

Call for Papers

# Crossing Over

## An Interdisciplinary Conference on Death and Morbidity

Graduate Program in Humanities Student Conference  
February 17–18, 2017  
Holiday Inn Toronto–Yorkdale  
3450 Dufferin St, Toronto, ON, Canada M6A 2V1

The Humanities Graduate Student Association (HuGSA) and the Graduate Program in Humanities at York University are pleased to announce an interdisciplinary conference interrogating the enduring human fascination with **death, dying, and the dead**—in senses both figurative and literal—encompassing the many cultural moments of the human experience. Despite the prevalence of morbidity and representations of death as a part of everyday experience, the study of death remains overshadowed by research frameworks which are primarily sociological or medical, or which centre on policy and law—the practical concerns of dealing with death and dying as part of all societies. That said, death as a ubiquitous human cultural phenomenon has received considerably less critical attention. As well, because scientific and medical study of death has advanced, suggesting new possibilities for postponing it, questions about human responses to the prospect of death—and its evolving meaning—become ever more societally foregrounded. Situating death as its critical theme, this conference seeks to attract and share research from across a range of disciplines within the humanities, as well as from the social sciences, education, science and medicine. Providing a platform for graduate students and early-career researchers to present and discuss their research, the conference’s secondary aim is to contribute to a growing network of researchers and work that engages with death in new and unconventional ways.

Panel themes and topics might include (but are not limited to):

- **Representation:** literature, art, music, film, theatre, etc.
- **Contemplation:** consolation, anxiety, memory, grief, anticipation, attraction
- **Location:** mortuary spaces, morgues, cemeteries, battlefields
- **Imagination:** immortality, undeath, afterlife
- **Communication:** language, euphemism, gallows humour
- **Execution:** assisted-death, humane death, suicide, sacrifice, murder, genocide
- **Religion:** rite and ritual, practice and belief
- **Celebration:** death as beauty, poetic, political uses, mythologizing

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We welcome submissions from graduate students of any level, as well as early career researchers, from a wide cross-section of disciplines, fields and critical approaches, including (but not limited to) anthropology, art history, classics, communications and culture, comparative literature, cultural memory, digital humanities, education, film studies, fine arts, futurism, historicism, history of science and technology, Jewish studies, media studies, medical humanities, medicine, nostalgia, philosophy, philosophy of the mind, philosophy of language, popular cultural studies, religious studies, representation studies, sociology, translation studies, and women's studies.

Submissions may take the form of 20-minute papers, or 12–15 minute roundtable papers in either English or French. Other submissions, in the form of poster sessions, visual art, or performance, will also be considered. Those wishing to participate are invited to submit a 250-word abstract to [humaconference@gmail.com](mailto:humaconference@gmail.com) by **5 December, 2016**. Submissions must be accompanied by the presenter's name, e-mail address, tentative title, a short (150-word) bio, as well as an indication of whether any computing or electronic equipment (e.g., laptop, projector) is needed.

### **Keynote Address**

The conference concludes with a keynote dinner and address. This year we welcome **Dr Patricia Rae**, who will deliver a keynote address entitled "**Proleptic, Pragmatic Mourning.**" Patricia Rae is Professor of English at Queen's University. She is the author of *The Practical Muse: Pragmatist Poetics in Hulme, Pound, and Stevens* and editor of *Modernism and Mourning*, and she has published articles on pragmatism, modernist poetry, elegy, mourning, and the literature of war, in journals including *ELH*, *Comparative Literature*, *Twentieth Century Literature*, *Prose Studies*, *The Journal of War and Culture Studies*, *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Agone*, *Southern Review*, *Analecta Husserliana*, *Queen's Quarterly*, and *English Studies in Canada*. Her essays have also appeared in collections including *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, *Modernism and Nostalgia*, *The Spanish Civil War: History, Memory and Representation*, *Political Fiction*, *Revisioning Pragmatism*, and the forthcoming *Reading Bergson*, *Reading Modernism*. At present she is completing a monograph, *Modernist Orwell*, which rereads the works of George Orwell in the context of debates about the form and politics of modernism.

For more information about presenting at the conference, please contact either Kris Kobold or Tracey Thomas at [humaconference@gmail.com](mailto:humaconference@gmail.com). For more information about registering for the conference, event, venue and accommodation details, please refer to our website: [www.yuhumaconference.wordpress.com](http://www.yuhumaconference.wordpress.com).