

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**American Religion and Literature Society**  
**American Literature Association**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**May 23-26, 2019**  
**The Westin Copley Place**  
**10 Huntington Avenue**  
**Boston, MA 02116-5798**

The American Religion and Literature Society will sponsor three sessions at the 2019 national meeting. Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to Ray Horton, [rhorton3@murraystate.edu](mailto:rhorton3@murraystate.edu). In your email, please indicate the session for which you are proposing a paper. Be sure to include your name, institutional affiliation, email address, and any AV requests. Electronic submissions only, in .doc or .docx format. The deadline for submission to the ARLS is **January 11, 2019**.

**1. Literature and Ritual**

For Gloria Anzaldúa, artistic creation requires a “blood sacrifice.” Her figuration of writing as, in part, an Aztec ritual prompts us to consider the relationship between American literature and ritual more broadly. Literary studies has attended to religion with renewed interest over the last several decades but, unlike recent work by Ronald Grimes and Kathryn McClymond in the field of “ritual studies” (a term first used by the American Academy of Religion in 1977), has largely ignored ritual. This panel invites papers that consider offerings to the gods, such as Hindu puja; communal fasting, as exemplified by Ramadan; rites of affliction, such as the Isoma ritual practiced by the Ndembu of northwestern Zambia; political ritual, as in Clifford Geertz’ famous analysis of the Balinese state; and other rituals as they relate to American literature. How does ritual function in literary works? How does literature function as ritual? How does the American context influence the depiction and role of ritual in literature?

**2. Religion and Film**

The conversation around religion and literature has become robust in the past two decades and there are signs that conversation is also being flamed in the fine arts world. There has been less discussion in Academic film studies in America about the role of religion in film. This panel seeks in part to redress that and welcomes submission for papers or groups of papers interested in many aspects of film studies and religious studies. We welcome papers about the secular/postsecular and film, the transcendent in film, adaptations of sacred texts in film, sociology of religion and film, pedagogies of liberation and film, but also papers on religious thematic topoi (reconciliation, forgiveness, meditation, ritual practice, belief/doubt, etc.) and papers that are on films critical of religions broadly conceived. Papers may address historic or contemporary film and religion, but some preference will be given for papers that will allow a more general, American Literature Association audience to engage with the argument and analysis. Of special interest to the conveners are papers that help to bring some of the important insights in recent conversations around American Literature and religion to bear on American film where that attention has seemed more attenuated

### 3. Layered Identities: Women Writers and Jewish-American Identity

American writer Adrienne Rich has described herself as “a problem within a problem” because audiences associate her with both “the Jewish question” and “the Woman question” (*What is Found There* 24). While the boundaries of categories such as race and gender are often called into question in contemporary discourse, Jewish women writers continue to be, in the words of Victoria Aarons, “twice marginalized” (*Cambridge Companion to American Fiction after 1945* 134).

This session invites papers that explore the ways in which Jewish-American women writers grapple with their layered identities. Possible questions include: Where do we see women resisting or engaging the limits of politicized terms that would define them? How does American fiction explore the tensions or interplay between Biblical models of womanhood and women’s struggle for agency in contemporary America? Does American literature by Jewish women show tradition contributing in positive ways to the development of female personhood? How does Jewish feminist literature work against the suppression of women within a patriarchal culture?