

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Eighth Annual Queens College English Graduate Conference

### **Catastrophe and Community**

Hybrid Conference Dates: Week of May 2–6, 2022 (details TBA)

Submission Deadline: March 28, 2022

This year's QC English Graduate Conference theme responds to our 2021 theme, "The Makeover: Revision, Transformation, Experimentation," which focused on adaptation and revision as a creative constraint after a period of great change. This year we are asking for proposals that address community and identity formation *during* extreme upheaval.

"Catastrophe" is commonly defined as a sudden disaster or misfortune. In classical tragic theory, it describes the final action that completes a plot. In geology, it's a sudden change in the physical order of things. For the 2022 conference theme, we are interested in proposals that consider the myriad ways literature, film, and media function in relation to these concepts. We invite you to engage in a conversation about catastrophic events that produce a subversion of order—and alter communities and individuals in the process. How has literature represented moments of violent change, personal or political? What is the significance of storytelling when communities experience calamity? When have writers found levity amid catastrophe, or mounted a "comeback" from catastrophe? How does art address our ability—and *inability*—to heal in the face of sudden loss? When are scenes of devastation forms of resolution?

This theme does not just invite us to consider how we make sense of catastrophe; it also asks how we continue to play during difficult times. What does "fun" look like when an individual or a community is unraveling? How might teaching transform catastrophe? How does despair lead to a desire to create?

We also welcome reflections on your own pedagogical or creative catastrophes. Have you had to find your way out of a "disastrous" writing process? Have you ever turned to writing or reading amid an upheaval? Have you been inspired to breathe new life into an old classic?

We welcome submissions on a wide range of topics and in a variety of forms. This includes (but is not limited to) essays, reflections, and scholarly discussions that explore

- Writing “disasters”
- Ecological/environmental reckonings
- Laughter, comedy, humor and transformation
- Loss (of identity, of language, of space, of land)
- Reading/seeing “classics” anew
- Dystopian/utopian landscapes
- Popular representations of catastrophe
- Historical “comebacks”
- Experiments in community-making
- Health, healing, access
- Convulsions of the *status quo*
- Addressing physical change/difference with/in writing (or reading)
- Predicting/risking catastrophe
- Geopolitical upheavals
- Worst-case scenarios
- War narratives/memoir
- The “unraveling” of plot
- Unsettling the quotidian, the everyday
- Carnavalesque and catastrophe
- Togetherness amid tragedy

## To Submit a Proposal:

Please submit proposals (250 words max.) via the following Google Form by **Monday, March 28, 2022**: <https://forms.gle/56kLLbL8DYUeFuff6>.

Proposals should indicate both the content and format of your project. While we welcome academic essays, we are open to a variety of presentation formats, as we invite you to test the boundaries of form. Possibilities include the reading of an academic paper, a pedagogical reflection, a podcast, a video essay, an asynchronous presentation, a virtual exhibit, a listening party, or a book review. Submissions may also be co-authored/co-created; this could include a joint presentation or roundtable.

All Queens College MA, MFA, MEd, and MAT students are welcome to submit, as well as master’s students from other schools. If you have any questions, please email [MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:MAEnglish@qc.cuny.edu).