

“Principles of Uncertainty”  
A Conference on Critical Theory  
Keynote Speaker: Martin Hägglund

The students of the Department of Comparative Literature at the City University of New York Graduate Center present the first annual interdisciplinary conference on literary theory to be held Friday, May 4, 2012. This conference is being given in support of the CUNY Graduate Center’s proposed certificate for Critical Theory, which is dedicated to the study of literary and critical theory.

**We invite papers from all disciplines focusing on works from any period that explore the theme of uncertainty as it pertains to literary and critical theory.**

This conference welcomes papers centering upon any individual theorist, period, or school of critical theory, as well as comparisons of various theoretical approaches, including, but not limited to literary theory, psychoanalysis, philosophy, gender studies, and political theory.

Some of the questions this conference seeks to answer include, but are not limited to:

- How is the meaning of a text uncertain?
- Is this uncertainty purposefully placed within a text or a by-product of the act of reading?
- How is this uncertainty demonstrated in the relationship between author and reader?
- How can uncertainty be understood not only with respect to literature but in ethical, gendered, political, and/or social terms?
- How is identity shown to be uncertain?
- How does an “undecidable” future impact present ethical and political actions?
- How is history (whether of language, narrative, and/or society) destabilized and called into question?
- How does language contribute to the uncertainty of meaning and interpretation?
- How does the theorist’s own writing present the reader with an example of uncertainty?
- How does uncertainty function in the methodologies of interpretation and the making of meaning?
- Can a text have a stable meaning or is it always uncertain?

Please submit a 300 word abstract for a 15-20 minute paper by March 1, 2012 to [uncertaintyconference2012@gmail.com](mailto:uncertaintyconference2012@gmail.com). Proposals should include the title of the paper, presenter’s name, institutional and departmental affiliation, and any technology requests. We also welcome panel proposals of three to four papers.

This conference is co-sponsored by:

**The Writer’s Institute at the City University of New York Graduate Center:** an un-MFA program devoted to bringing together the country’s most talented writers and today’s most celebrated editors.

**The Doctoral Students’ Council:** the sole policymaking body representing students in doctoral and master’s programs at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.