

The Sinclair Lewis Society

ALA 2027

The Sinclair Lewis Society invites proposals for a panel on “*Elmer Gantry*: Outrageous Reception” at the American Literature Association’s 38th Annual Conference, to be held May 26–29, 2027, in Boston at the Westin Copley Place, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02116.

2027 is the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Elmer Gantry*, a novel that has caused strong responses from readers and faith leaders over the last hundred years. Is the novel a critique of hypocritical religious practices, an attack on believers, or the presentation of an American archetype, a man who manipulates faith for personal advantage? The novel was banned in some cities and attacked from pulpits nationwide after its publication. It also became a national bestseller.

For the panel “*Elmer Gantry*: Outrageous Reception,” the Lewis Society invites abstracts that explore the novel and its reception. Topics may include readings of the novel, comparisons to other novels with similar religious characters, reception of the novel both in 1927 and more recently, and adaptations of the novel, which include musicals, an opera, and the Oscar-winning 1960 film. Please send 250-300-word abstracts by email to Sally Parry (separry@ilstu.edu) by Friday, January 22, 2027. If there is interest, we could also sponsor an *Elmer Gantry* roundtable, which would have short presentations and focus on discussion.