

Call for proposals

Albert Einstein famously said: ‘The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking’. The multiple crises of today’s society arguably demand that we change our business as usual and therefore also rethink how we do history. How do we research, write and teach the past? And who does this history? In 2024 the Royal Netherlands Historical Society (KNHG) together with Maastricht University (UM) and the Open University (OU) will organize the fourth edition of the Historians’ Days 2024 in the historical inner city of Maastricht. This three-day event will take place at campus of Maastricht University’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Building on a tradition of setting themes that resonate with current transformations in our society, the theme for this edition is **Undisciplined History**.

More than interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary, the word undisciplined also has a rebellious streak. It suggests breaking with conventions, out-of-the-box thinking and unruly practices. It appeals to the idea of doing history differently. For some, the word might have an activist connotation that resonates with meaningful conversations surrounding research ethics and forms of injustice. For others it may mean doing better, more inclusive, or simply more fun research. **Undisciplined History** is at the least an invitation to free oneself up, and to come and join in a quest to teach, research and present history beyond the well-known limitations of doing history as we are used to do.

An adjacent issue to doing history differently concerns the question: who is doing history? Increasingly we see others than trained professionals involved in research and teaching. In the Limburg province especially, this builds on a strong base of community collectives and associations interested in history and heritage. Therefore, **Undisciplined History** also includes a desire to engage with the past in a bottom-up manner. It takes an interest in projects that open up community knowledge and, as such, move into the zone where fact, fiction and fantasy are not so far apart.

Undisciplined History, or history in dialogue with other disciplines, is a fitting label for the research and education at the UM and the OU. They pride themselves in having a long history of doing interdisciplinary teaching and research. This edition’s theme therefore is an open invitation to all active as researchers, teachers, or exhibition makers—regardless of their ‘discipline’. It points to questions such as what makes a discipline, what holds it together, but also: what lies beyond it? Importantly the **Historians’ Days 2024** want to do more than just draw in those who are professionally active in the history and heritage field. We also explicitly extend the invitation to the amateurs, the communities and the creatives interested in historical objects and subjects.

Would you like to contribute?

For this fourth edition of the **Historians' Days** we invite contributions that deal with the issue of forms of **Undisciplined History**. Proposals can be submitted in two formats:

1. The disciplined format

Teaching, researching, and presenting history beyond what we know comes with a series of key questions:

- What materials are we researching?
- How are these materials examined?
- Where is this research taking place?
- Who is doing historical research?

In short: what are the materials, methods, location and agency of doing historical research? If you would like to submit a proposal we encourage you to think freely about how to contribute and consider the following issues

Conditions for these sessions are a maximum of five speakers (including the moderator) and sufficient opportunity for debate with the participants after the presentations. Duration: one and a half hours.

2. The undisciplined format

While we embrace the traditional conference formats (panel, workshop, etc.) we also explicitly invite **unconferencing contributions**. These may also entail presenting or sharing knowledge in a different format – walks, dates, sprints, film screenings, musical performances etc.

These undisciplined sessions are organized simultaneously with the other types of sessions. Beside time limits there are no conditions for these sessions. Duration: 45 minutes or one and a half hours.

Submit a proposal

The Historians' Days are designed to convey current events throughout the discipline. The contributions may relate to the theme but may also concern matters that transcend this theme. They may be specialized or interdisciplinary and may comprise Dutch and foreign participants alike and ideally appeal to historians from different professional fields (academia, education, heritage) and those interested in history.

Share your expertise, projects and ideas and submit a proposal that does not exceed 500 words to the program committee before 31 January 2024. This may be individual or on behalf of a (working) group or an organization. Young historians are strongly encouraged to submit proposals.

Committing to diversity and inclusivity improves our practice. Therefore, we strongly urge all contributors to consider carefully balancing their proposal in both areas.

For additional information and the rules, see the website www.historicidagen.nl.

Rules

- Maximum of 500 words, listing:
 - o (provisional) title
 - o substantive proposal
 - o type of session
 - o names and organization of the speaker(s)
 - o names and organization of the organizer(s) and the contact information
- Submit between 1 December 2023 and 31 January 2024.
- Submit individually, as a group or as an institution.
- Joint efforts between historians from different backgrounds and perspectives are preferred.
- Innovative presentation formats shall receive preference.
- Submit only via the site www.historicidagen.nl; unfortunately, proposals sent by e-mail shall not be considered.
- All speakers must register as participants and shall also be expected to pay the participation fees (speaker's rate). Organizers are requested to inform participants in their sessions about this as well.

The program committee shall take its decision on the proposals submitted no later than 15 April 2024.