

## Call for Papers

The Society for the Study of American Literary Naturalism  
American Literature Association 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
May 23-26, 2024  
Chicago, IL

The Frank Norris Society, The Jack London Society, the Stephen Crane Society, and the Theodore Dreiser Society have united for the American Literature Association into the Society for the Study of American Literary Naturalism.

The Society for the Study of American Literary Naturalism will sponsor multiple sessions at the 2023 American Literature Association Conference. While we are open to any topic related to the works of Norris, London, Crane, or Dreiser, we are also open to considerations of other authors—either in the traditional naturalist period or in any time after—embracing or working within a broadly defined “naturalist ethos.”

Send proposals of 200-250 words for a 20 minute papers/presentations by January 15 to: Adam H. Wood, Valdosta State University at [adwood@valdosta.edu](mailto:adwood@valdosta.edu)

Email proposals only.

Provide contact information including email, address, and academic affiliation.

The Society for the Study of American Literary Naturalism is also pairing with the American Religion and Society this year to co-sponsor a panel on American Literary Naturalism and Religion.

Canonical and noncanonical American naturalists evinced a complex and ongoing interest in religious matters. For this panel, jointly organized by the Frank Norris Society and the American Religion and Literature Society, we invite scholars to examine American literary naturalism’s engagement with religious ideas and practices. The intersection of American literary naturalism and religion presents a rich area for exploration, offering scholars the opportunity to analyze how authors understood the relationship between the deterministic forces of nature and the religious dimensions of American life.

Potential approaches include but are not limited to:

Reevaluation of Naturalist Assumptions – Authors could investigate how American literary naturalism challenges or reinforces traditional religious beliefs, analyzing the ways naturalist narratives engage with questions of morality, free will, and the existence of divinity.

Explore the Religious Dimensions in Naturalist Texts – Authors could examine the presence of religious themes, motifs, and symbolism in naturalistic works, considering how authors negotiated the tension between deterministic natural forces and the religious aspects of human experience.

Authorial Perspectives on Religion – Authors could investigate the beliefs of naturalist authors, exploring how figures such as Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Frank Norris, and Upton Sinclair grapple with or embrace religious ideas in their work.

Comparative Analysis – Authors could compare American literary naturalism with religious texts or explore parallels with religious narratives from other cultural traditions, examining how naturalist perspectives intersect with or diverge from other religious worldviews.

Examine Social and Cultural Contexts – Authors could explore the impact of social and cultural change on the portrayal of religion in American naturalism, investigating how issues such as industrialization, urbanization, and scientific advancements influenced the depiction of religious beliefs in naturalist literature.

Evolution and Religion – Authors could examine how authors engage with religious concepts and practices in the context of evolutionary science, exploring the ways religious ideas are reinterpreted, challenged, or reaffirmed in the face of evolutionary theory. Authors could consider how authors negotiated the tensions between religious faith and the scientific understanding of evolution.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words by **January 15**. Please include a brief biography and contact information. Submissions should be sent to Andrew Ball at [andrew\\_ball@emerson.edu](mailto:andrew_ball@emerson.edu).