Call for Papers

American Literature Association
38th Annual Conference

May 26-29, 2027

The Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02116

Conference Director: Olivia Carr Edenfield
Georgia Southern University

Conference Fee: $200
$125 for Graduate Students, Independent Scholars, and Retired Faculty

Deadline for Proposals: January 30, 2027

The ALA website contains details and instructions for submitting proposals as well as important information for representatives of participating author societies. Proposals from individuals and program information from author societies should be sent to:

Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield via email
(ALA@georgiasouthern.edu) by January 30, 2027

Our Boston Location: For our 38th Annual Conference, the American Literature Association will return to the Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston's Back Bay. This is certainly one of the most central and most convenient locations in Boston, with easy access by skybridge to the shops and restaurants of Copley Place Mall and the Prudential Center and only two blocks from Newbury Street and very convenient access to local trains and AmTrak as well as many of the major historical attractions. For further information on the hotel, please consult their website by following this link.

ALA Conference Housing Information: The Westin Copley Place will offer a conference rate of $214 for a single or double room. Riverview rooms are available for Reservation information will be posted in January.

Conference Details: Please note that the ALA is focusing on a live, in-person conference in which individuals can engage in the free exchange of ideas and information. We have no plans to offer a virtual option or to permit individuals to present via on-line services or pre-recorded sessions or by way of proxy. However, the ALA complies with ADA policy and guidelines, and will provide reasonable accommodation, including zoom access, to those who meet specific ADA criteria. We look forward to a collegial scholarly experience that is central to the mission of the American Literature Association.

For the 2027 conference, the ALA will again rely on electronic submission of program information and conference proposals. As usual, the societies affiliated with the American Literature Association will provide panels that make up much of the program. Individual societies will issue their own calls for papers, which will be listed on the ALA website as well as on the societies' own websites and in their publications. Guidelines for author societies are detailed toward the end of this notice.

Individuals may also propose papers or panels to the conference director by January 30, 2027. Preference will be given to papers and panels that represent authors, genres, or topics that are not covered by the societies of the ALA. Proposals must follow the guidelines described at the end of this notice.

Tentative Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, May 26, 2027:	Registration and Welcoming Reception: 8:00 – 10:00 PM
Thursday, May 27, 2027:	Sessions and Business Meetings: 8:30 AM – 6:15 PM
	Book Exhibit: 10:30 AM – 5:00 PM
	Graduate Student Organization Reception: 5:30 – 6:15
	Opening Reception: 6:15 -- 7:45 PM
Friday, May 28, 2027:	Sessions and Business Meetings: 8:30 AM – 6:15 PM
	Book Exhibit: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
	Special Readings and Receptions: 5:30 PM -- 9:00 PM
Saturday, May 29, 2027:	Sessions and Business Meeting:8:30 AM -- 6:15 PM
	Closing Reception: 6:15 – 7:30 PM
	Book Exhibit: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

A Graduate Reception and Meeting of the ALA Graduate Organization will take place on Thursday May 27. See the program for further details.

Book Exhibit: An exhibit of scholarly books will be held during the conference. We welcome the participation of publishers and are one of the few scholarly organizations that do not charge an exhibit fee. All official representatives of the exhibiting publishers are required to register and pay the normal $200 conference fee. About twenty publishers are expected to take part. To have your books represented at the exhibit, ask your publisher to consider taking part in the book exhibit or to contact Scholar's Choice (see information below), which will be organizing exhibits for publishers. Publishers should direct any questions to Alfred Bendixen at ab23@princeton.edu

Publishers who are unable to attend, but wish to have a few titles exhibited should contact The Scholar's Choice.

Scholar's Choice: The American Literature Association has again arranged with The Scholar's Choice to manage the combined book exhibit for our meeting. It may be possible for your recently-published books to be included in their display. Please refer to the following guidelines: "Any members interested in having their book displayed at the upcoming meeting should contact their publisher between October 30, 2026, and March 1, 2027. The Scholar's Choice displays on behalf of the publishers and *all requests must come from them, not the individual authors.* If they don't already have it, the press may request the appropriate paperwork by emailing Mary Lynn Howe at mlh@scholarschoice.com."

The Conference Fee: The registration fee covers the costs of the conference, including the receptions. It does not include any meals. **All of those who are on the program are required to register for the conference by April 15, 2027**. **Those who do not register by April 25th will be dropped from the program**.

The conference fee is $200 with a reduced rate of $125 for Graduate Students, Independent Scholars, and Retired Faculty. Registration Information for the conference will be available on the website in January. We prefer that individuals register on line by using the link provided on the ALA website. Individuals may also pay by check along with the registration form, which can be found online after January 1st. Please do not mail any checks until the registration form is posted.

Participants who must withdraw from the program need to contact the conference director and, if applicable, their society reps. To receive a refund for registration, contact the conference director by May 1st.

The Program: A draft of the program will be posted to the website as soon as it is available, around mid-March. After the first posting, the program will be updated and corrected until we go to press shortly after. No changes to the printed program can be made after the April 22nd deadline. Copies of the printed program will be available at the conference.

ALA Membership: Membership in the ALA is not required to propose or present a paper. In fact, technically, the members of the American Literature Association are the various author societies. Individuals may keep informed about the activities of the ALA by checking our website (www.americanliteratureassociation.org), which is the primary source for information about ALA activities.

The easiest way to find out about the conference and all ALA activities is by consulting our website:

www.americanliteratureassociation.org

ALA Guidelines: The most common ALA format is a time slot of one hour and twenty minutes with three papers and a chair. This permits some time for discussion and three papers of approximately 20 minutes. Organizers of panels are free to use other formats provided they respect the time limits. Please note that the normal reading time for a paper is two minutes per double-spaced page (or 20 minutes for a 10-page paper).

The ALA encourages panel organizers to experiment with innovative formats including roundtable discussion groups and panels featuring more speakers and briefer papers. Chairs will make sure that the panels start and end on time and that no speaker goes beyond the allotted time limit. We ask that chair not present papers on the panels that they are moderating, and no one may present more than one paper at the ALA conference. Individuals may, however, present a paper on one panel, and chair other panels, and/or also serve as a panelists for roundtable discussion(s).

Procedures for Author Societies: The representatives of the various author societies that make up the American Literature Association will organize most of the program. Societies are expected to offer their own calls for papers using their websites, email list-serves, newsletters, other publications, or mailing lists. Each society is also expected to post a call for papers or announce its plans on this ALA website by sending the CFP to Alfred Bendixen at ab23@princeton.edu and cc'ing the conference director at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu as soon as possible and **no later than December 1, 2026**. Societies are expected to advertise the national conference in their publications or on their websites. This expectation can be met by including the following notice in appropriate publications and websites:

The American Literature Association's 38th annual conference will meet at the Westin Copley Place May 26-29, 2027 (Wednesday through Saturday of Memorial Day weekend). The deadline for proposals is January 30, 2027. For further information or specific questions, please consult the ALA website at www.americanliteratureassociation.org or contact the conference director, Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield, at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu

The official representatives of each author society should confirm tentative plans for sessions with the conference director by email at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu before Nov 1, 2026. This is essential if any society is requesting more than two sessions and a business meeting. Please send an email noting your plans, the number of desired sessions, and any special requests. If your society, for whatever reason, chooses not to sponsor a session this year, please let the conference director know that.

By January 30, 2027, the conference director should receive an email with the complete program information. That information should follow the following format for each panel:

1. The subject line of the email should read ALA 2027: Name of Society. This enables the conference director to file emails efficiently. Then provide the rest of information as both an attachment (preferably in WORD) and pasted in. The ALA will use Ariel Narrow (12 point font); please do so if you can. If you cannot, do not worry about it.

2. Provide the program information so that it can be pasted into the final program. Please look at the following sample and then at the specific instructions that follow:

The Sublime in the Poetry of Sample
Organized by the Ima Sample Society

Chair: Joseph Goodscholar, University of Great Hopes

1. "Irony and *Angst* in the poetry of Ima Sample," Noah Problem, College of Notre Doubt
2. "The Beautiful Garden in *The Jungle*: Sample's Influence on Sinclair," Raphael Hythloday, University of East London
3. "Sample's 'Mambo' Poems and the Humor of Mark Twain: Beyond Beauty and Truth," Uriah Heap, Independent Scholar

Audio-Visual Equipment required: None

Requested slot: Thursday or Friday morning

Business Meeting Requested: the same day as the panels if possible

Please note that the sample above has no formatting (no bold, no CAPS). Please note that the presentations are listed with numbers and then five spaces and then the information. They are not indented as some word processing panels will do automatically, so please turn off auto-format. Book titles are italicized. If the conference organizer can cut and paste, then everything goes quickly, and errors are minimized.

A. Provide the exact Title of the Session as you wish it listed in the Program. (Please try to be both concise and precise). **Please do not use all caps or special fonts or highlighting or Bold or any special formatting in any part of the material you send.**
B. On the second line, please write Organized by Name of Your Society
C. Then list: Chair: Name, Affiliation
D. For each paper, begin with a number, skip five spaces or hit tab, then provide the title of the presentation in quotation marks, and then the correct name of the presenter, and his or her academic affiliation. For independent scholars, you may identify a society, a place, or just note independent scholar or biographer or anything you deem appropriate. For any questions about matters of format and style, please consult The Chicago Manual of Style.
E. You may list a respondent, if appropriate and desired.
F. Then write Audio-Visual Equipment Required and state NONE or request the specific equipment desired. The ALA will normally provide projectors for powerpoint and dvd presentations and screens (but we will **not** provide laptop computers). We will no longer provide overhead projectors, slide projectors, vcrs, or cd or cassette tape players (but you may, of course, bring your own cd or tape player). Please note that audio-visual equipment is incredibly expensive and has lately consumed close to $30,000 of our conference budget, which led to an increase in conference rates. **Please do not request AV unless you are sure that you or your panelists need it.** It costs much more to rent a piece of a/v equipment and a competent Tech person for three days than it costs to buy it;

nevertheless, we are tied to services offered by the hotel and, therefore, their rates. Please make sure that all audio-visual requests reach the conference director by January 30, 2027.

G. Because of the complexity of the program, we cannot permit individual societies to request specific time slots, but you may designate two preferred days and request either morning or afternoon. The conference director will attempt to honor all reasonable requests provided the required program information arrives by January 30, 2027, but no promises or guarantees can be made.

H. Please italicize book-length works and foreign phrases and use quotation marks for shorter works.

I. Please remind all of your participants that no-one may present more than one paper at the ALA conference and that we need to know about a/v requests immediately. Please note, however, that participants may present a paper, and chair other sessions, and appear on roundtables.

J. Proposals that fail to follow these directions will be returned to the proposer.

3. Please note that the ALA also welcomes Round Table Discussions. The difference between a panel and a round table is that a round table usually has a Moderator who is participating in the discussion (instead of a Chair who simply introduces speakers, monitors time, and manages the Q&A) and more than 4 (four) participants. Roundtable presentations may or may not have titles listed but round table presentations normally are 8 (eight) minutes or less in length and discussion is a more important component than formal lecture.

4. If you wish to also schedule a business meeting for your society, please request Business Meeting and provide any desired days and times. It is important that you let the conference director know if you wish the business meeting to come before or after a panel. Please note that while we will work to accommodate your requests, we cannot guarantee specific times. Nevertheless, we will usually try to put the business meeting directly after one of your sessions.

5. Please note that we no longer need you to provide the email address or mailing address of your participants since ALL communication with your panel will go through you. **We count on you to inform your participant of such basic facts as the need to register and pay the conference fee.** Please include a phone number where you can be reached in the event that the conference director is unable to email you.

The conference director will normally confirm the receipt of all emails within 3 business days. The conference director may refer you to the website but will never send you an attachment to open because of the danger of computer viruses. By mid-March, the conference director will let you know the day on which your panel or panels are scheduled. You should inform your participants of the day and instruct them to register using the information on the website at www.americanliteratureassociation.org **It is especially important to remind each of your participants that anyone who fails to register by April 25th will be dropped from the program.**

6. If any conference proposal comes in after the deadline, the conference director may be unable to place it on the program and **will not be able** to consider requests for specific times.

Procedures for Individual Proposals: Individuals may propose either a paper or a panel or round table to the conference director **no earlier** than December 1, 2026, and no later than the deadline of January 30, 2027. **The conference director will give preference to papers and panels on authors, texts, and topics not covered by the member societies of the ALA.** Those proposing a paper or panel on a topic represented by an author society should consult with the relevant society before submitting the proposal to the ALA. All proposals must be by email and should be both pasted in and included as attachments (preferably in WORD).

For an Individual Paper: In the subject line of the email, please put ALA 2027 Proposal: and then a brief title of between one and five words. That will enable the conference director to file emails efficiently. Please provide a clear and useful title for your paper and then an abstract describing the paper (usually between 250-600 words) and then a brief discussion of your status (i.e., an Associate Professor who has published a book and several articles on this topic/author; a graduate student who is offering part of his/her dissertation, etc.) or a two-page vita if that is easier. It is important that your abstract enable the conference director and his advisory committee to evaluate the nature of your work. You **must** also indicate whether you need any audio-visual equipment to present your work. Please provide a phone number (which will only be used if email fails to work for some reason).

In choosing papers, the conference director may need to emphasize the ways in which individual papers contribute to the formation of logical and coherent panels,
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For a panel: Please follow the sample below so the conference director can paste in the panels and round tables that are accepted.

In the subject line of the email, please put ALA 2027 Proposal: and then a brief title of between one and five words. In your proposal, which you should both paste into the email and provide as an attachment (preferably in Word), begin with the information in the sample below.

After providing the panel information in a form that can be pasted directly into the program, please provide a clear description of the panel and its goals, the titles of individual papers, appropriate abstracts for the papers, and a brief description of the participants and their relevant work. It is crucial that you note any audio-visual needs in your proposal. Finally, please provide your phone number (which will only be used if email fails to work for some reason.)

Please consult the following Sample.

The Sublime in the American Gothic Tradition

Organizer and Chair: Joseph Goodscholar, University of Great Hopes

1. "Irony and *Angst* in the Gothic Novels of the Early Republic," Noah Problem, College of Notre Doubt
2. "The Beautiful Garden in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*," Raphael Hythloday, University of East London
3. "Beyond the Castle: Gothic Transformations in the Humor of American Realism," Uriah Heap, Independent Scholar

Audio-Visual Equipment required: None

OR: if the organizer is not the chair of the session, then write

Organized by: Name of Individual organizer
Chair: Name

Please remember that individuals should not chair panels on which they present papers.

Please note that the sample above has no formatting (no bold, no all caps). Please note that the presentations are listed with numbers and then five spaces then the information. They are not indented as some word processing panels will do automatically unless you turn off auto-format. Book titles are italicized. Commas are used to separate the title and presenter and affiliation and there is no period at the end of each listing. If the conference organizer can cut and paste, then everything goes quickly.

In evaluating the quality of a proposal, the ALA's selection committee tends to be less accepting of any panel in which all the participants are from the same institution or are all graduate students. The ALA welcomes panels that represent a diversity of perspectives and demonstrate relevant expertise. We believe that graduate students are best served when they are on panels with senior scholars and assistant professors.

Some reminders:

The deadline for all proposals from individuals and panels from author societies is January 30, 2027.

No-one may present more than one paper at an ALA conference. It is possible to present a paper and also participate in a round-table discussion as well as chair another panel or panels

Please make sure to indicate any audio-visual requests with your proposal. Late a/v requests may be impossible to accommodate.

Please make sure to follow the instructions above. The use of electronic submissions enables the ALA to maintain the lowest conference fee of any major organization.

Participating author societies are required to advertise the national conference and are expected to post call for papers or announce their plans on the ALA website.

The conference director will attempt to acknowledge the receipt of all emails within 3 business days and will try to respond as quickly as possible to all proposals.

Please note that the American Literature Association maintains the lowest conference fees of any major scholarly organization because it operates without a paid staff. We cannot help you find a roommate or spend a great deal of time answering personal phone calls. If you have any questions that are not answered by this announcement, please contact the conference director,

Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield, at ALA@georigaouthern.edu or Professor Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director of the ALA, at ab23@princeton.edu.

Thank you for your support of the American Literature Association

www.americanliteratureassociation.org