

# Call for Papers

## “AS FOR THE MATTER OF GOVERNMENTS”: MARGARET CAVENDISH AND THE POLITICAL

The Fifteenth International Margaret Cavendish Society Biennial Conference

17–19 June 2026

University of New Brunswick (Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada)

Alongside her trenchant analysis of the best forms of rule and the causes and travails of the English Civil War, Margaret Cavendish offers disclaimers about women’s knowledge of, and involvement in, politics. “As for the matter of governments, we women understand them not” (Sociable Letter #16) is one such self-protective statement. Yet Cavendish scholars have identified and analysed the many sites and genres of Cavendish’s engagement with the political, demonstrating her often-underappreciated significance as a political writer and theorist.

This conference aims to bring together scholars from a variety of disciplines and at different career stages to explore topics related to the theme of Cavendish’s writing on politics and civil war as well as other aspects of Cavendish’s literary and philosophical works.

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR. ERIN MURPHY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

Topics for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- politics, focussing on specific works, genres, or themes
- the English Civil War and its aftermath
- global perspectives
- feminist, queer and/or trans Cavendish
- the politics of race
- imperialism, colonialism, and the Atlantic World
- influences on, and reception of, Cavendish’s political thought
- politics and the natural world

We warmly invite you to join us in Fredericton, the capital city of New Brunswick known for its hospitality, trails, craft beer, and views of the beautiful Wolastoq/Saint John River. Please send a 250-word proposal for an academic paper or creative response and a brief biographical note to [marcavconference2026@unb.ca](mailto:marcavconference2026@unb.ca). This event will be held in person, although online participation may be considered. The deadline for submissions is 16 January 2026.

Local organizing committee:

Melanie Simoes Santos, Edith Snook, and Joanne Wright