Is there more than a superficial family resemblance between the emergencies we suffer on a daily and epochal basis—due dates, expiration dates, statutes of limitation, biological clocks, revolutionary crisis-points, environmental tipping points, messianic end-times? The deadline invokes the implacable indifference of measured time but it imposes itself in anything but a uniform manner. The deadline demonstrates precisely why Marx was right to emphasize that political economy is always a political economy of time. Time flows at differential rates. Like all emergency measures, deadlines are coercive rituals that distribute privilege unevenly—limits are announced, extensions are granted, penalties are imposed, time runs out faster for the disenfranchised. In other words, the deadline (like death itself) is a “real abstraction”: it universalizes itself in a palpably discordant fashion. The deadline marks the place where the continuum of homogeneous, empty time erupts into a mine-field of exceptions. This lecture will explore some of the vicissitudes of this terrifying word and concept.