"Teaching In Difficult Times" sponsored by the Margaret Fuller Society
American Literature Association 2026 | May 20–23, 2026, Chicago

The Margaret Fuller Society invites proposals for a panel at ALA 2026 about teaching in difficult times. As we head into the spring 2026 semester—the mid-point in an academic year when students and educators read U.S. literature amidst rising book bans, closing degree programs and DEI offices, and even the dismantling of the Department of Education—many of us are facing existential crises about how to do what matters to us most. How to support our students? How to sustain our disciplines? How to teach in ways that do justice to our subjects? The most basic day-to-day parts of our teaching lives have never felt more vulnerable—or more urgent. That is especially true in courses where our authors and/or their subjects were activists, journalists, or freedom seekers.

CFPs for ALA circulate just before the semester starts; the conference gathers us just as it ends. At teaching panels, sometimes we like to present golden moments about courses/assignments that have worked well. Those are most welcome. But so—especially—are your difficulties, your vulnerabilities, and your ideas in the making. Send us abstracts with questions, projects, hopes, fears, or other experiments that are on your mind as you're writing courses for the upcoming year. You don't need to have answers or resolutions yet. We hope this roundtable-style session will be a brave space for Americanists to share conversation and reflection about pedagogy in times of political crisis.

Submissions about Margaret Fuller are, of course, welcome, but proposals need not be limited to Fuller's life or work. The Margaret Fuller Committee for Racial Justice encourages submissions to all panels to address anti-racist approaches to scholarship, pedagogy, and community engagement. Early career scholars are—as always—especially encouraged to apply. Please send 150–250 word proposals or questions to Mollie Barnes at mbarnes2@uscb.edu with "ALA 2026" in the subject line by January 26, 2024.