

CALL FOR PAPERS
American Religion and Literature Society
American Literature Association
33rd Annual Conference
May 26-29, 2022
The Palmer House Hilton
17 East Monroe
Chicago, IL 60603

The American Religion and Literature Society will sponsor a panel and a roundtable discussion at the 2022 national meeting. Please submit proposals to the contact person indicated at the conclusion of the relevant CFP. 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 9, 2022**.

Mysticism, Magic, and the Occult in American Literature

American authors have demonstrated a sustained interest in mysticism, esoterica, magic, the occult, and what Emma Mason and Mark Knight have recently dubbed “weird faith.” The American Religion and Literature Society invites proposals for presentations that focus on American authors’ engagement with non-dominant forms of religion. We welcome papers that offer new perspectives on more well-known cases—such as H. D.’s take on the occult, or the influence of Gurdjieff’s mysticism on Toomer—as well as those that examine lesser known examples. We encourage proposals on any form – prose, poetry, drama – or time period.

Please send abstracts (under 1,000 words) to Andrew J. Ball (ball@math.harvard.edu) by January 9, 2022.

Professing Literature / Professing Faith: A Roundtable Discussion

In *Professing Literature*, Gerald Graff observes that, “as late as [1900], there remained only a faint line separating professors of English from the clergy” (29). By 1915, however, the English professor had transformed into a “secularized educational professional” after the German model: “a man who supposedly transcended morality and ideology in his disinterested search for truth” (59, 62). The German professor, commented James Morgan Hart in 1874, “shakes off spiritual bondage and becomes an independent thinker” (qtd. in Graff 63).

Contrary to Graff’s secularization narrative, many institutions today retain strong religious affiliations, and many professors profess faith as well as literature. Nevertheless, the view

represented by Hart is a commonplace for the profession as a whole, and the institutional transition between 1875 and 1915 and its legacy up to the present often go unexamined.

For this roundtable, the American Religion and Literature Society invites proposals that address the role of religion in the profession. We welcome approaches that are critical, historical, and/or pedagogical. What does it mean to profess literature and faith? What role does a (secular) faith in the value of literature play in its teaching and study? How do religion and related assumptions inform our criticism, our teaching, and/or our division of labor and literature into periods, nationalities, subfields, and so on?

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to Ryan Siemers (ryansiemers@suu.edu) by January 9, 2022.