

The Way We Live Now – The AHRC Anniversary Essay Competition

Introduction

The AHRC is marking its tenth anniversary in 2015 through a number of activities to showcase the achievements of the arts and humanities research community over the last decade, to look forward to the coming decade and to celebrate the role of the arts and humanities in all areas of our national life.

One of these activities is a series of ten debates held at universities and cultural organisations around the UK over the next year. The theme of the series is 'The Way We Live Now' and individual debates will focus on more specific themes including The Future City, Curating the Nation, the Challenge of Change, Beyond Digital, and many more.

These debates will examine key aspects of our human world, the ways in which they are changing and shaping our lives, and explore the ways in which the arts and humanities can help us understand our changing world.

Essay competition - summary

To help build a legacy around the debates, capture the ideas expressed by speakers and members of the audience and to provide an exciting opportunity for doctoral students studying within the arts and humanities, the AHRC is running an essay competition linked to the debate series. The competition is open to any current doctoral student registered at an eligible organisation (see below for eligibility).

Competition requirements

Applicants are asked to submit essays of no more than 1,500 words on any of the topics covered by the tenth anniversary debates. Essays must reference the debate on the applicant's chosen topic but should also use this as a springboard to consider associated issues and questions. These can be related to the applicant's research or wider interests or the over-arching debate theme of 'The Way We Live Now'.

Some places at the debates will be made available to doctoral students by local organisers in the run-up to the debates and opportunities will be advertised on the AHRC and host organisations' websites. However, applicants do not need to have attended the debate in question as all debates will be either live-streamed and/or recorded with footage being made available online through the AHRC website.

Applicants can submit more than one entry but no more than two across the series of ten debates.

Eligibility

To enter the essay competition, you must be registered for doctoral study at a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) at the time of the closing date for the application.

It is not necessary for you to be AHRC-funded to enter this competition.

Prizes

There will be ten prizes of £250 for the best essay on each of the ten debates, with a prize for the best essay across all ten debates of £500. Winning essays will be also published on the AHRC website.

Judging

After internal AHRC review, the shortlisted essays will be judged by a panel made up of members of the AHRC's Anniversary Advisory Group:

- Ms Jan Dalley – Chair (Financial Times)
- Dr Richard Clay (Birmingham University and AHRC Commons Fellow)
- Dr Philip Pothen (De Montfort University)

Judging criteria

Essays should convey a sense of academic insight and rigour but be aimed at a non-academic audience, articulating their arguments succinctly, clearly and accessibly.

Essays will be judged according to the following criteria:

- the originality and quality of the essays and the arguments and ideas expressed within them, in particular the elegance, succinctness, accessibility and clarity with which the arguments and ideas are articulated

In addition, consideration will be given to:

- how the submitted essays develop ideas from the appropriate anniversary debate and the points made by speakers or by delegates in the debates
- how they address the series theme 'The Way We Live Now'.

How to make an application

Essays should be no longer than 1,500 words each and submitted in Word format.

Applicants should submit their applications to <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Y8SEA/> submitting essays by attachment when prompted to do so.

Footnotes should be kept to an absolute minimum and bibliographies should not be included.

Please do not include your name on the Word document to ensure anonymity during the judging process.

Winning essays will be published in on the AHRC website. Notification will be made prior to publication but submission of an application will be taken as acceptance of these conditions.

Deadline

Due to the fact that the series is taking place over a period of nine months, there will be two deadlines. The first deadline, covering the first three debates (Curating the Nation, The Challenge of Change, Faith and Education) will be **30th October 2015**. The final deadline will cover the debates: Beyond the Digital; Social Cohesion, Diversity and the Common Good; Future Cities for All; Rethinking the Nation, Books and the Human, Is British Culture a Myth? and Machine World will be **31st March 2016**.

The overall winner will be announced in April 2016.

The debates schedule

| Debate | Date | Hosts |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Curating the Nation | June 11th | IROs/British Museum/IWM |
| The challenge of change | October 15 th | Newcastle University |
| Faith and Education | October 21 st | Cambridge University |

| First deadline | October 30th | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Beyond the Digital | November 11 th | Ulster University |
| Social Cohesion and the Common Good | November 16 th | National Endowment for the Humanities, USA |
| Future Cities for All | November 17 th | Bristol Festival of Ideas/ UWE/Bristol/ |
| Rethinking the Nation | November 25 th | University of Huddersfield |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Books and the Human | 16 th December | University of the Arts London |
| Machine World | Early 2016 | |
| Is British Culture a Myth? | 1 st March 2016 | University of Cardiff/St Andrews |
| Final deadline | March 31st | |

The first debate – Curating the Nation at the British Museum on June 11th – will be live-streamed to [this page](#) on the AHRC website.

See www.ahrc.ac.uk/ahrc10 for further information on the dates and locations of the ten debates.

Further information

If you would like further information on this competition, please contact Tristan Russell on t.russell@ahrc.ac.uk