

The Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University is thrilled to host the 12th annual Post45 Graduate Symposium on March 4-6, 2027.

The Post45 Graduate Symposium seeks graduate-level works-in-progress related to post-1945 media, arts, literature, textual or visual objects, digital platforms, politics, and culture. We welcome submissions that expand our conception of objects and meaning-making post-1945 or place them in comparative, transnational, or hemispheric frames. We especially welcome contributions that foreground the importance of race, gender, class, and sexuality to post-45 studies.

Further, we invite (though do not require) engagements with our symposium theme of “Debt.” From credit card bills to student loans, debt is familiar to us as a ubiquitous feature of contemporary life, one that is universal rather than pathological. This year’s theme proliferates applications of the concept that extend beyond the monetary form and that index debt’s imbrication with racial, gender, sexual, and national processes of subjectivation and differentiation. Debt, as we understand it, is a structuring condition of modernity, whether as an expression of our necessary interdependence with local, transnational, and/or historical others and institutions, or of what Denise Ferreira da Silva has called the “unpayable debt” of a world forged through the destitution of racial violence and colonial expropriation. We invite contributions that consider the multiple resonances of debt, ranging from (but not limited to):

- The relationship between fiscal forms of debt to aesthetic or social forms
- The United States student debt crisis and its role in contemporary culture
- Ungrievable, unpayable, or unlimited forms of debt
- Social reproduction theory approaches to the labors transpiring under the category of debt
- The form of credit and the loan (as well as the gift or the commodity)
- Pedagogical, scholarly, and intellectual debts to traditions, genealogies, and mentors
- Narratives of aesthetic and cultural succession as those of indebtedness
- Reparations, racial violence, and debt as management of racialized populations
- The forms of care labor that debt enables, necessitates, or forecloses
- International interdependency in the context of globalization, migrant labor, and the offshoring of production from the Global North
- The distribution of debt, particularly to those who did not incur it
- The value form, particularly in its expanded manifestations

Works-in-progress will only be limited by a length of 15 double-spaced pages; besides this, we welcome a wide range of submissions in both traditional and non-traditional forms, including conference papers, articles, dissertation chapter drafts, and/or creative-critical writing projects. *Works-in-progress will be pre-circulated two weeks in advance of the conference date.* This allows participants to consider submissions carefully and to generate thoughtful critical feedback—a benefit often absent in traditional conference formats. Each individual paper will also receive feedback from a faculty

respondent and 30 minutes of discussion amongst all symposium participants during workshops set to take place on March 5-6.

We encourage graduate students from all locations to apply. Our committees represent graduate students from multiple countries, and we will enthusiastically consider paper abstracts from anywhere. At the same time, we acknowledge that the current US political climate poses serious limitations and risks for crossing borders and applying for visas to enter the United States. We recognize that the situation is volatile and in flux, and we will do all we can to create an inclusive and safe symposium.

In addition to a modest travel stipend allocated based on need, we are happy to provide breakfast and lunch on the days of our workshops, as well as a dinner. While this support will not fully fund all expenses for each participant, we plan to do everything we can to make the symposium accessible for those traveling nationally and internationally to New York City. We encourage participants to seek funding from their home institutions and departments.

Post45 is a collective of scholars working on literature and culture since 1945. The group was founded in 2006 and has met annually since to discuss diverse new work in the field. The Post45 Graduate Symposium meets annually to discuss works in progress. Now in its twelfth year, the Grad Symposium has convened in the past at Duke University, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Concordia University and McGill University, University of Washington, Northwestern University, University of California Irvine, Rutgers University, Princeton University, Yale University, University of California Berkeley and Stanford University, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.