Call For Papers:
Student Advisory Board for the Department of Comparative Literature
Indiana University Bloomington
Graduate Conference
March 2-3, 2018

The End of the World:
Tragedy | Catastrophe | Apocalypse

The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce the risks of disaster must be taken very soon.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists

In January 2017, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock to two and a half minutes before midnight, signalling that we are the closest we have ever been to destroying our world. Speculation about the end of the world has been a part of human thought, art, and culture since the beginning of recorded history, from the Epic of Gilgamesh to today’s Twitter feed. Mass violence, war, institutional violence, economic collapse, disease, and despair define our current media landscape. More and more, catastrophe is refigured in terms of individual narratives, while personal tragedy is reimagined on a global scale.

This conference aims to explore manifold representations of the end of the world across time and space. What is a “world”? What does it mean for one to be created or destroyed? Where is the line between tragedy and catastrophe? When does a catastrophe become an apocalypse? When does suffering become world-ending? How do these distinctions blur the lines between the private and the public, the personal and the global? How do such considerations change throughout history and across cultures? What does it mean to be “post”-apocalyptic? How are questions like these impacted by apocalypse as an unveiling? Are all unveilings necessarily catastrophic? Why has modern popular culture adopted the term as a catch all for major, mass destruction?

We encourage interdisciplinary and global approaches to the field of Comparative Literature. We welcome proposals from any branch of the humanities including, but not limited to, Literary Studies, Film and Media Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History and Historiography, Postcolonial Studies, Eco-Criticism, Folklore, Religious Studies, Medieval Studies, Classics, and Art History.

Please send an abstract (maximum 300 words), a title for your presentation, and a short bio (maximum 50 words) including your name, email address, degree level and institutional affiliation to: CMLTSAB@indiana.edu by December 15, 2017. Please submit all materials both as an attachment and as text in the body of your email. Final decisions will be made no later than mid-January.