

The Circle for the Study of American Speculative Fiction ALA 2027

CFP Session 1:

"Google Maps of Hell"

Following up on our conversations at the 2025 meeting in Chicago, the Circle for the Study of American Speculative Fiction invites proposals for 15-20 minute conference presentations on topics related to ecological futurity; 21st-century technological innovation (including AI/LLMs); utopian and dystopian readings of ecological crisis; the intersection of these themes with the politics of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability; and more.

Papers should be focused on the connection between the SF work under discussion and interpretive methods drawn from science studies and the ecological humanities (broadly conceived), and should be primarily focused on American SF (also broadly conceived). We welcome papers on film, television, games, drama, poetry, "science fiction," and other forms beyond the novel and the short story.

Please send a 250–300 word abstract and a brief bio to Gerry Canavan at gerry.canavan@marquette.edu by December 15, 2026. Please note any expected AV requirements with your submission.

CFP Session 2:

Roundtable on the "American" in The Circle for the Study of American Speculative Fiction

As part of its programming for the upcoming ALA conference in Boston, "The Circle for the Study of American Speculative Fiction" seeks to turn inward to interrogate the status of the "American" in its name. Curiously, neither organizer remembers how the term ended up in the name, and during our first business meeting, the question of "American Speculative Fiction" was discussed at length. With that in mind, we seek proposals that critically

interrogate, prod, provoke, historicize, and otherwise theorize the status of the “American” in a society for the study of American Speculative Fiction.

While sf has a long entanglement with notions of American-ness, whether the influence of the pulp and so-called Golden Age of the Gernsback-Campbell continuum or the origins of the Cyberpunk movement, such associations have always been ambiguous. For just two quick examples, Hugo Gernsback was born to a Jewish family in Luxembourg before emigrating to the US and William Gibson was a draft-dodger that has spent most of his adult life living in Canada. Or to turn to far more troubling recent history, we need only look at the Sad and Rabid Puppies controversies and the nationally, ethnically, and racially coded ideas of “good sf” that the proponents of these movements put forward—most damningly and disgustingly propagated by Theodore Beale’s racist and ethno-nationalist critiques of N. K. Jemisin and her work. What do these disparate experiences tell us about the American-ness of American sf?

We seek contributions on speculative fiction (broadly defined) that examine any aspect of the designation “American Speculative Fiction,” including but not limited to:

- the origins of the concept of “American sf”
- periodizing “American” in American sf
- the status of the Americas within American sf
- the role of Hollywood in Global sf
- the role of global production chains in the US sf game and film industries
- the role of American editors in shaping global print sf
- the role of non-American sf in shaping American sf
- the role of immigration, race, and/or ethnicity in American sf
- the role of emigration in American sf
- Indigenous Futurisms in/as/and/or/versus American sf
- rewriting/re-imaging Lovecraft within American sf
- Afrofuturism, Chicana-futurism, Latin-X futurism and/or/as/versus American sf
- Uncovering the American sf we don’t see
- Queering American sf
- American sf and American exceptionalism
- American sf and/as neoimperialism
- Silicon Valley culture and/or/as/versus American sf
- American sf as anti-American
- Or anything else related to the topic

The format for this session will be a roundtable focused on conversation. Rather than presenting a 15-20 minute paper, each participant will be given a few minutes to present a shorter position statement or a series of ideas/provocations in relation to the topic that can be used as jumping off points for further conversation amongst the panelists and with audience members.

Please send a 250–300 word proposal and a brief bio to Hugh O’Connell at Hugh.oconnell@umb.edu by December 15, 2026. Please note any expected AV requirements with your submission.