

Society for Contemporary Literature Call for Papers, ALA 2018 in San Francisco

"Truth in Fiction / Fiction in Truth"

The Society for Contemporary Literature seeks, for ALA 2018 in San Francisco, papers that explore the intersection of truth telling and literary art in 21st-century American literature. As pressing concerns about real politics, justice, and representation loom large in the culture, and as Common Core standards actively encourage K-12 teachers to engage fiction a bit less and nonfiction a bit more, a clear and contemporary discourse on how literary art modulates and indwells all kinds of expression is becoming more and more necessary to scholars and teachers of literature. In light of that need, this panel, "Truth in Fiction / Fiction in Truth" will explore the impulse toward nonfiction and truth telling in recent literary production. Prospective papers for this panel might address one or more the following questions in the context of a particular author, work, or genre:

How do the techniques or technologies associated with a literary genre or with a particular author or work result in published texts that make credible (or dubious) claims to truth telling while they are at the same time clearly literary products—selected, sequenced, crafted, edited, published, promoted, and perplexing?

What can we say about the complicated relationship between reality and art in literary works that make use of, or appear to make use of, documentary and documentary-like strategies?

How can we comment on the ways that both historical fictions and speculative fictions incorporate and recontextualize histories?

How are works marketed as truly nonfictional and truly true actually full of noteworthy literary craft that ought to be noted and assessed as we examine their truth claims?

Please send ~300-word abstracts and one-paragraph bio statements to Fred Johnson (fjohnson@whitworth.edu) by January 10, 2018 (early submissions welcome). Submissions should be sent via email with the subject line "SCL ALA 2018 Abstract." Note that scholars are limited to one presentation at this conference; notifications will be sent by Jan. 20, 2018, in order to allow responses to other panels or the general CFP by their deadlines.