

Call for Papers
The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted: People, Print, and Power

Seventh Annual Brooklyn College Graduate English Conference

Friday, April 25, 2014

Keynote Speaker: Barbara Foley (Rutgers Univ, Newark)

“In a revolution, as in a novel, the most difficult part to invent is the end.”

- Alexis de Tocqueville

Societies that are on the verge of, in the midst of, or adjusting to revolutions are thrust into significant turmoil and rejuvenation. The reaction of the people against the status quo leads to collective reinvention as conventional wisdom is rigorously questioned. Divergences from previous norms can become rallying points for issues surrounding race, gender, class, religion and other forms of identity that existed in the previous social order. When artists, writers and intellectuals engage in revolutions, cultural production becomes especially critical but more complex, often taking on a dual role. In content and form, it can galvanize revolutionary thought and energy and can, in turn, be impacted by revolution. While people fight for their rights, their freedom, and their survival with bayonets and bombs, words are used as weapons just as often. Writing can, itself, be a revolutionary technology and a powerful tool for the dissemination of new ideas. Literature inspires, echoes and preserves the revolutionary spirit of the people on the street, on paper, and through the screen. The best and worst of humanity are often exposed in the process leading to newly developed questions, rather than resolved answers.

This conference seeks papers that explore literature's multifaceted function as a medium of revolutionary discourse, from its moments of inception to its most distant outlooks. We invite papers on topics including but not limited to the following:

- The role of ephemeral print media – newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, zines – in race, class and gender struggles
- The creation and application of words, images, and symbols that helped define revolutions and social change
- Revolutions in the history of writing, such as new writing systems, printing techniques, or digital media
- The relation between aesthetic revolution, cultural revolution and political revolution
- How intercultural communication and inspiration may lead to intracultural revolution
- How technology and media can inspire, magnify, or impede revolutionary discourse
- The struggle between literature and censorship over revolutionary discourse
- The role of revolution in canon formation (or lack thereof)
- Othered, hyphenated, or otherwise marginalized identities and their literatures
- Satire's effects on revolutionary discourse and public consciousness
- The complications of self-representation for revolutionary ideas and groups
- The appropriation of revolutionary language and imagery

Abstracts of no more than 300 words are due February 15, 2013. Send by Word or pdf attachment to bcgradconference@gmail.com.