

# The Manchester Lit and Phil

Discussion for lively minds since 1781



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e-programme edition 1  
23rd March 2020

## Welcome to the first edition of the Manchester Lit & Phil e-programme!

With the lectures being cancelled until further notice, and most of us now self-isolating in our homes, the Lit & Phil has prepared a weekly programme of activities you can do in the comfort of your own home.

Each week will have a theme and we will try to approach it from a variety of angles and media. You will be offered the chance at the end of each week to take part in an online group discussion where you will be able to share with fellow members thoughts, interrogations and suggestions for further learning. All the activities we will list here are free and we do not own any of the materials.

For this first week of e-activities we will look at a very topical theme 'Plagues and Pandemics'. The current Coronavirus outbreak is not the first pandemic human societies have had to face. From the Medieval Plagues to the more recent Influenza outbreaks, there have been a number of particularly significant epidemics. We will have a look at how artists reacted to some of them, what we can learn from history and how you can help prevent the next one.

Front cover image: credit Derek Thompson

## Read



Philip McCouat

**SURVIVING THE BLACK DEATH**

<http://www.artinsociety.com/surviving-the-black-death.html>

In this article, Philip McCouat examines how the Black Death pandemics in the 1340s affected the life and work of one of the fortunate survivors – the Sienese painter Bartolo di Fredi. He is considered the most important painter in Siena in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Rae Ellen Bichell

**ICONIC PLAGUE IMAGES ARE OFTEN NOT WHAT THEY SEEM**

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/08/18/542435991/those-iconic-images-of-the-plague-thats-not-the-plague>

In this article, Rae Ellen Bichell explains that very few images depicting the Black Death were produced at the time the pandemics caused havoc. Most of the pictures in fact depict leprosy or smallpox.

## Listen



Verdi

**LA TRAVIATA**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQa6vXNSPI0>

Despite advances in medicine and treatments tuberculosis remains a global pandemic. It became also known as the 'artist's disease' and is an often-reused theme in many art forms (literature, painting, music...).

In Verdi's *La Traviata*, the main character Violet Valery suffers from the disease. She is based on celebrated courtesan Marie Duplessis, who died of pulmonary tuberculosis in 1847, aged 23.

The score is available online here:

<http://ks.petruccimusiclibrary.org/files/imglnks/usimg/6/6c/IMSLP514870-PM-LP16223-Verdi - La traviata.pdf>

## Listen



### Melvyn Bragg and guests

**IN OUR TIME - THE BLACK DEATH**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bcqt8>

As per the BBC website 'Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss how the Black Death influenced the structure and ideas of Medieval Europe.... In the long and unsanitary history of Europe there have been many plagues but only one Black Death. It killed over a third of Europe's population in 4 years – young and old, rich and poor, in the town and in the country. When it stopped in 1351 it left a continent ravaged but transformed – the poor found their labour to be valuable, religion was both reinforced and undercut, medicine progressed, art changed and the continent was awash with guilt and memorialisation. With Miri Rubin, Professor of Medieval and Early Modern History at Queen Mary, University of London; Samuel Cohn, Professor of Medieval History at the University of Glasgow; Paul Binski, Professor of the History of Medieval Art at Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge'

## Read



### Giovanni Boccaccio

**DECAMERON**

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23700>

The Decameron is a collection of a 100 novellas. The tales are told from the point of view of a group of young people sheltering in a villa outside Florence to escape the Black Death. It is considered a masterpiece of classical early Italian prose.

[www.manlitphil.ac.uk](http://www.manlitphil.ac.uk) | [@manlitphil](https://twitter.com/manlitphil) | [admin@manlitphil.ac.uk](mailto:admin@manlitphil.ac.uk)

## Learn



### futurelearn.com

**UNDERSTANDING MONEY:**

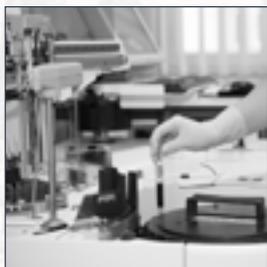
**THE HISTORY OF FINANCE, SPECULATION AND THE STOCK MARKET**

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-money>

The current coronavirus outbreak is having a devastating impact on the Stock Market. But what exactly is the Stock Market? In this course, you will 'explore how money, investment and finance have been represented in arts, literature and popular culture over the last 300 years.'

The course lasts 3 weeks and you can enroll now.

## Learn

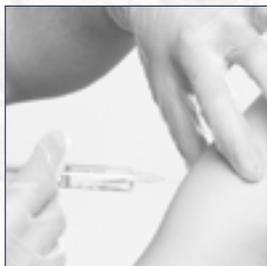


futurelearn.com

**COVID-19: TACKLING THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS**  
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/covid19-novel-coronavirus>

This free course presented by international experts covers the latest known information about COVID-19, from how it has emerged and was identified, to how it spreads, the Public health measures for COVID-19 worldwide and what is needed to address COVID-19 going forward. You can enroll from today on. The course lasts 4 weeks.

## Read



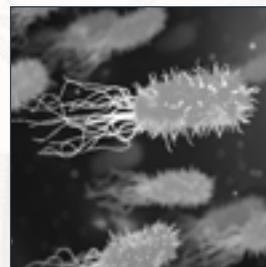
Tae Hyong Kim, Jennie Johnstone, and Mark Loeb

**VACCINE HERD EFFECT**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3171704/>

There has been a lot of talk about herd immunity lately, but how does it work exactly and is it truly effective? This paper published in 2011 provides 'an update review on the herd effect, focusing on the clinical benefit, by reviewing data for specific vaccines.'

## Do

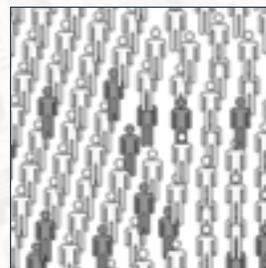


zooniverse

**BASH THE BUG**

<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/mrniaboc/bash-the-bug>

Tuberculosis is thought to infect one-quarter of the world's population as of 2018. Some strands of tuberculosis are now resistant to some of the antibiotics. The Bash the Bug project aims at predicting which drugs will be the most effective against the different strands and the general public can help by doing some identification/classification work. Head to the zooniverse website for more details.



Dirk Brockmann

**HOW HERD IMMUNITY WORKS**

<http://rocs.hu-berlin.de/D3/herd/>

Simulate how well herd immunity works depending on vaccination rate and reproduction number with this simple agent based simulation.

## FORUM

If you would like to share your thoughts, interrogations or other activities around this week's theme with other members we will meet online on Friday 27th March 2020 from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 a.m. (the forum will remain open outside of these hours but other members might not be connected).

To joint in the discussion head to:

<https://the-manchester-lit-phil.mn.co/>

1. Click on “Request to Join” and then follow the instructions.
2. Once you are logged in, click on the menu icon on the top left and select ‘Topics’

