

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH ON RESEARCH IN THE ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES BOOK SERIES



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In this contribution we introduce the new book series *Research on Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* (RoRAHSS – <https://www.brepols.net/series/rrahss>). The series is published by Brepols Publishers to provide a dedicated long-form outlet for in depth studies of how research works within the arts, humanities, and social sciences (AHSS).

We conceived the series to fill a noticeable gap in publication venues for research on research or science of science. Indeed, handbooks in the field appear mostly as stand alone items or as part of a very broad series of handbooks, e.g. the *Springer Handbook of Science and Technology Indicators* (Glänzel et al., 2019), the *Handbook Bibliometrics* published with De Gruyter (Ball, 2021), and our

own *Handbook on Research Assessment in the Social Sciences* published with Edward Elgar (Engels & Kulczycki, 2022). The introductory books *Becoming Metric-Wise* (Rousseau et al., 2018) and *Measuring Research* (Sugimoto & Larivière, 2018), as well as the recent volume *Challenges in Research Policy* (Sivertsen & Langfeldt, 2025) also appeared in broad categories rather than dedicated series. The monograph *The Evaluation Game: How publication metrics shape scholarly communication* (Kulczycki, 2023) even appeared in a series on general and classical physics.

This brings us to the question which book series publish monographs or edited volumes of scholars in our field. The Springer book series *Qualitative and quantitative analysis of*

scientific and scholarly communication (<https://www.springer.com/series/13902>) is a good example, dedicated to the study of the impact, evaluation, and organization of STM publishing. The MIT Press series *History and foundation of information science* (<https://mitpress.mit.edu/series/history-and-foundations-of-information-science/>) has a somewhat broader scope and gave, among others, fruition to the book *Bibliometrics and Research Evaluation: Uses and Abuses* (Gingras, 2016). However, scholars who investigate the processes, communication, evaluation, and impact of scholarship in AHSS – as well as those studying science and technology systems more broadly from AHSS perspectives, such as the sociology of science or critical science studies – have long lacked a platform for comprehensive, book-length treatments of these topics.

With the RoRAHSS series we aim to change that by welcoming contributions from a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds. By doing so, we seek to establish the meta-research on AHSS disciplines more prominently as a recognized branch of science studies. The series explicitly positions itself with a global outlook, building on long-standing European and international collaborations in the field.

THE NEED FOR LONG-FORM IN RESEARCH ON RESEARCH

How can a book series like RoRAHSS strengthen the field of science studies? Historically, books have been at the center of the field, especially Derek J de Solla Price and his works *Science since Babylon*, originally published in 1961 (Price, 1978) and *Little Science Big Science*, originally published in 1966 (Price, 1971) spring to mind. To study informetrics, *Introduction to informetrics* (Egghe & Rousseau, 1990) remains a great resource.

Another reason lies in the nature of scholarly communication in AHSS disciplines. Researchers in social sciences and especially humanities often publish their most significant work as monographs or edited volumes,

sometimes in local languages, to reach audiences beyond the global English-speaking academia. In contrast, STEM fields typically rely on frequent journal articles in English for dissemination. These different publication patterns mean that studies of research (and science) must account for the full range of scholarly outputs. Short-form articles alone cannot capture many aspects of AHSS scholarship. In fact, various scientometric studies and community experts have emphasized that books are essential communication media in AHSS and should not be treated as second-tier outputs. Monographs allow for deep, contextualized exploration of questions that would be difficult to fully address in a 8,000-word journal article.

Some research topics are essentially “called to be books” – they do not translate well into shorter formats without losing meaning or becoming superficial. This is especially true when dealing with complex, discipline-specific epistemologies or historical and cultural analyses that require narrative depth. In the field of science of science and metascience, there is growing recognition of these differences. However, until now, there have been few venues to publish long-form works examining how knowledge is produced and evaluated in the arts, humanities and social sciences specifically.

The RoRAHSS series now provides scholars room to develop nuanced arguments, compare disciplines, and investigate methodological details that a standard article format might constrain.

BUILDING ON COMMUNITY MOMENTUM

The launch of RoRAHSS is not happening in isolation – it builds upon a decade of community momentum. Notably, the European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and Humanities (EN-RESSH) was a COST Action (2016–2020) that brought together over 130 experts from more than 30 countries to study how SSH

research is assessed and to champion better recognition of SSH scholarly practices.

One of the clear messages from initiatives like ENRESSH was the need for infrastructures and forums tailored to the unique characteristics of scholarship in the arts, humanities and social sciences. The RoRAHSS series serves as a tangible legacy of that community's work.

As series editors, we – Tim Engels (University of Antwerp, Belgium) and Emanuel Kulczycki (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland) – were active in these discussions and recognized the absence of publishing options for comprehensive studies in this area. Together with the editorial board, we see the series as a way to strengthen the field of research on research in AHSS by capturing the rich insights that have been emerging in scattered papers, reports, and projects.

EDITORIAL VISION AND BOARD REFLECTIONS

As series editors, we articulate a commitment to rigorous peer review (each volume will be reviewed by specialists, often involving the editorial board) and to maintaining high academic standards on par with Brepols' long-standing reputation. But beyond process, the vision is about content: we encourage works that *push the envelope* in understanding how knowledge is created, legitimized, and used in the humanities and social sciences. In our view, AHSS fields possess distinctive epistemologies and societal roles that deserve dedicated study and reflection.

We feel privileged to be able to draw on the experience of a highly qualified editorial board, consisting of members that have each published one or more books in the field. These internationally recognized experts are Andrea Bonaccorsi (University of Pisa, Italy), Noela Invernizzi (Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil), Lai Ma (University College Dublin, Ireland), Michael Ochsner (FORS, Switzerland), and Cassidy Sugimoto (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA). Together they bring a

broad range of perspectives and deep experience in the field and will help us ensure the series reflects diversity and scholarly excellence.

DIVERSE APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES

A hallmark of the RoRAHSS series is its openness to a wide spectrum of disciplinary and methodological approaches. The scope is deliberately broad: proposals are welcomed from scholars of information science, higher education studies, sociology of science, bibliometrics, science policy, and more – as long as they focus on aspects of arts, humanities, and/or social science research.

Interdisciplinary works are explicitly encouraged, reflecting the fact that understanding research in AHSS often requires crossing boundaries (for example, combining historical analysis with quantitative publication data, or philosophical inquiry with case studies of artistic research practices). Practice-based perspectives – such as those from the creative arts or design research – are also valued.

By being inclusive in format (monographs, edited collections, and potentially other book formats) and in content, RoRAHSS fills a unique niche. It sends a message that research on research in the arts, humanities and social sciences is a diverse and evolving domain, one that benefits from multiple lenses.

FIRST TITLE AND FUTURE PLANS

The first title in the RoRAHSS series has already been accepted, offering a taste of what's to come. Written by Andrea Bonaccorsi, the title is *The Knowledge of Humanities: A Comparative Epistemology of History, Literary Criticism, History of Art and History of Architecture*. This work investigates how four major humanities disciplines conceive knowledge – comparing their epistemic frameworks, methods, and validation processes – and in doing so, lays groundwork for a general theory of knowledge production in the humanities.

Bonaccorsi's choice of topic exemplifies the ambition of the series: tackling deep questions about the nature of scholarship that require both breadth (spanning multiple fields) and depth (philosophical and historical analysis).

Looking ahead, we are actively building a community around RoRAHSS. We will organize a special session at STI-ENID in Bristol, and a first workshop, probably in January 2026, to encourage prospective authors to develop their work into a book format. Talented early-career researchers might for example turn their doctoral dissertation on research systems into a book. In the longer term we also conceive convening topic-focused meetings where scholars can brainstorm and get feedback on book proposals. These efforts aim to demystify the book-writing process for researchers who might otherwise stick to journal articles, and to encourage collaboration that could lead to multi-authored volumes. Such community engagement also ensures that RoRAHSS remains responsive to the needs and interests of the community of scholars that are members of ISSI and beyond. By creating spaces (both virtual and in-person) for discussion, we hope to spark new ideas and facilitate authors in developing long-form projects that align with the series' vision.

CONCLUSION

The Research on Research in AHSS series represents an exciting development for those of us interested in the science of science, especially as it applies to the arts, humanities and social sciences. It addresses a clear gap in scholarly publishing by providing a venue for long-form, in-depth explorations of how knowledge is created and assessed in these rich but often undervalued domains. The ISSI community and all scholars of scholarly communication can look forward to the insights that will emerge from this series – and are warmly invited to partake in this growing conversation, whether as readers or as future contributors.

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