



THE SOCIETY
FOR THE STUDY OF
FRENCH HISTORY

Resonances and Dissonances

Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France (ASMCF)-Society for the Study of French History (SSFH) Postgraduate Study Day

10 April 2026

Institute of Languages, Culture, and Society (ILCS), Senate House, London

Resonances and dissonances: moments of echo and reverberation, rupture and interruption. In the increasingly fractured contemporary world, these competing, overlapping, and often incongruous concepts invite renewed attention to how past events, ideas, and practices continue to shape the present. Resonance, in this sense, functions not merely as retrospective recognition but as a mode of historical cognition, shaping how individuals, communities, and institutions understand and respond to cultural and political events. Dissonance, by contrast, may emerge from closeness to difference or from similarity, challenging assumptions about continuity and coherence. Resonances and dissonances are now, more than ever, a dynamic central to the ways we might grapple with the conditions of modernity and its aftermaths.

Papers might consider how resonances and dissonances function historically, informing societies, groups, and individuals; how postcolonial histories and legacies reshape the resonances of the French language; how literary and philosophical texts from Mallarmé to Duras, from Glissant to Mbembe, register the tension between fragmentation and continuity. What does it mean for two things to resonate? To what extent are resonances a product of retrospective interpretation? How is dissonance generated? Is it born of similarity, difference, or their interaction? We invite participants to consider some of these questions and more through their work at our study day.

This Study Day is open to all postgraduate students working in French history and Francophone studies, in the fields of literature, philosophy, history, history of art, and cultural studies. Papers in either French or English are invited on a broad range of topics, which could include, but are not limited to, the following:

Historical Resonances and Dissonances: revolutionary ideals and their afterlives: how political, philosophical, or cultural ideas continue to reverberate across contexts; colonial legacies and postcolonial reverberations: the persistence of historical forms in contemporary social, linguistic, and artistic practices; historical misinterpretation and its consequences; intertextual and intermedial connections in literature, philosophy, and the arts: tracing the circulation of forms, motifs, and ideas across media and disciplines.

Spaces of Resonance and Dissonance: Francophone communities and transnational identities: how spatial, cultural, and linguistic networks generate continuity and tension; war, refuge, and memory; urban transformations and the spatial dynamics of Francophone cultures: how cities, neighbourhoods, and public spaces mediate resonance and dissonance; public life and collective expression: how political gatherings, protests, or other forms of social performance express or disrupt continuity.

Art, Memory, and Cultural Politics: monuments, museums, and commemorations: sites where resonance and dissonance are materially and symbolically inscribed; cultural transformation and global circulation: how French and Francophone cultural forms intersect with transnational influences; aesthetic and political interventions: artistic practices, literature, and philosophical texts that foreground or disrupt historical and cultural continuities.

Theoretical and Conceptual Resonances and Dissonances: postcolonial and decolonial rereadings of French history and culture: how historical narratives, power structures, and cultural forms are reinterpreted through postcolonial and decolonial frameworks; feminist and queer resonances in literature and history; reinterpretation and the echoes of the past in thought: how philosophical, literary, and critical theories engage with historical legacies.

We will also be pleased to consider proposals for complete panels on one or more of these themes. These should include abstracts for each proposed paper (3 or 4), and the details of the proposed chair (who should not be one of the speakers).

Abstracts of no more than 250 words, in either English or French, should be sent to asmcf.ssfh.pgstudyday@gmail.com.

Deadline for submissions: 9:00 AM (GMT), 30 January 2026.

The Study Day will take place in person at the **Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies (ILCS), Senate House, University of London** on **Friday, April 10th 2026**. Thanks to the generous support of the ASMCF and SSFH, attendees will be able to claim up to £100 for travel and accommodation expenses, with priority given to those participants who will deliver a paper during the Study Day.

The Study Day will include a professional development panel and opportunities to engage with academics from a range of institutions. Attendance is free but all attendees are kindly requested to register to become members of at least one of the organising societies in advance of the Study Day. Lunch and refreshments on the day will be provided.

Organising Committee: Zooey Ziller (Cambridge, ASMCF), Alexander Summers (Strathclyde, SSFH), Leon Hughes (Trinity College Dublin, SSFH).