

## The Fourth Annual Queens College English Graduate Conference CFP

# DIFFICULT TEXTS: LITERATURE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

*Conference Date:* Thursday, April 27, 2017

*Keynote Speaker:* Tanya Agathocleous, Associate Professor of English, Hunter College

*Submission Deadline:* Monday, February 20, 2017

The fourth annual Queens College English Graduate Conference comes at a post-election moment when much of the nation is concerned about maintaining and preserving hard-won rights in a changing political environment. Many groups within our society and across the globe feel under siege, dismayed and alarmed by proposed restrictions based on gender, race, and religion. As it often is in times of crisis, literature becomes a place where we seek to examine and understand seemingly abhorrent ideologies. For this conference, we are interested in looking at the roles that creative expression play in periods of social, political, environmental, and economic upheaval. How have writers in other historical moments confronted similar feelings of unease? What are the genres and forms that best help us cope during times of crisis? What can we learn from difficult texts that take on challenges in literature and culture? We want to engage in a conversation not only about how texts and readers respond to pervasive, often oppressive beliefs, but the process of resisting those beliefs and struggling against powerful new cultural norms.

The QC English Graduate Conference is a chance for CUNY master's students to share their research interests with the larger CUNY community. Submissions must be critical or theoretical works about literature and/or culture and can be portions of larger works or works-in-progress.

Possible submission topics include but are not limited to:

### Genres for Troubled Times

- Apocalyptic Narratives
- Protest Literature
- Science Fiction/Fantasy
- Children's/YA Literature
- Comics and Graphic Novels

### Sizes, Scales, and Magnitudes

- Planetary
- Global and Transnational
- Colonial and Postcolonial
- National
- Regional
- Personal

### Varieties of Crisis

- Financial and Economic
- War and Genocide
- The Body in Crisis
- Politics and the Demos
- Crisis of Faith and Belief
- Emotional Challenges

### Crisis Management

- Utopian Writing
- Aesthetic Remedies
- New Social Imaginaries
- Redistributing the Sensible
- Belonging and Sociality
- Coalitions and Intersections

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### *To Submit a Proposal*

Please send proposals (250 words max.) to [QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com](mailto:QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com) by Monday, February 20, 2017. Proposals should be pasted in the body of the email. Please include your full name and the name of your program and school.

All Queens College MA, MFA, MSED, and MAT students are welcome to submit, as well as master's students from other schools. If you have any questions, please email [QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com](mailto:QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com).

### *Keynote Speaker Biography*

Tanya Agathocleous is an associate professor of English at Hunter College. She researches and teaches Victorian literature and culture, as well as twentieth-century Anglophone literature in transnational, colonial and postcolonial contexts. She is interested in the relationship between transnational political ideals and literary form, and in bridging the gap between Victorian, modernist, and postcolonial scholarship. She is the author of several books, including *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World* (Cambridge UP, 2011), *Teaching Literature: A Companion* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), and *George Orwell: Battling Big Brother* (Oxford UP, 2000). She also edited and wrote the introduction to the Broadview Press edition of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. She recently published an essay in the *LA Review of Books* titled "Life (Narrative) in the End Times," which was part of the inspiration for this year's conference theme.