

Call for Papers: 10th Annual Graduate English Organization Conference

“Worked Up: Labor, Literature, and Culture”

Department of English

University of Maryland, College Park

March 18th, 2017



As questions of unionization, solidarity, precarity, and capital reverberate throughout our academic communities, this conference asks how an historical consideration of labor can invigorate our work as literary scholars today. We might map our present moment through histories of labor that navigate the legacy of slavery, colonization, indentured servitude, guild labor, convict labor, undocumented labor, and the gendered spheres of public and private work. Literary inquiry can trace genealogies of labor—how writings register continuities and ruptures in the way we regulate, politicize, and imagine work over time. Writers as varied as Shakespeare, Marx and Engels, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Zora Neale Hurston, John Steinbeck, and Jacques Rancière illustrate that labor is constantly being reimagined and repurposed. We thus invite you to explore work and labor as not only nouns but verbs: what it means “to work,” and what is a “work,” as both an art object and the outcome of labor. These terms invite questions about power, property, and subjectivity that engage many interpretive frameworks like feminist theory, Marxist criticism, critical race studies, disability studies, and digital humanities. We imagine this conference to be, in part, self-reflexive: a space for us to think about our work as scholars in academic communities.

We aim for “work” and “labor” to broadly encompass not only questions of material production, but also create opportunities to consider representations of work across boundaries of race, sexuality, gender, class, nation, and form. How do texts work, what do they *do*? What constitutes the labor of an author or reader? How are bodies transformed by or in the service of labor? How do we account for domestic, racialized, emotional, nonhuman, and collaborative labor? What histories have we traced for these forms of labor, and what futures might we imagine?

We welcome MA, MFA, and PhD students to submit a diversity of “works” to our spring conference: critical presentations, collaborative projects, craft essays, creative work in fiction, poetry, drama, dance, arts, and film. Topics of potential essays can include, but are not limited to:

- Representations of Labor
 - Commodified or laboring bodies
 - Dis/ability
 - Invisible labor
 - Digital labor
 - Sex work and transgressive labor
- Global and transnational mappings of work
 - Representations of migrant and displaced labor
 - The work of translation
 - The work of (de)colonization
 - Hemispheric and transatlantic literary traditions
 - The circulation of trade, knowledge, and texts
- Literary Labor
 - The political work of aesthetics and poetics
 - Fetishization, lack, and surplus desire
 - The work of authors, publishers, printers, and readers
 - Ideology and labor
 - Issues of craft and the creative process
- Labor and the University
 - Models of labor in academia
 - Pedagogy as labor and ethics
 - Intellectual labor
 - The work of the Humanities
 - Creative writing within the university

Please submit proposals for fifteen-minute presentations. Panel submissions (3-4 participants) are highly encouraged, as are other collaborative projects. **Proposals for papers or panels should be 300-word abstracts.** Proposals for creative work should be a short sample from an original composition or a description of the intended work. Please include your full name and email address.

**Abstracts are due December 12th, 2016 and should be e-mailed to
conference.geo@gmail.com**

Website: <http://workedupconference.weebly.com>

Facebook: [GEO Conference 2017: Worked Up](https://www.facebook.com/GEOConference2017WorkedUp)

Twitter: UMD GEO Conference [@workedup2017](https://twitter.com/Workedup2017)