

## Call for Papers | The Road Taken: Along the Way

24-25 April 2026, UBCO, Okanagan (Syilx)

Submission Deadline: March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 11:59pm.

From “The Road Not Taken”

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

*Robert Frost*

The Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies (FCCS) at The University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) invites submissions for our 2026 Graduate Conference, *The Road Taken: Along the Way*, taking place from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of April at UBCO.

We are seeking papers and creative works of 10-15 minutes that explore journeying, hope, and survival. *The Road Taken: Along the Way* is inspired by Cormac McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic novel *The Road*. McCarthy’s novel examines themes of life, death, family, and perseverance when faced with collapsing societal hegemony in a post-apocalyptic setting. While this is a thematic launching point for this conference, we are seeking papers and creative works that speak beyond McCarthy.

*The Road Taken: Along the Way* asks readers, writers and artists which path they will travel on. We ask about the road that is taken, not the road that is not. When we think about the post-apocalypse, we often turn to images of dystopia, zombies, or speculative fiction. To question the road that is travelled is to question where we are headed, and what we are leaving. It is an exploration of the journeys we take; the walk upon past-trodden footprints. The road can mean paths, journeys, transformation and adventure, but it is also a space that is marked by politics and precarious morality. *The Road Taken: Along the Way* asks, how can the image of the road call to attention themes of hope, or adversely, *anti-hope*? What future(s) exist at the end of the road? What can we find “along the way?” We invite you to consider how these themes and questions manifest in literary, artistic, theoretical, political or lived contexts, through a flickering lens of hope.

Potential topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Journeying, Adventure, Paths
- Predestination, Biblical themes, or religion in the apocalypse
- Life and Death narratives
- Survival, Perseverance, Revival
- Rituals and Traditions
- Choices, Agency and Autonomy
- Hallucinations, Dreams, the Real/Unreal
- Posthumanism, Technology (or lack thereof), Critical Animal Studies
- Endings and Beginnings
- Patriarchal fantasies, paternalization, father-son relationships, or other family dynamics
- Hope, Anti-Hope and Futurity
- Transformation, Change, New Beginnings
- Ethics, Morality, Precarity
- Immigration, migration and diasporic experiences

Abstracts of 250-300 words can be sent to [shar.ghanekar@ubc.ca](mailto:shar.ghanekar@ubc.ca) by March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 11:59pm. We welcome submissions from students currently enrolled in: MA/MFA in FCCS, IGS supervised by FCCS faculty, and English Honours Undergraduates. Please ensure the document containing the abstract has no identifying information. In a separate document, enter your name, contribution title, preferred contact information, and a short biography of no more than 75 words.