and specify whether you hope to attend the conference in person or online. Proposals will be evaluated by a panel drawn from all three societies.

The conference fee will be waived for two graduate students in exchange for written reports on the conference, to be published in the BSLS newsletter. If you are interested in being selected for one of these awards, please mention this when sending in your proposal. To qualify you will need to be registered for a postgraduate degree at the time of the conference.

John Holmes

Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture, University of Birmingham, UK
President, Commission on Science and Literature

Jenni Halpin

Professor of English, Savannah State University, Georgia, USA
Chair, British Society for Literature and Science

Aura Heydenreich

Chair of Modern German Literature, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany
President, European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts