

2025 Charles F. Fraker Conference
Capitalism and Desire
Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
University of Michigan

17-18 October 2025

Ann Arbor, Michigan / Zoom (Hybrid)

Deadline for abstracts: June 30th (up to 250 words)

Submission Form: <https://forms.gle/9zENxMYi9i1Wotu67>

Free and open to the public

The 2025 Charles F. Fraker Graduate Conference, organized by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan, invites participants to critically engage with the interplay of capitalism and desire.

The Anthropocene marks an era of profound ecological, economic and existential crisis. Amidst climate breakdown —what Lucas Pohl and Samo Tomsic call “the ultimate surplus product of capitalism”— we confront not only the devastation wrought by capital but also its extraordinary libidinal grip. What, then, becomes of desire in a moment where the future of life itself hangs in the balance? In other words, does desire as a concept still matter in the era of climate crisis?

In this sense, we ask questions such as: how has the libidinal economy tied to extraction and consumption deepened the ecological crisis? What forms of individual and collective fulfillment might emerge in a society freed from the logic of capital accumulation? How might we rethink desire not within the anthropocentric categories that enabled the current crises but as a potential locus for imagining alternative futures?

In light of the current uncertainty surrounding funding availability at many universities due to federal budget cuts, the conference will be held in a hybrid format. The acceptance of presentations for Zoom panels will be more competitive.

We welcome papers that examines capitalism and desire from a variety of perspectives, fields, themes and media, including, but not limited to:

Accumulation and	Gender and Sexuality	Performance
Dispossession	Heritage Studies	Photography
Care and Commonality	History and Historicity	Science, Technology and
Cinema	Illustration	Society
Crisis and Culture	Indigenous & Afrodiasporic	Speculative Fiction
Critical Race Theory	Studies	Social Reproduction Theory
Democracy, Law, and Justice	Literature	Technologies
Disability Studies/Crip	Museum Studies	Translation Studies
Theory	Narrative/Narratology	Urban Studies
Ecocriticism	Nation-state and Empire	Violence and Trauma