

CFP: SSAWW Panels at the American Literature Association (ALA), May 2017
The West Copley Place Hotel in Boston, MA

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The Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW) is proud to announce its two panels for the upcoming American Literature Association Conference in Boston, MA, from May 25 to 28, 2017. These two panels intend to present the varied ways in which women—as authors and activists, storytellers and social critics—have engaged and continue to engage in activism in response to the many social, cultural, and political issues that shape American life. But as Annelise Orleck notes in her 2015 *Rethinking American Women's Activism*, far too many have envisioned “women’s activism and advances in women’s rights as having come in two major waves,” the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries—a view that inaccurately suggests “women had little to do with American politics or social change at any other times” (xi). In their attempt to promote a more expansive vision, this year’s SSAWW panels seek to engage the theme of activism and resistance in American women’s writing from early America to the present day:

Panel I: Activism in Early American to Nineteenth-Century American Women’s Writing

Panel II: Activism in Twentieth-Century to Twenty-First Century American Women’s Writing

Because of its influence in shaping public discourse and the socio-political conversation, American women’s writing across time and across genre has played an important role in shaping the vision for social change. These panels will therefore ask participants to consider women writers and political activism. Presenters might explore the need for renewed attention to women writers for their efforts at activism and resistance in a patriarchal society that too often relegates women to second class status at best. What are the social, cultural, racial, and political challenges that they seek to overcome? How do they envision, in their writing, a less restrictive America—one where the notion of equality extends across the racial, gender, and religious lines that arguably still divide the United States? How do their works resist not only the social norms but also the culture of marginalization that seeks to limit the involvement of women and minority peoples in traditional political roles? Interested participants are encouraged to think not just of the speeches, articles, and essays traditionally associated with political discourse but also of the novels, short stories, poems, and plays, etc. that necessarily challenge America’s social ills and promote socio-political change.

The deadline for proposals this year is January 15, 2017. Please submit a 250 to 500-word abstract and a brief CV (no more than two pages) that includes rank/status (e.g. ABD, Associate Professor, etc.), institutional affiliation (independent scholars are encouraged to submit proposals as well), and past conference presentations. Proposals should be submitted to Christopher Allen Varlack at cvarlack@umbc.edu and note either “ALA Panel 1 Submission” or “ALA Panel 2 Submission” in the E-mail subject line. All proposals should be included as an attachment, preferably as a single PDF document. Confirmation of receipt will be sent within two business days of submission.

While interested participants do not need to be a member of SSAWW to submit a proposal for the aforementioned panels, all presenters must be members with SSAWW before ALA in order to participate in a SSAWW-sponsored panel.