

Call for Seminar Proposals and Papers
ACLA 2012

Providence, RI, March 29-April 1, 2012 “Collapse/Catastrophe/Change”

“there is a hollow murmuring underground; a confused movement is felt that threatens a general earthquake in the political world.”

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

“enforced uniformity, sooner or later, is the greatest occasion of civil war”

Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island

From the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 to 9/11 to the recent upheavals in the Middle East, the language of collapse and catastrophe, of crisis and change has come to dominate the public sphere. What figures and tropes produce and recuperate such events? How have they been represented differently in different periods and across linguistic and national boundaries? Economic meltdown, financial collapse, environmental depletion and disaster, trauma, the crisis in the humanities, in the foreign languages, in comparative literature itself: we are besieged by a discourse of crisis. At the same time, discourse itself seems to be in crisis, on the brink of collapse from the strain of having to reinvent itself with each new cataclysm without becoming redundant or incommensurate. What remains of terms like “revolution,” “democracy,” “justice,” “tragedy,” “community,” “freedom”? How are they mediated culturally? nationally? globally? Can the literary re-imagine so as to renew? What is the relation between figuration and change?

We invite proposals and submissions on comparative topics addressing such issues and their representation in texts, film and other media for seminars of from eight to twelve persons or individual paper proposals which should be submitted via the "Propose a Paper or Seminar" link at the ACLA conference website: http://www.acla.org/acla_2012

Seminar Proposal Deadline: October 1, 2011

Deadline for Paper Proposals: November 1, 2011

For more information, contact conference@acla.org