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SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY,
HOUSTON/THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS

MONSTROSITY AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF FEAR

2018 Conference of The Society for Comparative
Literature and the Arts

We fear that which is dangerous, painful, or threatening. Fear is an emotion that signals peril, one that heightens our senses and preps us for action. But the causes of fear are vast and varied. The monster in the dark causes fear, but so does the threat of poverty, deportation, and violence. A society's fears manifest in a number of ways. One of these is through the figure of the monstrous. W. Scott Poole argues in *Monsters in America* that monsters are not individual fears, but take root in public imagination. These monsters are effects of various cultural influences, social change, and historical events. Images, events, and circumstances of monstrosity and the surrounding fear foreground anxieties about identity markers such as race, gender, sexuality, ability and class, as well as religious beliefs, science, and politics. Indeed, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes that "Because of its ontological liminality, the monster notoriously appears at times of crises." In our current political, historical, ecological, and social moment we are inundated with discourses of monstrosity and fear. This conference explores how various literatures, arts, performances, and media are produced by fear as well as how we manufacture monsters and terror in the 21 st century At the 2018 annual conference of the SCLA, we want to examine broadly and comparatively the topography of monstrosity and fear. Although we are encouraging papers that directly engage the conference theme, we also welcome papers and panels on any topic that investigates literature and the arts.

Post-apocalyptic narratives
Religious fundamentalism
Racial terror
Monstrosity and toxic masculinities
Queerness and monstrosity
Security and mass surveillance
Nationalism, fascism and terror
Monstrous consumption
Disability and monstrosity
Monstrous politicians and politics

Monstrous bodies
Catastrophe
Monstrosity and the female body
Terror and trauma
Hybridity and prodigality
Intersectionality and monstrosity
Monster theory
Horror and ludic terror
Abjection and the uncanny
Fear-mongering, populism, and performance

Please submit your paper proposal (250 words) or panel proposal (500 words) via email: scla2018@gmail.com. Please include in the body of the email your name, academic affiliation, status (faculty, grad student, etc.), and mailing address. For panel proposals, include the names, addresses, and affiliations for all participants. **Deadline for proposals: May 20, 2018.** Please note if you are a graduate student seeking a travel stipend.

SCLA awards several \$400 travel stipends for graduate students, based on quality of proposal