Gatekeepers of Memory
10th Annual Germanic Graduate Student Association Conference at The Ohio State University

February 23rd – February 24th 2018

Keynote speaker: Prof. Yasemin Yildiz (UCLA)

Gatekeepers grant or deny access across a semipermeable threshold and act as the intermediary of those who determine the criteria for entry into a restricted space. If memory is imagined as a space that preserves its inhabitants against the erosion of time, who is the gatekeeper? Who constructs this space and to what ends is it constructed? Who controls the threshold between this sphere of memory and the external realm of oblivion? With what materials are these spaces constructed? How are they preserved? Who or what is included or excluded within this space, and why?

This conference will investigate such questions of memory to gain insight into the formation and preservation of memory in the German-speaking world. Furthermore, we seek to look beyond isolated instances of local, regional and national communities to determine how a distinctly Germanic ‘memoryscape’ can be useful in understanding similar issues in a transnational context. We welcome abstracts that address memory from a variety of perspectives, including but not limited to: literature, philosophy, film, art, history, linguistics, pedagogy, cultural studies, environmental humanities. Potential topics include:

- public and private memory
- artistic representations of memory
- documentation, archivization and memorialization
- transnationalism and translingualism
- migration and the exchange of memory
- language standardization / dialectalism
- gatekeeping and institutionalization of memory (museums, schools, and authorities, etc.)
- canonization and the creation of literary memory
- construction and transformation of identities and selfhood
- instances of – personal, national, or cultural – forgetting
- ecological and geological memory
- the creation of folklore, legend, and myth
- memory of the body and mind

Please submit an abstract of 250-300 words and a brief biography to Geoff Algar (ggsa.osu@gmail.com) by Sunday, December 17th, 2017. Expected presentation length: 20 minutes.