**WESTERN STATES RHETORIC AND LITERACY CONFERENCE**

University of Nevada, Reno

2014 Call for Proposals

November 7-8, 2014

**LITERACIES AND RHETORICS OF CRISIS**

Crisis is not a new subject for either literacy or rhetoric studies. The crisis between oral and written literacies produced the dynamic ideological conception of literacy as an interdisciplinary study situated in specific social and cultural contexts. Rhetoric is similarly animated by identity crises. The sophists, Plato, and Aristotle all vied to define the uses and misuses of rhetoric. We rehearse these origin stories to emphasize two points: first, crises are part and parcel of our disciplinary fabric, and, second, crises are both restrictive and productive. Every crisis marks the boundary between what we have been doing and what we have yet to do and creates new pathways beyond those limitations.

Instead of seeing crisis as something to erase, this conference invites participants to see “crisis” as a generative concept, as an opportunity for change. No doubt, through its association with danger, crisis is frequently used to manipulate populations and gain power. Yet it can also be a means of enacting positive change in the world. Crises are moments of possibility, potential future trajectories and new opportunities for growth and reconception. Because responses to crises require some kind of decisive action or change, crisis provides the platform on which to examine discourses of justification, rationalization, and reaction. In this call, we embrace the dialectic of crisis and encourage proposals that examine how crisis functions rhetorically as well as rhetorical responses to crisis.

Of particular interest are proposals that define, explore, and analyze literacies and rhetorics of crisis as generative. Possible inquiries may include, but are not limited to:

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| * Environmental crisis
* Educational crisis
* Immigration crisis
* Disaster rhetorics
* Economic crisis
* Literacy crisis
* Political crisis
* Risk analysis and crisis
* Crisis of the disciplines
* Crisis of public communication
 | * Crisis of representation
* Crisis of identity politics
* Crisis and its affect
* Crisis and power
* Crisis malaise
* Crisis as a mode of literacy
* Exploring literacies of crisis
* Theorizing crisis as a rhetorical strategy
* Representations of crisis in popular culture and discourse
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As a state that has faced perpetual budget cuts and has continually graced the bottom of statistic-shaming, nationwide education reports, foreclosure lists, and unemployment numbers, Nevada seems an ideal place to study the literacies and rhetorics of crisis. We call you to Reno to explore the local, regional, national, and global interstitial components of crisis.

Individual, panel, and roundtable proposals should be submitted to http://groups.unr.edu/rhetoric/index.html by Monday, March 31, 2014.

For further conference inquiries, please contact:

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