It was once commonplace to speak of crisis. Not only were economic and natural disasters times of crisis, but even the general categories by which our political reality was ordered fell into dismay (e.g. nationalism, the subject, etc.). This epoch of crisis is over. We have entered an age in which catastrophe reigns. Catastrophe, as opposed to crisis, manifests in fatal, material events that demonstrate the dysfunction of a system rather than its disruption from an outside force. Such disruptions have led to the radical revamping of citizenship and the democracy that constitutes it. Catastrophe, in exposing the seams by which society is unraveling, brings our attention to the areas most in need of repair or alteration. However, those who are least able to maintain their way of life still bear the brunt of disease, state-sanctioned violence, and natural disasters. Moreover, this underclass is growing every year, an event that Judith Butler has called the “acceleration of precarity.”

At the same time that the representations of political reality have fundamentally changed, so too have the stakes of representation shifted. A question seemingly solved by the Enlightenment has been resurrected in contemporary debate: Who or what is deserving of protection and inclusion? How much intolerance can a “just” society tolerate? Answers to these questions most often imply violent expulsion of those who do not fit the definition of a citizen or subject worthy of protection. How might one, from a relative subject position, be able to access and perform citizenship in a way that lends itself to the minimizing of precarity and the promotion of dignity, respect, and a “livable” life? With this in mind, we invite papers on catastrophic subjects and the catastrophe of citizenship from interdisciplinary and comparativist approaches. Papers should analyze multiple distinct issues and/or perspectives on a related topic.

The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. David Caron (Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan).

Potential topics for papers include, but are not limited to:

- AIDS/HIV
- Reproductive Rights
- Eugenics
- Holocaust Representations and/or Testimony
- Neo-Fascism
- Immigration

Please send a 150-200 word abstract to jakenaba@buffalo.edu by January 5, 2018. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out shortly after the deadline. Check our website for more information and future updates: https://citizenshiporsubjectivityprecariouspositionings.wordpress.com/.