

CALL FOR PAPERS
American Religion and Literature Society
American Literature Association
28th Annual Conference
May 25-28, 2017
The Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02116-5798

The American Religion and Literature Society will sponsor two sessions at the 2017 national meeting. Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to Ray Horton, rlh137@case.edu. Be sure to include your name, institutional affiliation, email address, and any AV requests in your abstract. Electronic submissions only, in .doc or .docx format. The deadline for submission to the ARLS is **January 9, 2017**.

1. Postsecular Prospects in American Literary Studies

The American Religion and Literature Society invites all proposals that consider the role that American literature of any period plays in postsecular studies, or in broader cultural negotiations of the religious and the secular. Possible topics might include asking how “secular” writers (from the non-religious to the “lapsed”) represent the sacred or transcendent, and how their work complicates traditional separations between spirituality and materiality, belief and non-belief, or devotion and doubt.

We also invite papers that examine critical methods considered post-secular. Theoretical challenges to the binary between “religious” and “secular” have risen to prominence over the past decade, but what have they accomplished for the study of American literature? What longstanding critical assumptions have postsecular methods disrupted or reinforced, and what else might postsecular criticism offer to the field of American literary studies?

2. Theodicies in American Literature: Memory, Suffering, and Hope

The American Religion and Literature Society invites papers that explore the relationship between suffering and religious identities in American literature. How have Americans writers grappled with the problem of evil? How have they contributed to the conversations about the presence or absence of God in suffering? How do experiences of war or violence shape discourses on suffering and theodicy? In what ways do literary texts function as an especially important medium for revealing the tensions that reside in narrating human suffering within a post-secular or post-religious context? The panel welcomes papers that explore these questions and others that analyze the connection between loss, grief, trauma and the formation of religious identities.

The American Literature Association’s 28th annual conference will meet at the Westin Copley Place in Boston on May 25-28, 2016 (Thursday through Sunday of Memorial Day weekend). The deadline for proposals to the ALA is January 30, 2017. For further information, please consult the ALA website at www.americanliteratureassociation.org or contact the conference director, Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield at carr@georgiasouthern.edu with specific questions.