

# Renaissance Society of America

Annual Conference

Philadelphia, 2-4 April 2020

Call for Papers:

## (Mis)Reading the Past: Medieval and Renaissance Political Terms and their Modern Meaning

Political terms such as democracy, freedom, government, liberty, people, power, prudence, state, sovereignty, virtue, etc. have a long history and, for this reason, look quite familiar to the modern eye. However, when we turn our attention to Medieval and Renaissance sources, the use of these terms appears to be different from how they are used today. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges for a scholar is to be able to accurately describe these terms employed in a premodern context without projecting on them the modern meaning they have assumed. How much does this difference affect our ability to understand those sources and establish a productive dialogue with them?

This panel is therefore open to any contribution that presents **concrete examples** of such a challenge and difference. In particular, we welcome contributions that analyze:

1. The use of a political term in a Medieval or Renaissance source compared with its usage today;
2. Examples of a misreading of a premodern source or author caused by the projection of modern political terms on a premodern context;
3. The evolution and change in meaning of a specific political term from the Middle Ages and/or Renaissance to today;
4. The originality in the use of a particular political term in a premodern author compared with his/her contemporaries.

While contributions must be **in English**, they can focus on **any literary genre** (e.g., political treatises, comedy, poetry, letters, etc.), **any field** (political science, literature, philosophy, art, etc.), and **any** Medieval or Renaissance **source and author** from any part of **Europe**. Contributions on the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance are particularly welcome.

Please send a proposal and following info to Dr. Andrea Polegato, [apolegato@csufresno.edu](mailto:apolegato@csufresno.edu) by **August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**:

- i) paper title (15-word maximum)
- ii) abstract text (150-word maximum)
- iii) curriculum vitae (.pdf or .doc upload)
- iv) PhD completion date (past or expected)
- v) full name, current affiliation, and email address

\* All submissions to the RSA Annual Meeting must consist of new material that has not been published or presented in alternative venues or formats.

\*\*Applicants will hear whether their paper proposal fits in this panel by August 14th. The proposed session will be then evaluated for final approval by the RSA Program Committee.