

2nd MIRCAALT Young Scholars Doctoral Seminar

“(Re)framing the Normal: Transgressing Meaning, Identity, Representation and Culture in Literature”

April 15–16, 2027

Centro Cultural La Corrala (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

The MIRCAALT research group is pleased to announce its **Second Doctoral Seminar for Young Scholars**, which will take place at the Centro Cultural La Corrala (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) during the upcoming month of April. After queering the limits *ad infinitum*, this year’s edition will focus on **“(Re)framing the Normal”** in the broadest sense of the phrase.

Accustomed as the world is to questioning traditional terms and definitions, people have honored this creative drive and they have continuously revised what “normal” stands for and produced **renewed meanings of it**. Forced by catastrophes — the 9/11, the COVID pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine — by socio-political movements — the MeToo, the Black Lives Matter, No More Stolen Sisters — or even by literary currents — Postmodernism, Transculturalism, Ecocriticism — “normal” has never stayed a stable category. This ceaseless endeavour to reconstruct the frames containing normalcy, however, has **intensified its force in the past few years**. In a period of history where the rise of conservatism claims for stricter lines of definition, the MIRCAALT Group emphasizes the **urgency to keep re-questioning** to a deep level what for centuries was considered **fixed and indisputable**.

In particular, this seminar incorporates as one of its main objectives the relocation of power. Although “normal” has traditionally belonged to privileged groups’ discourses and “those in positions of power continually try to erase subject-positions outside of what is viewed as culturally legitimate (and consequently normal and viable), people who live those subject-positions continue to attempt to articulate them” (Cromwell, “Queering the Binaries Transsituated Identities, Bodies, and Sexualities” 509–519). Thus, “(re)framing the normal” is interpreted as the communal effort to **reinscribe normalcy’s content and limits**, but also the **locus from which it is crafted**. In this sense, this seminar emerges as an opportunity for early career scholars to substantially explore the so-called “normal” and its workings. Through this exploration, scholars may reimagine its definition, along with the subjects in charge of their production and its degree of desirability in a world rooted in the multiplicity and mutability of its nature.

The 2nd MIRCAALT seminar is conceived, then, as the **frame for rethinking the normal** in a moment where the concept has been diffused, perhaps to its advantage. Indeed, as Judith

Butler claims, “the question of what it is to be outside the norm poses a paradox for thinking, for if the norm renders the social field intelligible and normalizes that field for us, then being outside the norm is in some sense being defined still in relation to it” (*Undoing Gender* 42). These “frames” that work to differentiate the lives we can apprehend from those we cannot [...] generate specific ontologies of the subject” (Butler, *Frames of War* 3–4) but as “**norms**” and “**frames**” they **can be reworked**. Through the **contribution of young scholars** from different fields of research — queer theory, border studies, indigenous epistemologies, etc. — **the “normal” is contested and resisted** to the extent that analyses *queerly* fail at replicating the same normative conventions and instead turn “on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable. [They] quietly lose[...], and in losing [they] imagine[...] other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being” (Hallberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* 88).

In terms of the **organization** of this seminar, the **MIRCAALT research group** (<https://www.mircaalt.com/>) is an academic organization based at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, which focuses on the exploration of meanings and representations of cultural and identity aspects in the Anglo-American literary and theatrical scene. The MIRCAALT group has historically promoted the **development of young researchers’ careers**, and it has openly advocated for the creation of a befitting and hospitable academic environment for them. This second edition of the seminar aims at replicating the **inspiring atmosphere** which both the academic committee and the participants enjoyed in the previous edition with the objective of fully embracing MIRCAALT’S values.

Academia is often not easy to navigate, especially if one does so without the support of their peers. Thus, we want to take this opportunity to reframe what has been considered normal so far in this environment, and **promote the subversion of negativity and the allegiance to cooperation**. This endeavour is an objective that the MIRCAALT group shares with **Philobiblion: Young Researchers of Hispanic Literature Association** which, also based at UAM, again join the group in this collective effort to boost young scholars' early academic life. In addition, this seminar is also part of **Intersectional Maternities: Matrifocal Narratives and New Types of Family in Anglophone Literature**, known as MILA (<https://www.milaproject.org/>), a nationally funded project PID2024-1600044OB-I00 in which several members of MIRCAALT take part.

Following this year’s topical focus, **suggested topics** for this seminar include but are **not limited to**:

- **Border studies:** (Re)frames of limits and marginal zones and beings, understood in the broadest sense of both geopolitics and identity issues. This includes border zones, migration literature, borderlands, human limits, and any analysis that focuses on what sits at the edges.

- **Queer theory:** From the perspective of “(re)framing the normal,” queer studies questions how society defines and enforces what is considered “normal” in terms of gender and sexuality. As Michael Warner argues, “queer” reveals how the normal can become “a site of violence” rather than “simple intolerance,” gaining its “critical edge” when it defines itself “against the normal rather than the heterosexual” (*Fear of a Queer Planet* xxvi). In this sense, queer studies reframes the “normal” by exposing how it is produced, maintained, and used to marginalize those who do not conform to it.
- **Mothering studies:** Literary reconsiderations of maternal identities, mothering practices and family structures in all its variations, including all forms of subversiveness connected to gender, sex, sexuality, race, class, religion, culture, etc.
- **Body studies:** Perception of normal and not normal human bodies, from both the inside and the outside. This can include the corporal abject, reproductive rights, disability studies, medical humanities, biopolitics and necropower governing bodies, and gender issues.
- **Spectral criticism:** Representations of the ghost linked to the Gothic, the Uncanny and/or Hauntology, as a literary trope capable of addressing various forms of absent presence or spectral agency, for example, the legacy of structural violence, the manifestation of trauma and (post)memory, and the creation and exclusion of otherness.
- **Indigenous studies:** Indigenous epistemologies, storytelling traditions, and literary representations that challenge colonial and Eurocentric frameworks of normalcy, sovereignty, identity, belonging, and land relations.
- **Poetry studies:** Poetic forms as sites of resistance and formal innovation, exploring how lyric voice, syntax, rhythms, and aesthetics interrogate, disrupt, and reframe normalcy in cultural, political, ecological, or spatial approaches in poetry (among others).
- **Spatial studies:** Literary, cultural, and sociological perspectives on the ways in which space is constructed, represented, and experienced. Explorations of how our understanding of space is shaped by social and cultural structures, and how spaces in turn influence experiences of belonging, exclusion, identity, and normality.
- **Critical identity studies:** Literary and cultural approaches to the ways in which identities are constructed, experienced, and negotiated. This line focuses on how identities become shaped by particular social and cultural contexts, and how literature can question the boundaries between normative and marginalised forms of identity.
- **Ecocriticism:** Literary works that, from an ecocritical, ecofeminist, and/or posthumanist perspective, challenge the ways of life presented as natural or normal in the context of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, as well as the hierarchies that shape the relationships between bodies, territories, and species.

Abstracts should be around **300 words**, and they should include **3-4 keywords** and a **short bionote**. Papers can be delivered in **English** or in **Spanish** and MLA citation style is recommended. Please submit proposals through the documentation > abstract submission tab on our website. The deadline for submission is **January 15**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by the end of January 2027.

Website: <https://eventos.uam.es/go/reframingmircaalt>

Contact email: youngmircaalt@gmail.com

Venue:

Centro Cultural La Corrala
C/ Carlos Arniches 3 y 5
28005 - Madrid

Registration fees:

Graduate students and Early Career
Scholars: 30€
Late Registration: 40€

Attendance with certificate: 5€

Late Registration: 7€

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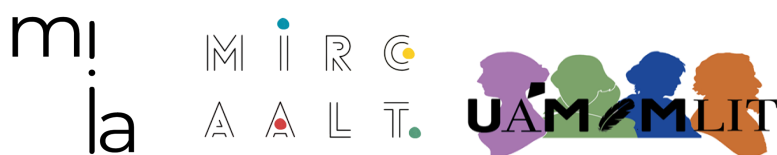
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