

Call for Papers:

Blue Humanities and Liquid Media: A Watery View of the World

Date: Saturday May 31st, 2025 (Wallis Annenberg Conference Room, UCSB)

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Elizabeth DeLoughrey (UCLA)

The University of California, Santa Barbara's Graduate Center for Literary Research (GCLR) is pleased to announce our annual academic conference: "Blue Humanities and Liquid Media: A Watery View of the World"

Water is essential and ever present in our lives, a substance whose salience often goes unnoticed in its ubiquity. Indeed, all life on Earth is largely attributable to the (so far) relatively unique presence of liquid water on the planet. Not only does water sustain the possibility of life as we know it, it also connects us—humans and non-humans— across vast countries and disparate continents. Down to the very fabric of our beings, so much of our collective history is tied to water. From stories of creation and waterborne travel to the ongoing horrors of (neo)colonialism and enslavement, water holds a reflective mirror up to us and our societies. Today, however, our relationship with water is perhaps more tenuous than ever as the global socio-ecological crisis threatens to—among other things—submerge even more of our shared world beneath the waves.

Liquid water is also unique for its properties as a "universal" solvent, one which is able to dissolve more substances than any other. In this sense, water's abilities to bind and unbind relationships on a molecular level can also be extended to the study of culture, literature, history, and media more broadly. Amongst a wealth of others, the Martinican philosopher-poet Édouard Glissant and his work on the "poetics of relation" stands out as one notable example that traces liquidity in this fashion.

With these ideas in mind, this conference invites graduate students from the US and beyond to submit papers on topics including but not limited to:

- Maritime Narratives from the Arctic to Oceania
- Archipelagic Thinking and Island Studies
- River and Freshwater Studies
- Arctic/Antarctic Studies
- Liquid Media and Liquid Modernity
- Water and the Anthropocene
- Human-Animal Relationships
- Environmental Humanities and Ecocriticism

We invite abstracts of no more than 300 words for 15-minute paper presentations. Proposals from enrolled graduate students in any discipline will be considered: MA, MFA, and PhD. To apply, please submit an abstract and a CV to complit-gclr@ucsb.edu by Sunday, April 6th, 2025. Successful submissions will be notified of their acceptance by May 1st, 2025. Please feel free to contact complit-gclr@ucsb.edu with any questions or concerns.