This year, the College of Liberal Arts Interdisciplinary Graduate Symposium will explore conditions of emotion, work, and creativity through a focus on “Structures of Care.” Together, we will explore multiplicities of interpersonal connection. Different disciplines talk about and practice care in different ways, from studies of best practices for care in psychology and nursing to the histories and representations of care in history and languages and beyond.

In this symposium, a focus on Care as a broad rubric for professional, academic, aesthetic, or political activity will encourage participants to pay careful attention to the myriad ways that experiences, histories, and goals create the conditions for more thoughtful interactions. We invite papers that consider the integral role that caring for others and for the world around us plays in shaping our histories and our futures. At the same time, we invite considerations of how existing structures of care encourage individuals to represent or commercialize their emotional lives and their ability to share those lives with others. A way to name the emotional, material, and conceptual ways that individuals employ and manage the interpersonal elements of their work and professional performances, “affective labor,” as theorized by Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Sara Ahmed, Lily Wong, and others, has helped reconsider contemporary capitalism in its many iterations. Care, then, has its beauties and its dangers. This year’s symposium seeks to explore those ambiguities and paradoxes across a range of disciplines and formats.

We invite submissions on any humanistic approach to the rubric of care and the concept of “structures of care” from graduate and undergraduate scholars in a range of fields across the humanities, such as literature, history, theater and dance, art history, women, gender & sexuality studies, digital humanities, communication & media studies, sociology, psychology, and ethnic studies. We also welcome proposals (for papers or panels) from disciplines and programs like nursing, kinesiology, education, mathematics, biology, or computer science. Abstracts from undergraduate researchers, creative writers, artists, and performers are welcome, as are proposals for non-traditional panel formats. Papers that adopt interdisciplinary perspectives and employ diverse theoretical vantage points are encouraged. Individual presentations should be limited to 15 minutes. The symposium will be open to the public.

Keynote Speaker: Thursday, March 27. Dr. Sarah Allison, Loyola University New Orleans.
Dr. Allison will share work in progress about the relations between trauma narratives, testimony, and advocacy in comedic performances such as Hannah Gadsby’s Nanette.
Possible paper/panel topics include:

Making Care Beautiful
--literary representations of care or empathy
--aesthetic celebrations of social difference
--artistic challenges of rendering care visible
--emotional and affective responses to literary or artistic works

Best Practices in Care-Based Professions
--changing meanings of care in nursing, psychology, social work, and/or education
--professional preparations/conversations about the role of care
--case studies in “affective labor” by practitioners
--analysis of the systems and structures of care that inform different jobs or professions

Care Within and Beyond the Family
--explorations of the family and kinship structures as resources for care
--feminist labor theories and the economics of care within the home
--histories and traditions of intimate care across different historical, geographical, or social contexts

Care and the State
--histories and sociologies of social welfare programs
--state-run institutions of care (including schools, foster programs, health and medical institutions)
--rhetorics of care and indifference in political, economic, and legal cultures

Care and Disabilities
--using “care” to shift disability studies away from traditional responses like pity or fear
--the erotics and intimacy of caregiving and disability
--disability justice

Alternative Forms of Cares
--structures of caring outside the normative (heteronormative, cisnormative, Western, colonial)

Social Movements: Care about Change
--how care leads to social or historical change
--self-care and social activism
--strategies for encouraging care about social issues: voting; representation; personal safety
--countering bigotry, racism, sexism, violence, privation and other threats through care

Caring for the Environment
--stewardship and environmental protection
--the study of oceanic and other natural environments
--environmental movements, advocacy, and forms of direct action
Submissions
Abstracts, CVs, and bios should be submitted via email to:
TAMUCCGraduateSymposium@gmail.com
Any questions may also be directed to this address.
Deadline for Abstracts: Friday, February 1st

Abstract Workshop, TAMU-CC: Friday, January 25th
Acceptances will be sent out by mid-February.

To apply as a panelist, please submit:
- A 500-word abstract describing the paper’s argument, critical context, and significance.
- Please include your name, contact information, and paper title with the abstract.
- An up-to-date CV
- A brief biography (200-300 words)

Special Poster/Visual Presentation Session
In addition to panel presentations, this year’s Symposium invites undergraduate and graduate researchers to apply to give poster presentations or present visual art/media installations during a special session. This format, commonly used in fields such as psychology, social sciences, and natural/life sciences, includes a poster on your research in a one-hour session with direct audience participation. For more information on poster presentations, please visit the following website: https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/presentations_poster.htm.
A visual arts/media installation, commonly used in fields such as art and design and communications, entails presenting a work of art or media in this one-hour session. Presenters will be responsible for setting up and managing their projects (including technological needs) throughout this session.

To apply to present a poster or installation, please submit:
- A 300-word abstract describing the project that you will present during this special session.
  Please include a brief description of your research and/or methods and significance.
- Please include your name, contact information, and paper title with the abstract.
  - An up-to-date CV
  - A brief biography (200-300 words)