

Call for Papers

Taboo in language, culture, and communication

Rome, Italy – September 30th, October 1st-2nd, 2020

In a world that seems continuously to be stretching the line of what is acceptable to the inhabitants of specific linguistic and cultural contexts, this interdisciplinary conference acknowledges the importance of investigating taboos and their reinforcement/breaking in various areas of language, culture, literature and society, and across different cultures. We propose to explore the delicate balance and subtle boundaries between the need for inclusion and respect for different ethnic, religious, sexual backgrounds – which seem to be at the basis of modern multicultural societies – and a conscious (or unconscious) push towards the breaking of existing taboos, for example for shock value, as in the case of comedy and art. In such contexts, investigation of the linguistic, cultural, social, institutional and personal implications of taboo reinforcement/breaking appears of extreme value.

For its fifth edition, the Taboo Conference series will specifically address the intricacies of taboo in language, culture, literature and communication in its various occurrences from the points of view of production, performance, and perception/reception. The subject of taboo in language, culture, literature and communication seems to have become especially relevant in the last few years, in which political correctness at both the institutional and individual level has been seen, on the one hand, as a crucial tool in protecting people from verbal abuse and in preventing the reinforcement of stereotypes and, on the other, as a set of measures and a way of thinking which significantly curtail free speech in many aspects of the public sphere.

The 2020 conference seeks to explore the shifting boundaries of the acceptability of taboo in their various incarnations as produced and perceived in today's multicultural society, from cinema and television, to news, videogames, literature and different kinds of online content. The study of taboo in the past, for example through the medium of literature, is also relevant to the conference. Possible areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to, political orientations and political satire, identity and gender politics, ethnic stereotypes, different kinds of non-normative behaviour, political correctness and the discourse surrounding it, and the debate between real and perceived offense through comedy.

We welcome individual proposals or pre-organized panels from different disciplines pertaining – but by no means limited – to the following thematic areas and their intersections in various mediatic forms:

- Sex and sexuality (e.g. nudity, non-normative sexual practices, pornography)
- Racism and sexism (e.g. white supremacy, gender discrimination, transphobia)
- Death and dying (e.g. mortality, ageing, funerals and burials, fatal accidents)
- Sickness, disability, and deformity
- Scatology (e.g. excreta/effluvia)
- Politics (e.g. political corruption, political incorrectness, prejudice, gender discrimination)
- Religions and blasphemy (rituals, prejudice, afterlife)

- Addiction
- Money (greed, graft, exploitation, waste, extravagance, poverty)
- Changing social attitudes towards violence, exploitation and abuse (prostitution, slavery, trafficking, rape, children's rights)
- Censorship, reactions to it, and its effects.

The Conference will be held at University of Rome, Tor Vergata. The working language for the conference is English. Each paper presentation should be scheduled for 15 minutes to be followed by 5-minute question time to the panel.

Please submit your contribution (a 300-word abstract and a brief bio-note) at the following link:

<https://www.conftool.org/taco2020/index.php?page=login&ismobile=true>

For further information, please visit the website:

<http://taco2020.grupposymposia.it>

If you are interested in submitting a pre-organized panel, please contact us at the site above and by the deadline indicated below.

Important Dates

Nov. 5th 2019: Call for Abstracts opening

Dec. 16th 2019: Online Registrations opening

Feb. 10th 2020 (midnight CET): Abstracts Submission deadline

April 6th 2020: Abstracts acceptance notifications

June 15th 2020 (midnight CEST): Authors Registration Deadline

July 10th 2020 (midnight CEST): Early Bird Fee Deadline

Sept. 24th 2020 (midnight CEST): Online Registrations Deadline