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

Acknowledgements:

The Conference Director expresses his appreciation to all who have organized panels and/or agreed to present their work at this symposium. Special thanks are due to Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield who has provided invaluable advice and managed almost all the financial arrangements. The American Literature Association is also extremely grateful for the superb work provided by our Executive Assistant, Natalie Fitts, who has ensured a smooth registration process and handled countless logistical details with good humor and great efficiency.

Land Acknowledgment:

The Drury Plaza Hotel, in which we have gathered to share our scholarly explorations of American literary history and culture, sits on unceded ancestral Tewa Land, specifically O'gha Po'oge, now present-day Santa Fe. The descendants of O'gha Po'oge, the modern-day Tewa people, still exist and live in Santa Fe and the local Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara and Tesuque. We pay our respect to the Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, those who came before and those who remain present today.

Room Locations and Audio-Visual Details:

Rivera A and B are located on the first floor near the hotel lobby. The Palace A and B rooms are located on the second floor. All sessions in Rivera A and B have audio-visual equipment – a digital projector and screen. Participants need to bring their laptops and any special connecting cables needed to hook up to the digital projector.

Thursday, November 5, 2026

5:00-7:30 pm (Palace A)

Conference Registration, Welcoming Reception, and Opening Panel

Our Opening Panel starts at 6:15 pm and features two contemporary novelists:

Ramona Emerson,

author of *Shutter* (2022) and *Exposure* (2024)

Jamie Figueroa,

author of *Brother, Sister, Mother, Explorer* (2026)

Friday, November 6, 2026

Registration: 8:00 am to 11:30 am (Hotel Lobby)

8:30-9:45 am

1-A Hawthorne's Novels (Rivera A)

Chair: Maria Karafilis, California State University, Los Angeles

1. "Reading *The Scarlet Letter* Now," Lesley Ginsberg, Univ. of Colorado, Colorado Springs

2. "Bringing it Home: Consuming Images in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables,*" Christopher J. Lukasik, Purdue Univ.

3. "*The Marble Faun* as Victorian Gothic," Jonathan A. Cook, Independent Scholar

1-B Reading the American Crime Novel (Rivera B)

Chair: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

1. "Photography in Ramona Emerson's Diné Detective Novels," Hertha D. Sweet Wong, University of California, Berkeley

2. "Leave Her in a Lonely Place": Pathology and Agency in Noir Novels by Dorothy B. Hughes (*In a Lonely Place),* Vera Caspary (*Laura*), and Ben Ames Williams *(Leave Her to Heaven*), Donna M. Campbell, Washington State University

3. "Transforming the Hardboiled: Patricia Highsmith and the Evolution of American Crime Fiction," Nicholas Stockman, University of Nevada, Reno

1-C The Long Gestation of *Tender Is the Night* (Palace B)

Organized by the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society

Chair: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

1. "The Man who Killed His Mother and the Biographers who Buried Her: Mollie McQuillan Fitzgerald in Tender Is the Night," Mary Jane LaVigne, Independent Scholar

2. "'From Darkness to Hope': Re-reading Tender Is the Night through the Cluster Stories," Julia Gresti, University of California-Santa Barbara

10:00-11:15 am

2-A Melville, Hawthorne, and Poe (Rivera A)

Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. "Moby-Dick and Abolitionism," John Stauffer, Harvard University

2. "*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*: An Inside (and Outside) Story," John Gruesser, Kean University and Sam Houston State University

3. "Time, Protraction, and Hawthorne's Resistance to Serialization," Maria Karafilis, California State University, Los Angeles

2-B Biography in the Works of Cormac McCarthy (Rivera B)

Organized by the Cormac McCarthy Society

Chair: Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

1. "Biographical Elements in McCarthy's Tennessee Novels," Scott Yarbrough, Charleston Southern University

2. "McCarthy and Biography from Up Close," Dennis McCarthy, Independent Scholar

3. "Biography and Chronology in McCarthy's Western Novels," Brad Bannon, University of Tennessee

2-C Gender and the American Novel (Palace B)

Chair: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

1. "Exploding Form in the American Novel: Women of Color Take Flight," Thadious Davis, University of Pennsylvania

2. "Representations of Women in the American Novel," Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University

3. "Recalculating Home: Anita Loos and the Costs of Domesticity," Deborah Clarke, Arizona State University

11:30 am-12:45 pm

3-A Race and Religion in the Shaping of an American Literary Tradition (Rivera A)

Organizer and Chair: Caroline Levander, Rice University

1. "What Even Is A Novel?: The Book of Mormon and the Perils of Being Certain," Elizabeth Fenton, The University of Vermont

2. "Frederick Douglass, Great American Novelist?," Abby Goode, Plymouth State University

3. "What's Novel about the American Convent Narrative?," AnaMaria Seglie Clawson, St Norbert College

3-B Reading the American Novel Now (Rivera B)

Chair: Patrick Bonds, Troy University

1. "Look Back/Don't Look Back: Reinstating and Resisting the Classic American Novel in the 2020s," Andrew Levy, Butler University

2. "American Traumatic Impressionism: Form, Embodiment, and Porosity in Modern and Contemporary American Fiction," Juliette Grondin, Université Paris 8

3. "'A Necropolis of Prose': Generative A.I. and Identity Critique," Jennie Lightweis-Goff, Louisiana State University

3-C Diverse Traditions (Palace B)

Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. "Transforming Traditions in the Nuevomexicano Novel: Anaya, Castillo, Baca, and Quade," Genaro Padilla, University of California, Berkeley

2. "The Latino Immigration Novel in the Era of ICE," Juan Alonzo, Texas A&M University

3. "Coming of Age in California: Adolescence in Janet Fitch's *White Oleander* and Dagoberto Gilb's *The Flowers*," Chris "CW" Johnson, *University of Minnesota Duluth*

Buffet Lunch 12:45- 2:15 pm Palace A

2:15 – 3:30 pm

4-A Closets, Regions, Archives, Communities, Publics: New Spaces for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (Rivera A)

Organized by SSAWW and the Texas Regional SSAWW Study Group

Chair: Shirley Samuels, Cornell University

1. "Sorry, Jo March, This is a (National) Family Romance: Race, Reconciliation, and the Generic Im/possibility of Transness in Little Women," Jess A. Goldberg, New Mexico Highlands University

2. "Fannie E. Ratchford, the Novels of the Texas Book Club, and the Texas Centennial," Theresa Strouth Gaul, Texas Christian University

3. "Regional Novels, Relational Data: Recovering Women's Regionalism through Her Hollywood Story," Alexandra Edwards, Texas Christian University

4. "Acts of Recovery: Regional Archives, Scholarly Community, and the Public Humanities," Randi Tanglen, University of North Dakota

4-B The Novel in/and Early America (Rivera B)

Organized by the Society of Early Americanists

Chair: Thomas Koenigs, Scripps College

1. "James Fenimore Cooper's literary half breed, *The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish*," Betty Booth Donohue (Cherokee Nation), Independent Scholar

2. "Fictions in Print: Reprinting and the Popular Dissemination of the Novel in the 19th Century U.S.," Emily Gowen, University of Notre Dame

3. "Teaching Uriah Derick D'Arcy's *The Black Vampyre; A Legend of St. Domingo* as part of the Early American Literature Survey," Andrew Pisano, University of South Carolina Union

4. "Anecdotes of Sex and Class Manipulation for White Rescue in Leonora Sansay's *Secret History: or, the Horrors of St. Domingo*," William-Claire Younts, University of Tennessee

4-C Perspectives on Flannery O'Connor's Narrative Strategies (Palace B)

Organized by the Flannery O'Connor Society

Chair: Deborah Clarke, Arizona State University

1. "I Was Trying to Say": Verbalization, Appropriation, and Animalization in Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury" and O'Connor's "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," Calvin Coon, University of Arizona

2. "Why Do the Heathen Rage: A Character Study in Mid-Century Intellectual Identity," Monica Carol Miller, Middle Georgia State University

3. "The Black Vernacular Tradition in Flannery O'Connor's Early Fiction," Katie Simon, Georgia College & State University

3:45- 5:00 pm

5-A "Reading the Great Unread: *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"* (Rivera A)

Moderator: Jennifer Wicke

1. "Faulkner and Critique: Reading Absalom, Absalom!" Hortense Spillers, Vanderbilt University

2. "Reading the Plot: Huckleberry Finn, Race, and History," Candace Waid, University of California, Santa Barbara

5-B Novel Monsters (Rivera B)

Chair: Caroline Levander, Rice University

1. "A Monster in His House: Tom Franklin's *Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter* and the Modernization of the Southern Gothic," Katelyn S. Schuler, Troy University

2. "Weird, Queer Horror in Ellen Douglas's *A Lifetime Burning*: A Muskrat, a Dwarf, an Ape, and a Bride Walk into a Novel," Deborah Wilson, Arkansas Tech University

3. "Murder or Female Hysteria: Interrogating the Unreliable Female Narrator in Mystery and Thriller Genre Fiction," Anna Orlofsky, Troy University

5-C Contemporary Relationships (Palace B)

Chair: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

1. "Raymond Carver and William Kittredge: Will You Please Write a Novel, Please?" Diane Smith, Independent Scholar

2. "Disavowing the Marriage Plot in Sarah Manguso's *Liars*," Jessica Maucione, Gonzaga University

3, "Alison Lurie: Faculty Wife," Amy Mittelman, author of *Dames, Dishes, and Degrees: Faculty Wives in America*.

5:00-7:30 Welcoming Reception and Keynote Address

Palace A

Keynote address starts at 6:15 pm

"A Theory of American Women and the Novel"

Shirley Samuels, Cornell University

Thomas and Dorothy Litwin Professor of American Studies

and author of: *Haunted by the Civil War: Cultural Testimony in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (2025); *Reading the American Novel 1780-1865* (2012); *Facing America: Iconography and the Civil War* (2004); and *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation* (1996)

Saturday, November 7, 2026

Registration: 8:00 – 10:30 am (Hotel Lobby)

8:30-9:45 am

6-A Antebellum Novels (Rivera A)

Chair: Gretchen Murphy, University of Texas at Austin

1. "Changing Perspectives on Mixed-Race Figures in Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* and Wilkie Collins's *Armadale,"* Victoria Baugh, Arizona State University
2. "'The Great Heart-Viewer': Psychonarration and its Discontents in the Antebellum American Novel," Thomas Koenigs, Scripps College
3. "Redwood at 200: The "First American Novel" Revised and Revisited," Lucinda Damon-Bach, Salem State University

6-B "Breathing Spirits/Unwelcome Ghosts: Narrating 'Survivance' in Native Fiction" (Rivera B)

Chair: Hertha D. Sweet Wong, University of California, Berkeley

1. "Retributions/Restitutions: History and Hauntings in Stephen Graham Jones's The Only Good Indians (2020) and Off the Reservation (2026)," Kendall Lovely, University of New Mexico
2. "Breathing into the Novel: A Tribalographic Staging of Witchery from Silko's *Ceremon*y," A. J. Claveria, California State University, Northridge
3. "Unravelling Rivers: Centering the Earth through Sacrifice and Survivance in Hogan's *Solar Storms,"* Xander Bien, Independent Scholar

6-C Novel Forms (Palace B)

Chair: Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

1. "Anchoring the Young Adult Novel in our Literary Past: Postwar Classics as Touchstone Texts," Jacqueline Foertsch, University of North Texas
2. "The Role of Gender in American Novels of Orphans," Susan Dunston, New Mexico Tech
3. "Approaches to Troubling Content in Young Adult Novels," Derek F. DiMatteo, Gannon University

10:00-11:15 am

7-A American Issues (Rivera A)

Chair: Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University

1. "The Ignoble Success of Romance in Charles Chesnutt's *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900)", Amanda Louise Johnson, Pitzer College

2. “Ernest Howard Crosby’s *Captain Jinks, Hero*: A Novel against Imperialism and for a Multipolar Future,” Daniel S. Malachuk, Western Illinois University

3. “Of ICE and Men: Displacement, Exclusion, and the Search for Home in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*,” Audra Shumpert-Ebar, Troy University

7-B The Stowe Revival (Rivera B)

Organized by the Harriet Beecher Stowe Society

Chair: Shirley Samuels, Cornell University

1. "Stowe's Christian Romance," Tess Chakkalakal, Bowdoin College,

2. "Stowe's Feminist Theology," Claudia Stokes, Trinity University,

3. "Form and Genre in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*," Edward Whitley, Lehigh University,

7-C The Politics of Genre in the Contemporary Asian American Novel: A Roundtable (Palace B)

Moderator: Jennifer Ho, University of Colorado Boulder

Patricia P. Chu, George Washington University

Julia H. Lee, University of California, Irvine

David Roh, University of Utah

11:30 am - 12:50 pm

8-A "Is it Still Good to You?": The Continuing Importance of African American Novels in the Present Moment: A Round Table (Rivera A)

Moderator: Herman Beavers, University of Pennsylvania,

Keith Byerman, Indiana State University

Brandon Manning, Texas Christian University

DeAnna Daniels, University of Arizona

Michael Collins, Texas A&M University

8-B American Gothic: Generic Developments (Rivera B)

Organized by the Society for the Study of the American Gothic

Chair: John Gruesser, Kean University and Sam Houston State University

1. "A Few Hints, By Way of Advice, Upon Authors and Eras of Literature"; or, Why Samual Knapp Thought the Kids Should Read Gothic Novels in the Days of the Early Republic," Joshua B. Tuttle, Whitworth University

2. "The American Man and The Sea: American Literature's Gothic Love Affair with the Ocean," Maria O'Connell, Wayland Baptist University

3. "'Frequent, Gory, and Grotesque': Gothic Horror and the Explained Supernatural in the Novels of John Dickson Carr," Matthew Mosher, Montclair State University

8-C Contemporary Forms (Palace B)

Chair: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

1. "Allegories of Experiential Form: Prospects for the Relevancy of the Experimental American Novel in the Post-Literate Age," Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

2. The Metaphysical Detective in Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*," Scarlett Higgins, The University of New Mexico

3. "Fascism and Curative Violence in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness," Gretchen Murphy, University of Texas at Austin

12:50- 2:15 pm

Lunch Break and Special Pedagogy Session

9-ABC Special Lunch Pedagogy panel (Palace A)

One Book: How and Why We Continue to Teach a Favorite American Novel."

Chair: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

1. "*Into the Forest*, or, Seeking Survival in the Community College Classroom," Mary Rosenberry, Cosumnes River College

2. "To Make Thought Permanent: Teaching *The Great Gatsby*," Nicole J. Camastra, The Nueva School

3. "Only True in Winter: Teaching Accuracy as Craft in Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing,"* Patrick Bonds, Troy University

A Box Lunch will be Provided for those attending this panel.

2:30 – 3:45

10-A Consuming Serialized Fiction in the U.S. (Rivera A)

Organizer and Chair: Amanda Louise Johnson, Pitzer College

1. "What America Read: Serialized Newspaper Fiction and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Marketplace," David Bishop, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign –

2. "'Referee—The Public': Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Max Pemberton, and the New York Herald's Anglo-American Fiction Competition," Brent L. Kendrick, independent scholar

3. Effie Lee Newsome's The Wholesome Store, Edna Dredden Gullins's Those Other People, and the Role of Serialized Fiction in the Harlem Renaissance," Cynthia Patterson, University of Southern Florida

10-B Exploring the African American Novel I (Rivera B)

Chair: Herman Beavers, University of Pennsylvania

2. "The Politics of Assassination in Ralph Ellison's *Juneteenth*," Michael Collins, Texas A&M University

2. "Writing Worlds: Morrison, Butler, and the Cosmology of the American Novel," Amber Lowe, Georgia State University

3. "Beyond Blood: Absent Mothers, Chosen Sisters, and the Making of Community in Tayari Jones' *Kin,"* Angela Mullis, Rutgers University

10-C The Poet in the Novel (Palace B)

Chair: M. R. Hofer, University of New Mexico

1. "The Desert of Poetry: Borders and Disappearances in Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives,"* Dale Enggass, University of Utah

2. "Saprophytic Poetry: Samuel R. Delany's Productive City," Carly Heidenfeld, University of New Mexico

3. "Negative Angels in Ben Lerner's *Transcription*," Serena Solin, CUNY Graduate Center.

4. "Fabric Patches & Material Mends in Lisa Robertson's *The Baudelaire Fractal,*" Kristen Tapson, Independent Scholar

4:00- 5:15

11-A Poets' Novels (Rivera A)

Chair: M. R. Hofer, University of New Mexico

1. "The Limits of Genre in Tan Lin's *Seven Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary 2004*. *The Joy of Cooking,"* Orlando Edmonds, Independent Scholar
2. "The Poetics of Renee Gladman's *Event Factory*," Andrea Quaid, CalArts
3. "Emptied Forms: Ed Dorn and the Ethics of Drift" Jonathan Ullyot, Seneca College and University of Toronto
4. "The Way Ahead: Nathaniel Mackey and Utopia in the Jazz Novel," Carl Warmuth, University of New Mexico

11-B Re-visioning the American Gothic (Rivera B)

Organized by the Society for the Study of the American Gothic

Chair: DeAnna Daniels, University of Arizona

1. "Feminine Narration and its Constraints on Reliable Narration in Charles Brockden Brown's Wieland," Colby Townsend, Indiana University
2. "Slavery's Ghosts: Re-visioning the Past in Novels for Young People," Maude Hines, Portland State University
3. "Ghosts in All Their Forms: The Hauntings of *All The Sinners Bleed*," Hunter Mueller, Blinn College

11-C Exploring the African American Novel II (Palace B)

Chair: Michael Collins, Texas A&M University

1. "Nella Larsen and the Naturalist Undercurrents of the Harlem Renaissance," Cameron Loftis, Johns Hopkins University,

2. "Role Play in the American Novel: Performing Sexuality in James Baldwin's *Another Country*," Eric Solomon, The University of Mississippi

3. "Against Redemption: Toni Morrison, Anti-Romance, and the Processual American Novel," Christy Call, Weber State University

Closing Reception: 5:15-6:30 pm (Palace A)

"Music and the American Literary Imagination"

January 28 – January 30, 2027

Hyatt Centric Downtown Nashville 210 Molloy Street
Nashville, TN 37201

Conference Director:
Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University
Keynote Speaker:
Kirk Curnutt, Troy University
Open Plenary:
Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood: Nina Simone, Langston Hughes, and the Birth of Black Power: A Conversation with Jason Miller, North Carolina State University, and Anthony Reed, Vanderbilt University
Conference Fee: $250

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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

Featured Reader: Andre Dubus, III

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

Deadline for Proposals: January 30, 2027

Please send proposals to the conference director at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu