

Imagination, Creation, Critique

The 2025 Society for Linguistic Anthropology Conference

May 29–31, 2025 | The University of Chicago, Hyde Park, Chicago

What does it mean to imagine today?

The 2025 Society for Linguistic Anthropology Conference invites participants to explore the many ways that *imagination* critically shapes, reproduces, and transforms social worlds across times, spaces, and scales through discursive and non-discursive processes and practices. Starting with the idea of imagination as movement toward a thing, state of affairs, and/or set of ideas that does not (yet) exist, we prompt participants to ask: Who imagines? What gets imagined? Toward what ends and with what effects? How do particular imaginaries resist or engage practices and technologies of mediation? What happens when imagination is not just linked to, but is also untethered from temporal terms and logics? What is the relationship between imagination and forms of individual and collective action, including narrative, claims-making, and other rhetorical modes? How can we understand the myriad instantiations of imagination, creation, and critique—from innovation, construction, or invention to destruction, violence, or the reinforcement of the status quo?

Signs of imagination are never singular, and like all signs, they are always implicated in what they are not. Accordingly, conference participants will engage together with what gets constructed as *other* in particular imaginings while also attending to the horizons of *the otherwise* that variously emerge in discourse, embodied habits, and other forms of social and institutional life.

We welcome proposals that make use of varied methods and frameworks to engage with the role of language, communication, and discourse. We also encourage work on imagination, creation, and critique that is not narrowly or overtly linguistic. The conference will convene linguistic anthropologists, anthropologists across sub-fields, and linguists; we additionally look forward to the participation of colleagues working within Area Studies, Black Studies, Comparative Racial and Ethnic Studies, English Language and Literature, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History, Performance Studies, Postcolonial/Decolonial Studies, and other fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Submissions will be due December 6, 2024.

Details on submissions soon to follow!