

CALL FOR PAPERS

2026 COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SILENCE &—

JOIN US MARCH 5TH & 6TH 2026
TO CELEBRATE 15 YEARS OF CSLC



KEYNOTE SPEECH BY
CHRISTINA A LEÓN



PUBLIC CONVERSATION WITH
PEGGY KAMUF & RONALD MENDOZA DE JESÚS



What is silence? Might it be a gaping void or a buzzy medium—the absence (presence) of articulation, the limit and condition of being? Whether in Marx's mute compulsion of capital, Freud's operations of the drives, or Derrida's secret solemnity of a duty to recall, silence is everywhere. As the liminal that potentiates possibility across academic landscapes and political realities, wherever silence is, silence is not/ought not be. The question of an (un)intelligible, (il)legible S/subject is a loud force: Gayatri Spivak's analysis of the subaltern, Homi Bhaba's points on the politics of narration, the noise in Saidiya Hartman's archives of slavery, Franz Fanon on the racialized colonial psyche, Hélène Cixous' decapitated woman, &—

Silence is never merely about absence; its presence entangles enunciation. Silence, therefore, is a knot; it is the complexity of words spun together, every flowing stream of sentences forcefully stringing out reflections on inclusion and exclusion. To what extent is it an act of self-preservation, of resistance? To what extent is it violence? We identify silences by sounding the unsound(able), avowing the disavowed, and materializing into thought the unthinkable.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION BY JANUARY 16TH

The 2026 USC Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture Graduate Colloquium "SILENCE &—" invites inquiries that take silence as a heuristic to think through problems such as foreclosure, aporia, and impasses as they manifest in philosophy, literature, aesthetics, politics, or culture. In this spirit, we welcome you to engage with silence in all capacities and across disciplines including but not limited to: Black critical theory, philosophy, environmental humanities, animal studies, postcolonial and subaltern studies, feminist and queer theory, disability studies, sound studies, literary theory, science and technology studies, religious studies, media and film theory, performance theory, classical studies, and psychoanalysis.

Points of entry may include: Aporias, Absences, Affects, Aesthetics, Archive, Archival Violence, Blackness, Compulsion, Desire, Deconstruction, (De)materialization, Emotionality, Failure, Form, Grammar, Historical Materialism, Impasses, Indigeneity, Liminality, Matter, Noise/Sound, Opacity/Transparency, Passage/Vestibularity, Performance, Performativity, Paradox, Relationality, Refusal/Withdrawal, Semiotics, Specters, Spectrality, Spirits/Ghosts, Sex, Sexuation, Spaciality, Subjection, Testimony, Temporality, Voice, Voicelessness

In-person presentations in English, French, or Spanish are accepted. Each presentation will last between 15 and 20 minutes. Interested applicants must submit an abstract of no more than 250 words.

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