Call For Papers

The 9th Annual
Graduate Conference in Comparative Literature
at the University of Texas at Austin

Go-Betweens:
Crossing Borders

Friday, October 12th, and Saturday, October 13th

Keynote Address by Dr. Jahan Ramazani
The University of Virginia

The migrant. The adventure-seeker. The messenger. The student abroad. The empire-builder. The exile. The diplomat. The blogger. The go-between assumes a variety of identities but in each incarnation, this figure performs a vital role in cultural and literary studies. Translators and mediators of conflicting ideologies and languages, ‘go-betweens’ shatter our definitions of borders and boundaries. Through their movements, they invite us to explore space in radically new ways and to discover relationships among previously unconnected communities or people. As their presence becomes increasingly felt, critical theory has developed methods of interacting with their experiences. Conversations on cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, and planetarity all emerge from an understanding that a global world is not a homogeneous one and that we as scholars have a responsibility, one that borders on an ethical obligation, to represent the multiplicity of experiences and identities that belong to each individual and place. The 9th Annual Graduate Conference in Comparative Literature embraces this challenge and asks participants to consider narratives by, about and for these border-crossing groups and individuals.

Proposals and Submission Information

The conference welcomes proposals from individuals and panels alike. Submissions for the conference should consider critically theoretical frameworks such as cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and planetarity or should use these approaches in their literary or cultural analyses. In keeping with the conference theme, we especially encourage the presentation of interdisciplinary or multilingual work.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Narratives of movement, such as letters from abroad, the pilgrimage account, or autobiographies of exile
- Languages of between-ness, such as translation practices, creole/pidgin/dialects and code switching
The advent of techno-savvy go-betweens, such as hackers, Twitter revolutionaries, and cyber-chatters
- Engagements with contested borders, such as Mexico-U.S. crossings or the Ramallah wall
- Forced Migration, such as slavery or territorial conquests
- Geographical categories of study that accommodate in-between-ness, such as Hemispheric studies, the Black Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean
- Go-betweens in conflict zones, such as messengers, guides, imbedded journalists, defectors
- The city as a space for the between: re-thinking the metropolis, the cosmopolitan
- Gender as border: in-between queer and gender studies
- The hybridity of genres, such as the blending of fiction and non-fiction, Twitter poetry, and new narrative strategies
- The politicized go-between, such as participants in protest movements, financial crises and revolutions
- (De) forming canons: new methods of teaching language, culture and literatures

Panel Proposals may include 3 or 4 speakers and must be submitted by May 1st, 2012. Each member of the panel must submit an individual abstract online at http://goo.gl/am4Kw. The panel leader should then email GRACLSConference@austin.utexas.edu with the proposed title, topic, moderator (if available) and presenters for the panel.

The deadline for Individual Abstracts is May 5th, 2012. All proposals should be submitted through our online application at http://goo.gl/am4Kw.

For additional information about the conference, please contact conference organizers Katie Logan and Martino Lovato at GRACLSConference@austin.utexas.edu or visit UT’s Program in Comparative Literature website: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/

Dr. Jahan Ramazani is the Edgar F. Shannon Professor of English at the University of Virginia. His most recent book, A Transnational Poetics, received the prestigious Harry Levin Award from the American Comparative Literature Association in 2011. Dr. Ramazani is also the editor of The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry. He is the recipient of a Rhodes Scholarship, an NEH Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the William Riley Parker Prize of the MLA.