

[Call for Essay Proposals for a Volume on "Teaching 9/11 and Its Aftermaths"](#)

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Call for Papers

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Essay proposals are invited for a scholarly volume entitled *Teaching 9/11 and Its Aftermaths*, to appear in the Options for Teaching series published by the Modern Language Association. The upcoming twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks heralds the first generation of college students whose understanding of the events and their contexts and consequences has no basis in personal memory. A 2015 article appearing in the APA's *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, authored by a consortium of some of the United States' leading memory researchers, conveys the pedagogical implications of this generational shift for teaching what critics are already periodizing as "post-9/11" literature and culture. Researchers reported that two popular cultural texts in particular—the 2004 documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* and the 2006 film *United 93*, a fictionalized retelling of events aboard one of the hijacked planes—were significant in shaping what study participants "remembered" about the facts of the 9/11 attacks and even, in some cases, the details of their own "flashbulb" memories of what they were doing and where they were at the time they first learned of the attacks.

That media spectacles, popular representations, and cultural narratives can shape personal memories of the September 11, 2001, attacks—and, in effect, one's understanding of their political aftermaths—underscores the pedagogical and scholarly urgency behind this planned volume of essays, which confronts the challenge of teaching students for whom spectacle, representation, and narrative compose the sole locus of knowledge about "9/11" and the origins of the United States' ongoing "War on Terror." Moreover, the broad assortment of texts that depict (explicitly or indirectly) the "post-9/11 world" or "post-9/11 U.S." suggests the possibility that college students' encounters with representations of 9/11 and its aftermaths will be limited, within their study of contemporary literature and culture, to those works of literature or film that are most widely available, aesthetically and politically uncomplicated, and representative of majoritarian viewpoints. Through scholarly essays, teaching materials, and pedagogical resources, *Teaching 9/11 and Its Aftermaths* aims to highlight the complexity, diversity, and breadth of the materials available to instructors teaching the literature and culture of 9/11 and its aftermaths, at both the undergraduate and graduate level and in a variety of institutional settings.

Proposals are invited from diverse pedagogical and scholarly viewpoints from across the humanities, including relevant interdisciplinary critical perspectives and methodologies. The following list of

potential areas of focus for essays is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive:

- the concept of the “9/11 novel” and the problems and possibilities of this genre classification
- representations of 9/11 in sci-fi and horror fiction; graphic novels and comic books; short stories; poetry; plays; memoir and autobiography; creative or journalistic nonfiction; film (narrative, documentary, and experimental); television
- the best-selling *9/11 Commission Report* and its graphic adaptation
- teaching 9/11 through dominant tropes of post-9/11 popular culture (zombie apocalypse, superheroes, global “disaster”)
- literary, cinematic, and other cultural depictions of the War on Terror, including the United States’ invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan
- teaching 9/11 literatures beyond print media (oral histories, popular music)
- 9/11 fiction and poetry in languages other than English
- Arab American literary and cultural responses to post-9/11 United States society and politics
- teaching as “texts” relevant political and legal documents (e.g., the USA Patriot Act, President Bush’s post-9/11 address to the nation, 2004 Supreme Court decision in *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, or other legal opinions related to the status of Guantanamo Bay detainees)
- 9/11 visual culture beyond film and television: the cultural history of the World Trade Center itself (including pre-9/11 depictions); the National 9/11 Museum and Memorial; *The New York Times* “Portraits of Grief” series; the homemade “missing” flyers created by families of WTC victims; the iconic “falling man” photograph; images depicting the torture of detainees from Abu Ghraib prison; 9/11 memorials in the United States and throughout the world; vernacular “memorial” art, including 9/11 tattoos and graffiti
- key words or phrases for teaching 9/11 literature and culture (e.g., “Guantanamo,” “Unlawful Enemy Combatant,” “Homeland,” “Ground Zero”) and key concepts (nationalism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, trauma)

- approaches to teaching 9/11 from the vantage of earlier literary historical periods (e.g., poetry of the United States Civil War or Shakespearean political drama)
- teaching non-English-language literature, film, or other cultural representations depicting 9/11 or the global War on Terror
- relevant works of criticism and theory (e.g., Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, or Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*; critical responses to 9/11 and the War on Terror by Baudrillard, Slavoj Žižek, or Judith Butler; or theoretical interventions into the ideological distortions of post-9/11 public culture by Lauren Berlant, Jasbir Puar, or Donald Pease)
- essays on pedagogical frameworks for teaching 9/11 that highlight particular critical methodologies, such as queer theory, trauma studies, or postcolonial critique

Authors from diverse backgrounds are invited to submit 350-400-word abstracts and brief 50-word biographies by **30 September 2018**. Questions regarding possible topics or approaches are welcome anytime. Please send inquiries or proposals to the editor at eosucha@bates.edu.

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