



CFP: Critical Minerals Symposium
7 November 2025
University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Keynote Speaker: Associate Professor Tom Nurmi, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Recent geopolitical contestations over Ukraine's rare earths, global debates on 'critical' minerals in the context of green energy transitions, and growing scholarly engagement – such as *Museum and Society's* recent special issue on minerals – have all highlighted the ethical, political, and environmental stakes of minerals.

This one-day, interdisciplinary symposium addresses these urgent concerns by bringing together scholars and professionals from the humanities, social sciences, arts, and museums to examine minerals as political and cultural agents. The term 'critical' in our symposium title carries a triple meaning: 1) it refers to minerals deemed essential for renewable energy transitions; 2) it addresses the urgent environmental and political challenges tied to resource extraction and securitisation; 3) it signals a critical scholarly approach to the cultural and political knowledge of critical minerals. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, this symposium aims to deepen the understanding of the geopolitical and environmental consequences of minerals, and to encourage more sustainable and ethical perspectives on the mineral foundations of our modern life.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Ethical and political stakes of mineral demand in renewable energy transitions
- Construction, contestation, and circulation of cultural knowledge about minerals
- Minerals and literary imagination
- Minerals and art
- Minerals and archives
- Minerals in museum display and curatorship
- Evolution of mineral narratives
- Colonial histories underpinning today's critical minerals discourse
- Minerals and imperial literary histories
- Nineteenth-century narratives of extraction
- Minerals, conflicts, and geopolitics
- Minerals and (non)human rights
- Minerals and domestic violence
- Minerals, green energy, and the climate crisis
- Minerals and racial capitalism

- Minerals and policymaking
- Alternative imaginaries of minerals and post-extraction futures
- Teaching critical minerals
- Researching critical minerals in the humanities

Submission Guidelines:

Please submit a proposal of 200–250 words for a 15-minute paper, along with a short bio (approx. 100 words) by **15 August 2025** to both organisers: ge.tang@ucd.ie and katie.donnely1@ucdconnect.ie. We will notify applicants of acceptance by mid-September 2025.

This symposium is generously supported by the UCD College of Arts and Humanities (CAH), the UCD Humanities Institute, and Research Ireland through the Starting Laureate Minerals project. It is also supported by CAH's research strands: Environmental Humanities, Thresholds of Knowledge, and Transnationalising the Humanities.

Modest travel bursaries will be available for PhD students and unwaged scholars. If you would like to be considered for a bursary, please indicate this in your proposal and attach a short CV.