

ALA 2018, San Francisco (Ryan David Furlong)
American Religion and Literature Society

“Race, Religion, and Post-Secularism in American Literature” (ALA 2018)

In the recently published essay collection *Race and Secularism in America* (2016), editors Jonathon S. Kahn and Vincent W. Lloyd point to a conspicuous gap in, as well as sketch out an emerging sub-field within, the literature of (post-)secular studies in an American context: race and secularism. The book’s introduction poses the question best, “Why has whiteness characterized not only [the study of] the secular but also, all too often, critiques of the secular?” (5). In other words, scholars across disciplines, including American literary critics, have tended to prioritize and privilege the study of (post-)secularism’s relationship to white writers, literatures, cultures, histories, and subjectivities, as it also has unwittingly contributed to the marginalization and exclusion of ‘(O)ther’ non-white races that have long constituted the various sacred/secular landscapes from early America to our present day. (Post-)secularism and race are inextricably entwined within the literatures of America and thus require an American “turn” in our critical attention to more completely understand the entanglements of race and religion in post/modernity.

With this “turn” in view, the American Religion and Literature Society invites paper proposals that engage with, and explore, the sundry intersections between race, religion, and (post-)secularity in American literature. We encourage submissions from all American historical periodizations, literary movements, formal genres, and individual writers, as well as papers that address the various writings of American writers whose (non-)religious worldviews, racial identities, and (post-)secular writings help to shed new light on how we better understand race and religion in America. The panel indeed welcomes proposals that broadly interpret this topic and delve into its immense complexities, but with always an eye toward questions of race, religion, and all things (post-)secular in American literary cultures.

Please submit all abstracts to Kathryn Ludwig (kludwig@bsu.edu) by January 15. Be sure to include your name, institutional affiliation, email address, and any AV requests in your abstract. The subject heading of the email should be “Race, Religion, Postsecularism - ALA 2018.”