CALL FOR PAPERS

“The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight.”
(Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” 1940)

Crisis, war, state of emergency, catastrophe: the recurrence of these terms has become increasingly obsessive in contemporary debates on the state of the planet. When one talks about crisis, it goes from the most intimate spheres (such as sexual identity, family) to social, political, and environmental spheres. Throughout the course of history, literature has carved a space of interrogation and confrontation of ideas, serving as a privileged field where individual and collective crises are confronted, replayed, negotiated, and questioned. Solutions are sometimes suggested, promoting new levels of awareness in society. Other times, following Adorno’s theorization, literary forms do not aim to reconcile antagonisms but present incomplete, fragmented, and consciously disorganized narratives. This conference aims to solicit a discussion on how world literature reflects and responds to ‘crises’ – visible and invisible, from ancient to contemporary – with a particular emphasis on the singularity of ideas and aesthetic choices developed within diverse literary traditions. In the age of the Internet and new global anxieties, can literature be the place to articulate solutions for the world’s crises? How is the plasticity of meaning changing narrative structures?

The conference is open to all literary genres and welcomes all theoretical approaches and cultural traditions. We invite you to submit proposals for individual papers that address the topic of ‘literature and crisis’ from all historical periods. The presentations will be given in English.

Possible topics include:

- Representation of traumatic events
- Eco-criticism and environmental issues
- Impact of new technologies
- Crisis of literary forms
- Violation of human rights
- Religion and war
- Gender and sexuality
- Global challenges
- Unemployment and economic crises
- Forms of contemporary slavery
- Slave narratives
- Witness literature

Please send an abstract for individual papers between 200 and 300 words by October 30, 2014 to: literatureandcrisis@gmail.com.

We will ask all participants to pay a registration fee on-site during the conference.

- Faculty Members: $50
- Graduate Students: $25

Conference Organizers:
Maya Boutaghou, Assistant Professor of French (fboutagh@fiu.edu)
Nicola Gavioli, Assistant Professor of Portuguese (ngavioli@fiu.edu)
Hitomi Yoshio, Assistant Professor of Japanese (hyoshio@fiu.edu)