

📅 April 25-26, 2025

CONFERENCE WEBSITE: <https://www.uwo.ca/theory/events/conferences.html>

| About the Conference

We are pleased to announce the in-person 2025 Theory & Criticism conference at Western University from April 25th-26th. This conference aims to look beyond visions of the future that are confined to the utopian-dystopian binary. To do so, it will feature theoretically rich work from decolonial, queer, trans, and crip-futurism(s) and their intersections.

There has been much discourse around planetary crises such as malicious **algorithms**, democratic decline, ecological dysfunction, economic downturn, international conflict, etc. At the same time, Indigenous scholars like Kyle Powys Whyte in “Against Crisis Epistemology” highlight how crisis narratives reinforce coloniality, advocating instead for narratives reimagined from epistemologies of kinship that emphasize coordination and responsiveness to change. A similar reproach is offered by Donna Haraway in *Staying with the Trouble*, warning us about a sense that one is trapped in the present and helpless against the future. Theorists like Sylvia Wynter show in *On Being Human as Praxis* that our understanding of crisis is tied to the manufacturing of desire for

Important Dates

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Western forms of being. Others, like Audra Mitchell and Aadita Chaudhury, who inspire us especially in this conference, argue in “Worlding Beyond ‘The’ ‘end’ of ‘the world’” that “despite their claims to universality [...] ‘end of the world’ discourses are concerned about protecting the future of whiteness.” The relationship between “worlding” and “making” (“poiesis”) has been long discussed in humanities departments, yet today many speculative futures fall into techno-utopias or post-apocalyptic dystopias. Worlding beyond the end of the world means seeing beyond this binary.

Discourses of worlding, especially beyond the assumed ‘end’ of the white heteropatriarchal world, uniquely ask: in what kinds of worlds and futures is inclusion being demanded, and what kinds of worlds can or cannot (co)exist? Haraway suggests we rethink futures and science fiction (SF) in terms of “a sign for science fiction, speculative feminism, science fantasy, speculative fabulation, science fact, and also, string figures.” SF author Samuel Delany noted nearly fifty years ago in *The Jewel Hinged Jaw* that “if SF is affirmative, it is not through any obligatory happy ending, but rather through the breadth of vision it affords, through the complex interweave of these multiple visions of human origins and destinations.” This conference will emphasize that futurism(s) are not about despair or hope in-themselves but rather discovery and coordination, intertwining visions to address ongoing problems. Questions this conference will address include: How do decolonial, queer, trans, and crip-

futurism(s) offer visions of the future that challenge dominant imaginations? What might those worlds look like at the level of affective life, political procedure, techno-economic structure, and ecology? How does homo economicus or the white, abled, heteropatriarchal 'Man' contribute to current crises, and how can we move beyond him? What role does SF and experimental writing play in bridging the gap between theory and practice in envisioning alternative futures? What kind of art, performance, poetry, and fiction open new futures and horizons?

We prioritize theoretical papers as well as submissions from a broader category—SF, in Haraway's sense. However we will also accept poetic experiments from the sciences, imagining their applications in different worlds—along with poetic experiments, following the spirit of figures like Fred Moten in B. Jenkins, who tells us that "poetry is a struggle and preparation toward the future", and that resisting the divisions between theory, experiment, and poetry is invaluable. We welcome applicants from every background including faculty however prioritize graduate student applicants from Southern Ontario.

We welcome submissions across disciplines. Approaches may include but are not limited to:

- Indigenous Studies
- Queer Theory
- Trans Theory
- Disability Studies
- Feminist Theory
- Critical Race Theory

- (Post)colonial and Decolonial Theory
- Poetry
- Short Science Fiction
- Short Film
- Drag and Performance
- Science and Technology Studies
- Ecocriticism/Environmental Humanities
- Global Studies and International Relations

Submit proposals as a .docx or .pdf file to the following Qualtrics form:

https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4SkGkPpwpjIj40

For any doubts or questions, please email us contact the Organizing Committee at the email address: cstc-conference@uwo.ca.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

2 topics

Research papers are invited in, but not limited to, the following areas:

Computer Science
& Software
Engineering

Multidisciplinary
& General