

The American Novel: Forms, Genres, and Traditions

A Symposium Sponsored by the American Literature Association

November 5-7, 2026

Drury Plaza Hotel in Santa Fe
828 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Conference Director:
Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

Keynote Speaker:
Shirley Samuels, Cornell University
“A Theory of American Women and the Novel”

For our 2026 Fall Symposium, the American Literature Association will return to beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Drury Plaza Hotel offers an excellent location near the central plaza. Single and double rooms will be available for \$199 a night plus taxes; this rate includes not only free breakfast and wireless access, but also an afternoon “kickback” every evening at 5:30 featuring hot food and cold drinks. Valet parking will be \$18 per night. The conference fee of \$175 includes one lunch and several receptions.

American Fiction: Forms, Genres, and Traditions: What themes, techniques, and values shape the diverse forms and traditions of American storytelling? Do aspects of the American experience encourage or privilege specific literary forms? How do American genres differ from their British or European counterparts? Do American authors work within or against established traditions? How important are certain traditions and forms: the Gothic, the Romance, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, Post-Modernism, Experimental and Speculative fiction? What is the place of race, class, and gender in constructing, expanding, or demolishing these traditions? These and other questions should provide for a lively weekend of literary exploration and good conversation. We welcome proposals for individual papers, complete panels, and roundtable discussions on any aspect of this important subject

Please send all proposals to the conference director at
ab23@princeton.edu
as soon as possible and no later than July 20, 2026.

www.americanliteratureassociation.org

Conference Details: Sessions run Friday and Saturday, November 6-7, 2026. There will be an opening event and welcoming reception on Thursday evening, November 5; the Conference Fee will include at least one lunch as well as the receptions.

Individuals may propose papers or panels by emailing the conference director, Professor Alfred Bendixen (ab23@princeton.edu) no later than July 20, 2026 and preferably earlier. The proposal should include the title of the presentation or panel, an abstract that provides a clear idea of the material that will be covered, a brief vita or description of the presenter's qualifications and email addresses for all participants. The proposal should be both pasted into an email and sent as an attachment (preferably in WORD). All emails will be acknowledged in a timely manner. Limited audio-visual support will be available. If your paper requires a/v, please make sure to indicate that in your proposal.

The conference director welcomes proposals for roundtables and panels that deal with specific authors and/or the development of important genres, literary movements, themes, and issues related to the symposium topic.

Those proposing papers and/or panels will be informed of acceptance by August 5. Participants will be asked to make their hotel reservations immediately and to pre-register on-line. A program will be placed on the ALA website prior to our meeting, and printed programs will be available at the symposium.

ALA Guidelines: The most common ALA format is a time slot of one hour and twenty minutes with three or four papers and a chair. Organizers of panels are free to use other formats provided they respect the time limits. Furthermore, the ALA encourages panel organizers to experiment with innovative formats including 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 prefer that chairs not present papers on the panels that they are moderating, and no one may present more than one paper at an ALA symposium.

The conference fee covers the costs of the conference. We require all of those who are on the program to pre-register. The conference fee is \$175 for all participants. We regret that we are unable to offer a lower rate for graduate students and independent scholars.

ALA Membership: Membership in the ALA is not required in order 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, including our symposia and conferences, by checking our website (www.americanliterature.org).

Please note that the American Literature Association maintains the lowest conference fees of any major scholarly organization because it operates without a paid staff. If you have any questions that are not answered by this announcement, please contact the conference director, Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director of the ALA, at ab23@princeton.edu

Thank you for your support of the American Literature Association.