

The 55th Texas Tech Comparative Literature Symposium

Pandemic, Environment, and Life Writing

April 21-22, 2023 (Central Standard Time)

The English/Philosophy Building, Texas Tech University

Free Registration on Zoom [Here](#)

The symposium is sponsored by the TTU Office of Research & Innovation, the Dean's Office of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Humanities Center, and the Departments of English

Friday, April 21, 2023

Registration and Morning Coffee

8:30-8:55 a.m., English Student Lounge, English 200

Welcome Speech: Tosha Dupras, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Opening Remarks: Yuan Shu, Director of the Comparative Literature Program

9:00-9:10 a.m., English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Keynote Lecture I: Jennifer Ho, University of Colorado at Boulder

"Twin Pandemics and Twinned Identities: Addressing Anti-Asian Racism during COVID-19"

9:15 -10:15 a.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Coffee Break

10:15-10:25

Session I: Covid Memoir, Ecological Crisis, and Life Writing of Resistance

10:25-11:55 a.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Presiding: Kanika Batra, Texas Tech University

1. "South Asian Covid Memoirs: Mourning and Erasure of 'Grievable Lives,'" Lopamudra Basu, University of Wisconsin-Stout
2. "Class, Ecological and Economic Crisis, and the Aesthetics of Contemporary Life-Writing," Ryan M. Brooks, West Texas A&M University in Canyon
3. "The Other-than-Human as Family: Opposing Settler Colonialism in Tanya Tagaq's *Split Tooth*," Brad Buckhalter, Texas Tech University

Lunch Break and Special Forum: The Asian and the International Instructor in the Classroom (Co-sponsored by the English Department Anti-Racism Committee, the TLPDC, and the Graduate School)

12:00-1:30 p.m.

English Faculty Lounge, English 209

English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Presiding: Jennifer Nish and Yuan Shu, Texas Tech University

Featured Speakers:

Kanika Batra, TTU College of Arts and Sciences (English)

Kerk Kee, TTU College of Media and Communication

Jeong-Hee Kim, TTU College of Education

Yanlin Wang, TTU College of Arts and Sciences (CMLL)

**Keynote Lecture II: Laura Hyun Yi Kang, University of California at Irvine
“Life/Writing and the Work of Social Reproduction”**

1:30-2:30 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Session II: Labyrinth, Representation, and Sorrow’s Complexities

2:35-4:05 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Presiding: John Beusterien, Texas Tech University

1. “Labyrinth and the Legacy of Denis Johnson: Reading *Tree of Smoke* through Life Writing,” Kevin M. Gibbs, The University of Texas at Austin
2. “What’s Hair Got to Do with It: Sharing My Story as a Black Woman in the Academy as Life Writing,” Tara Abydos, Texas Tech University
3. “Of Sorrow’s Complexities: Elegy in the Face of Disaster,” Samodh Porawagamage, Texas Tech University

Tea Break

4:05-4:15 p.m.

Keynote Lecture III: Jackie Kolosov, Texas Tech University

“Monument: A Meditation on Caring for and Losing Elderly Parents in a Time of Pandemic/Panic”

4:15-5:15 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Session III: Creative Readings and Reflection on Environmental Writings and the Graphic Memoir

5:20-6:50 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Presiding: Yuan Shu, Texas Tech University

1. “The Place between Time and Land,” Michaela Decker, Texas Tech University

2. "Grieving and Community in the Middle of Pandemic," Victoria Loniewski, Texas Tech University
3. "Reading Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*," Aaron Lavery, Texas Tech University
4. "Repression and Obsession in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," Amanda Lopez, Texas Tech University
5. "Rethinking the Father-Daughter Relationship in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," Samantha Rentfro, Texas Tech University
6. "Literary Allusions in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*," Megan Vaughn, Texas Tech University

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Keynote Lecture IV: Muhsin Jassim Al-Musawi, Columbia University, "The Postcolonial Arabic Autobiographical Atlas"
9:00-10:00 a.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Session IV: Democracy, Black Consciousness, and Self-representation at the Time of Corona

10:10-11:40 a.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201
Presiding: Roger McNamara, Texas Tech University

1. "Soweto, Black Consciousness Environments, and Feminist Life Writing," Kanika Batra, Texas Tech University,
2. "Re-envisioning Democracy and Citizen Rights in Ita Mehrotra's *Shaheen Bagh*," Bhawana Pillai, Texas Tech University
3. "Marked: Self-representation at the Time of Corona," Roma Madan-Soni, Anant National University, India

Coffee Break
11:40-11:50 a.m.

Keynote Lecture V: Aretha Phiri, Rhodes University, South Africa, "What Writing is not Life Writing?: A South African Perspective"
11:50 -12:50 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Lunch Break 1:00-2:00 p.m., English Faculty Lounge, English 209

Session V: Trauma, Self-representation, and Prison Life Writing
2:00-3:30 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201
Presiding: Nesrine Chahine, Texas Tech University

1. "Dispatch from Nice, France: Life in the Time of Corona," Marie Lienard-Yeterian, Université Côte d'Azur in Nice, France
2. "Trauma, Writer's Block and Autofiction: A Textual Analysis of How Authors Talk About Their Experiences," Jehane Deborah Sarah, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
3. "Missing Communication," Catherine Jane Cole, Texas Tech University
4. "Writing the Landscape—Having a Body Under Racial Capitalism: Contemporary Prison Life Writing and The Anthropocene," Mauve Perle Tahat, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Session VI: War, Hollywood, and Life Writing

3:40-5:10 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201

Presiding: Yuan Shu, Texas Tech University

1. "The Reconstruction of Truth in Oliver Stone's *Heaven and Earth*," Nicolas Maynes, Texas Tech University
2. "The Question of Agency in Oliver Stone's Adaption of *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*," Tessa Phillips, Texas Tech University
3. "Reading Tim O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone*," Thomas Cochran, Texas Tech University
4. "Speaking of Courage in Tim O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone*," Kiera Anderson, Texas Tech University
5. "Representation of the Japanese American Internment Experience in George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*," Sophia Thomas, Texas Tech University

Symposium Wrap-up: Yuan Shu, Texas Tech University

5:20 p.m. English Faculty Meeting Room, English 201