

CALL FOR PAPERS

Annual City College of New York English Graduate Conference

Through the Dark

Conference Date: May 9th, 2025

Abstract Submission Deadline: April 18th, 2025



Bertolt Brecht once wrote, “In the dark times / Will there also be singing? / Yes, there will also be singing. / About the dark times.” Today, as we witness the rise of far-right governments, the erosion of democratic norms, and the assault on basic human rights across the world, Brecht’s words resonate with renewed urgency. These are dark times, but they are not unprecedented. Literature has long documented moments of oppression and resistance, offering both cautionary tales and a window into imagined—and not imagined—ways of fighting back. In the spirit of Brecht, we seek to create a space for critical dialogue, collective reflection, and hope. Let us sing, and write, about the dark times, not only of being in them but also of moving beyond them.

For the 2025 CCNY English Graduate Conference, we invite papers that think with and through darkness. We welcome submissions that engage with both the theme of resistance and beyond. How can literary texts help us understand the current political and social moment? How can they inspire us to imagine new ways of confronting the challenges we face today? Darkness, of course, invites broader resonances, such as the Gothic, the

unconscious, ecological disaster, and more. We look forward to work spanning a variety of contexts, genres, and periods.

This year's conference will feature keynote speaker Dr. Kandice Chuh, a professor of English at the CUNY Graduate Center. An acclaimed scholar, she is the author of *The Difference Aesthetics Makes: On the Humanities "After Man"* (2019) and *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (2003).

Possible proposal topics include, but are not limited to:

Resistance

- Writing as resistance and rebellion
- Narratives of survival and revolution
- The aesthetics of dissent

Utopia & Dystopia

- Speculative fiction
- Alternative world orders
- Cosmopolitanism and the planetary

Postcolonialism, Decolonization, Anti-Colonialism

- Imperial history and violence
- The aftermath of Western colonialism
- Borders, occupation, and opposition

The Gothic & Horror

- Ghosts and haunting
- Monsters and wild animals
- Dark affects
- Psychological turmoil

Climate & the Anthropocene

- Climate change in literature
- Eco-futurism & eco-socialism
- Natural disasters

Surface & Depth

- Psychoanalysis and the unconscious
- Obscurity, light, and shadow
- Narratives of mental illness
- Taboos

Please submit proposals (150-250 words) to ccnygradconference@gmail.com by Friday, April 18th, 2025. We welcome both critical and creative presentations. Possibilities include the reading of an academic paper, a scholarly reflection, a poetry reading, a soundscape, a panel discussion, and more. Submissions may be co-authored. All graduate students are welcomed to submit, including those pursuing their MA, MFA, and PhD.