**Reading Then and Now**

<http://graduate.engl.virginia.edu/gesa/conference/CFP/>

*The University of Virginia Department of English Graduate Conference  
April 4-6, 2014*

Keynote speech by **Andrew Piper**Master class with **Rita Felski** and **Andrew Piper**

From Socrates to Tina Brown, cultural critics have been lining up to bury the book for millennia. Yet, in spite of the predictions of the Greeks, the early printers, and more recent heralds, literature just won’t die. One sign? A survey of recent titles from the U. of Chicago press offers 1,680 books with “reading” in their description. Another? The insistent textual qualities of even the most recent social media. Persisting through one technological revolution after another and despite cultural sea changes, reading continues to evolve, to inform, and to sustain modern cultures.

The University of Virginia Department of English invites graduate student proposals for conference papers that think through issues related to reading practices. This call seeks presenters interested in questions of book history, the phenomenology of reading, and the digital turn. Papers may focalize literary or cultural texts from any period and may engage in conversations with such subjects as:

* The phenomenology of reading
* The rise and fall of print culture
* Public and private modes of reading
* Professional and popular modes of reading
* The market for books and its effects on reading and textual production
* The reading, writing, and textual production of the global novel
* Close reading, distant reading, and the digital humanities
* And other topics such as: translation, circulation, reception, bibliography, books as physical objects

Submit 250-300 word abstracts to [gesa2014@gmail.com](mailto:gesa2014@gmail.com) by January 31, 2014. Please include a brief academic biography, including your name, email address, and academic affiliation. Presentations should be 20 minutes in length (about 8-10 double-spaced pages).

Keynote speaker **Andrew Piper** is Associate Professor in the McGill University Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures and an associate member of the McGill Department of Art History and Communication Studies. He is the author of *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (2012) and *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (2009), winner of the MLA Prize for a First Book. His research spans from the technologies of reading to life sciences to quantitative approaches to literature.

Master class presenter **Rita Felski** is William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor in the University of Virginia Department of English and the editor of *New Literary History*. She is the author, most recently, of *Rethinking Tragedy* (2008), *Uses of Literature* (2008), and *Literature after Feminism* (2003). Her current research focuses on questions of method and interpretation.