



Social Science History Association

Call for Papers

50th Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association
Toronto, ON, Canada October 31 - November 3, 2024
Submission Deadline: February 23, 2024

“Trust and Distrust of Historical Sources in the Digital Age”

Scholars who research historic populations and events are trained to critique their primary sources by considering their provenance, the original intended audience for the source and the process by which the source was created and preserved. This critical work may be a workaday task at the beginning of the research process or may become the central focus of a constructivist approach to understanding the past. In recent years, source criticism has spilled into the public domain. The spread of mis- and disinformation via social media has promoted popular suspicion of government-generated and private documents and data collection. The reliability of historical sources such as birth certificates and censuses, and their role in defining identity, kinship and community belonging, is in the spotlight more than ever. How can social science historians bring their expertise to bear on such debates and, in turn, how can scholars learn from them? How has our critical approach to routinely-generated sources evolved in the digital age?

While the 2023 Program Committee welcomes individual papers or panel proposals on all aspects of social science history, it is especially interested in papers and panels that address trust and distrust in historical sources. Topics may include but are not restricted to:

- What are patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the documentary record?
- How can scholars reread historical sources in a way that transcends colonial narratives?
- How has historical source criticism prompted a reformulation of concepts used in research?
- How have established standard metrics constructed from historical sources shaped understandings of economic and social processes, and how could perceived omissions or biases be rectified through the development of alternative indicators?
- How can scholars ensure trust and reciprocity when studying and working with particular communities?
- The advent of big data and artificial intelligence has presented scholars with unprecedented research opportunities; what are their potential drawbacks?
- How have large genealogical databases transformed the definition of family and the practice of family history? What new ethical considerations have been prompted by the advent of genetic genealogy?
- How can scholars reimagine spatial systems in ways that respect alternative visions of land use and the relationship of humans with their environment?

SSHA 2024 will be held at the **Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, ON, Canada.**

How do I apply for a Richard Sutch Student Travel Grant to help pay the cost? A link to apply for one of SSHA's competitive student travel grants will be available in June 2024 at: <http://ssha.org>.

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