

60th Conference of the Western Literature Association



Banner art courtesy of Steph Littlebird

The Western Literature Association is being held on Kalapuya ilihi, the traditional Indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the [Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde](#) and the [Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#), and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the UO, to the lands now known as Oregon, and to the world.

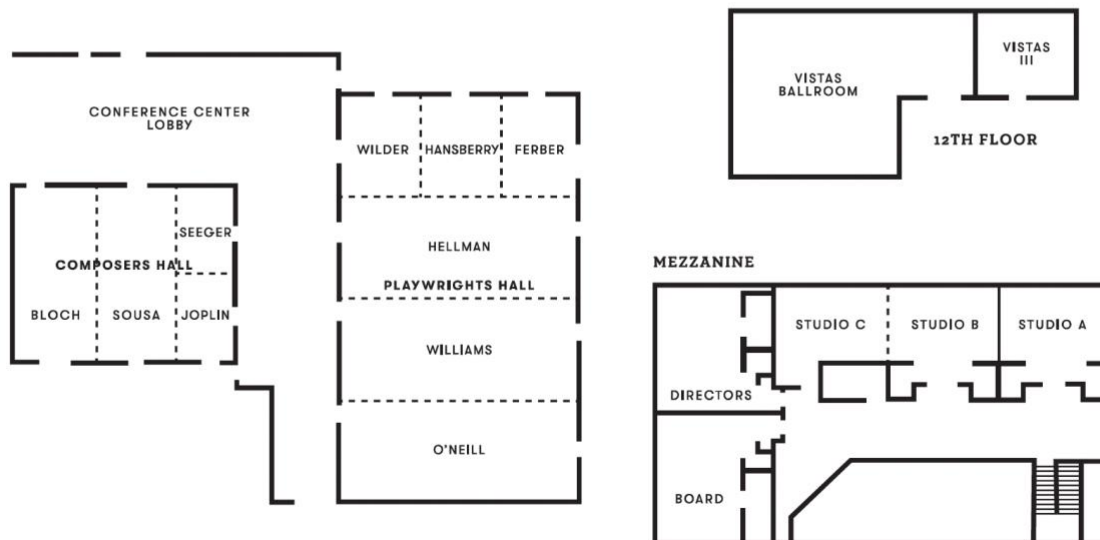
In following the Indigenous protocol of acknowledging the original people of the land we occupy, we also extend our respect to the nine federally recognized Indigenous nations of Oregon: the [Burns Paiute Tribe](#), the [Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians](#), the [Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde](#), the [Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#), the [Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#), the [Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs](#), the [Coquille Indian Tribe](#), the [Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians](#), and the [Klamath Tribes](#).

We extend our respect to [the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this territory](#), as well to all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.



EVENT SPACE

floor plans



President's Welcome Message

Laxayam, Qa'pai, Áay Xtway, Maik'w, Dai'sla, Waqlis'i, Chee-la, Osiyo nigada. These are just a few of the dozens of greetings from the Indigenous lands and languages of what is now known as Oregon, with my own Cherokee language thrown in at the end for good measure.

I'm super excited to welcome you to the 60th Anniversary WLA conference right here in *Kalapuya ilihi*, the traditional homelands of the Chifin and Chelamela Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their homelands by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya people are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to their Nations, to the City of Eugene, to Oregon, and to the World. Oregon is also home to seven other federally recognized Indigenous nations and dozens of others who maintain historic and ongoing relationships to the lands, languages, waters, foods, medicines, and other/more-than-human relations that have given shape and life here since time immemorial. Which is to say that Oregon *is* Indigenous land and that we are gathered this week in what *was*, *is*, and *always will be* Kalapuya ilihi.



Indeed, nestled along the banks of the *wilamut* (where the water runs swiftly) and between *yapoah* (the high place) and *champ-a te* (place of the rattlesnake), this area has long been a gathering space for Kalapuya and other Indigenous peoples and a home to a diverse ecology of oak savannahs, camas fields, wapato habitats, salmon fisheries, managed forests, and other/more-than-human relations. From the opening of the Oregon Trail in the 1830s to our present moment, the valley and its relations have experienced dramatic social, cultural, political, economic, and ecological change. Though much of this history is riddled with conflict, violence, dispossession, and exploitation, these lands and waters also have been centers of Indigenous survivance and resurgence, environmental activism and stewardship, union and worker organizing, countercultural politics and art, black and brown power, LGBTQ activism, and anti-racist, anti-fascist, and anti-authoritarian resistance.

The theme of this year's conference, "This IS Kalapuyan Land: Relationality and Reciprocity in Kalapuya Ilihi," calls us into these overlapping histories and relationships, and the program reflects these dynamics in a variety of ways. First, it intentionally centers Indigenous writers, artists, and knowledge makers/keepers. I'm particularly honored to recognize with the Distinguished Achievement Award two giants of Indigenous literary, cultural, and intellectual production in Oregon: celebrated author, poet, educator, curator, and former Oregon poet laureate Elizabeth Woody (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), and curriculum advocate, educator, language warrior, knowledge keeper, and storyteller Esther Stutzman (Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Yoncalla Kalapuya). The program also features three Indigenous artists: author, poet, scholar, educator, and "Bad Indian," Deborah Miranda (Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation); comics artist, musician, performer, and "Super Indian," Arigon Starr (Kickapoo Nation of Oklahoma); and artist, author, activist, curator, and "Fierce Auntie," Steph Littlebird (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Kalapuya descendant). We also have the privilege of viewing a concert reading of *Bluejay's Canoe* by Theresa May and Marta Lu Clifford (Grand Ronde), a resonant play about cross cultural family, community, and healing amid climate and health crises, political turmoil, and personal and collective loss. Taking a page out of the

Fort Hall, Tucson, and Oklahoma City conferences, we're also hosting over a dozen artists and artisans from the Native American Arts and Crafts Makers group here in Eugene, as well as local hip-hop artist, activist, creator, and DJ, Kunu Bearchum, who will be spinning tunes at the awards banquet and may offer a few original tracks of his own!

I'm also excited that this year's conference includes a record number of Indigenous studies panels, a host of Latinx/Chicanx sessions, a large slate of ecocritical and environmental studies panels, and a slew of interdisciplinary panels on everything from relational methods and practices, critical storytelling, and critical regional studies; to sessions at the intersections of gender, sexuality, and climate, contested and queer(ring) west(s), and public lands and land management; to highways and running in the west, land, labor and extraction, and abolition and incarceration studies. We're also hosting urgent critical discussions on pretendianism in academia and the arts, political attacks on academic freedom and freedom of speech, intellectual and disciplinary genealogies and futurities, and the possibilities and challenges of public humanities to address some of the central challenges of our time.

Additionally, we have multiple opportunities throughout the gathering to celebrate in-process, recently published, and about-to-be-published work, including public readings and book signings by featured artists, roundtable and lightning round discussions of academic monographs and collections, sessions on creative/creative non-fiction writing, and a workshop on tarot and wellness. Continuing one of my favorite things about this organization, we also have strong student representation across the program, including multiple graduate student presentations and panels, two undergraduate student panels, and graduate workshops and sessions on dissertating, publishing, and pedagogy. I hope you're as excited as I am to listen, learn, and get re-energized by the incredible work taking place across the organization.

Speaking of which, I'd like to conclude by noting WLA's organizational ties to *this* place and to the University of Oregon. In 1988, longtime UO English faculty member, Glen Love, hosted the gathering just downriver at the Valley River Inn where conversations began about what a sustained, ecologically-based literary criticism might look like. A year later, Glen delivered his landmark 1989 WLA presidential address, "Revaluing Nature," which advocated for an interdisciplinary, "ecocritical" approach to literary and cultural studies, laying part of the groundwork for the emergence of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment a few years later. Though I never had the opportunity to get to know Glen before he walked on in 2022, I've come to appreciate how important he was to the UO English department, to the development of ecocriticism and ASLE, and to the scores of graduate students, junior faculty, and colleagues he mentored and influenced. As the 2026 WLA president hosting the return of the organization to Kalapuya ilihi, I'd like to think Glen would appreciate where the organization has gone and the urgent, politically committed work it's taken on.

As we consider our current moment of intensifying political conflict, resurgent nativism and racial and gender violence, retrenchment of anti-environmental policies, skyrocketing inflation and inequality, and attacks on public health, public lands, education, the arts, and free speech, Kalapuya ilihi offers a rich site to think collectively about the many pasts, presents, and, most crucially, future(s) that bring us together as guests and potential relatives in *this* place at *this* time. And let us all remember, as Steph Littlebird reminds us, that This **IS** Kalapuyan Land!

Skoden! Sdoodisden!

Kirby Brown, PhD
WLA President, 2026
University of Oregon

Gvyalielitse—Deep Gratitude

The WLA and I would also like to thank the following sponsors for substantial financial support for this year's conference: University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences, Department of English, Native American and Indigenous Studies Program.

We also want to thank ASU 3 staff at UO for the mountain of labor they do behind the scenes to make events like this possible. Christina Ochs, David Schmuck, David Yorgesen, Melissa Bowers, and Maeve Cier: we literally couldn't have done this without you.

We've also had the privilege of working with incredible partners at the Graduate Hilton, including Nina Vallin, Melody Kiser, and Anton Cole. It's been a real pleasure working with you and we hope it won't be another 40 years until we're back in Kalapuya ilihī again.

To our community partners and relatives, Marta Lu Clifford and Kevin Simmons: enormous gratitude for helping us to open the gathering in a good way and for reminding us of what it means to be in community with each other and with the lands, waters, air, and more-than-human relations across which we move. Hands up to both of you; I'm honored to call you relatives.

We'd also like to extend thanks for our colleagues and friends who agreed to chair or moderate plenary panels and special events, or who worked some magic behind the scenes when I needed it: To Lisa Tatonetti, Susan Bernardin, Brian Twenter, José Aranda, Krista Comer, April Anson, and Sarah Wald—deep gratitude and promises to return the favor.

It's not an understatement to say this conference wouldn't have gotten off the ground and I wouldn't have maintained anything close to my own sanity without the steady hand and good-natured guidance of Amanda Zink. This is very much your conference too, friend. I appreciate you!

And to the lands, waters, peoples, relatives, and ancestors of Kalapuya ilihī: Gvyalielitse--deep gratitude for your kindness, care, hospitality, and beauty from the core of who and what I am.

~KB



The 9 Tribes of Oregon



Vendors and Exhibitions (Conference Center Lobby)

Native American Arts and Crafts Makers Vendors:

[Arusha Dittmer](#): Ho-Chunk Nation

[Leo Whitehorse](#): Sicangu Lakota, Rosebud Sioux Reservation

Stephanie Wright: Klamath Tribes

Shegocaga: Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma

[Aleta Miller](#): Cherokee and Choctaw

[Marcy Middleton](#): Diné, Navajo Nation

[Bill and Florence Beck](#): Navajo-Diné / Newe-Shoshone

[Adrianne Shabi](#): Navajo Nation

Amanda Whitelighting: Comanche

Josh Whitelighting: Standing Rock Dakota

Book and Journal Presses

University of Nebraska

University of New Mexico

Oregon State University

Western American Literature

Local Bookstores

[Hodgepodge Books & Taproom](#)

Exploring Eugene

[Travel Lane County](#)

[WLA Conference Custom Tours](#)

Symbolic Spaces

- Alton Baker: A Whilamut River Walk & Urban Forest Bath (Sat. 8/29, 1:30-4pm)
- Fall Creek: Farm to Forest Tour (Sun. 8/30, 1:30-7:00pm)

Best Oregon Tours

- Willamette Valley Wine Tasting Excursion (Sat. 8/29, 1:30-5:30pm)
- Central Oregon Coast Excursion (Sun. 8/30, 8:00am-5:00pm)

Helfrich McKenzie Rafting

- McKenzie River Whitewater Rafting (Sun. 8/30, 8:30am-2:30pm)



60th Conference of the Western Literature Association

This IS Kalapuyan Land: **Relationality and Reciprocity in Kalapuya Ilihi**

HIGHLIGHTS

Land Acknowledgment	1
Hotel Map.....	2
President’s Welcome Message.....	3-5
The 9 Tribes of Oregon.....	6
7:30am Registration (Conference Center Lobby, Daily)	
9:00am Vendors & Exhibitions (Conference Center Lobby, Daily).....	7

Wednesday Overview

1:00pm—Executive Council Meeting (Vistas Ballroom)	
4:00-6:00pm—Registration (Conference Center Lobby)	
6:30pm—Welcome Reception with Hors D’oeuvres, Cash Bar, and Reading with Deborah Miranda (Vistas Ballroom).....	10

Thursday Overview

9:15am—Coffee & Snack Break (Conference Center Lobby)	
9:30am—Graduate Professional Development 1: Publishing Advice: Dissertation to Book (Composers Hall: Bloch).....	12
11:00am—PLENARY 1: Fierce Aunties and Super Indians with Steph Littlebird and Arigon Starr (Playwrights Hall: O’Neill/Williams).....	13
12:15pm—*Graduate Student Luncheon (Trophy Room)	
3:00pm—Soda & Snack Break (Conference Center Lobby)	
7:30pm—PLENARY 2: Concert Reading of “Bluejay’s Canoe” with Theresa May and Marta Lu Clifford (Playwrights Hall: O’Neill/Williams).....	18

Friday Overview

7:00am—*Past-President’s Breakfast (Trophy Room)	
9:15am—Coffee & Snack Break (Conference Center Lobby)	
11:00am—PLENARY 3: Distinguished Achievement Award Recipients, Esther Stutzman and Elizabeth Woody (Playwrights Hall: O’Neill/Williams).....	23
1:30pm—Graduate Student Professional Development 2: Journals and Articles (Composers Hall: Bloch).....	25
3:00pm—Soda & Snack Break (Conference Center Lobby)	
6:30pm—Cocktail Hour (Cash Bar, Conference Center Lobby)	
7:00pm-11:00pm—*Awards Banquet (Playwrights Hall: O’Neill/Williams) Cash Bar, Buffet Dinner, Awards, Dance with DJ Kunu Bearchum.....	28

Saturday Overview

8:00am-1:00pm—Last Chance at Vendors Tables (Conference Center Lobby)	
9:15am—Coffee & Snack Break (Conference Center Lobby)	
11:30am-1:00pm—WLA Business Meeting (for all members) (Playwrights Hall: Williams)	

*Saturday and Sunday Excursions

(Conference Center Lobby).....	31
WLA 2026 Award Winners.....	32
WLA Executive Council.....	33
WLA Conference Sites & Presidents 1966-2025.....	34
CFP: WLA Conference 2026.....	36



*Requires ticket purchase. Visit registration table for information. Visit Explore Eugene tables if you’d like to book a Saturday or Sunday excursion.

Wednesday

August 26, 2026

1:00pm—Executive Council Meeting (Vistas Ballroom)

4:00-6:00pm—Registration (Conference Center Lobby)

6:30pm-9:30pm—Welcome Reception with Hors D’oeuvres and Cash Bar and Reading with Deborah Miranda (Vistas Ballroom)

6:30-9:30pm Welcome Reception and Reading with Deborah Miranda (Vistas Ballroom)

Moderators: Lisa Tatonetti, Kansas State University
Kirby Brown, University of Oregon



Deborah A. Miranda was born at UCLA Hospital, the mixed-blood daughter of an Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation man with Santa Ynez Chumash tribal ancestry, and an English/French and Jewish woman from Beverly Hills. In addition to *Bad Indians*, she is also the author of four poetry collections and coeditor of *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*. She earned her Ph.D in English Literature from the University of Washington in Seattle and taught for three years at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma before relocating to Lexington, Virginia. There, she was the Thomas H. Broadus Jr. Endowed Professor of English at Washington and Lee University, teaching literature of the margins and creative writing. She retired from that

position in 2021 to focus on writing and creating community. In the Fall of 2022, Deborah and her spouse, writer Margo Solod, relocated to River Song Cohousing in Eugene, Oregon on the banks of the Willamette River—just a day’s ride south on the Coast Starlight to homelands in California.

Who We Are

The Center for the Study of the American West aims to promote the study of the American West both as a region culturally unique and as a product of broad historical forces. CSAW's primary goal is to cultivate a critical sense of region and place in a globalized era.

What We Do

Founded in 2016, CSAW promotes interdisciplinary regional scholarship through research, education, and outreach. The Center hosts numerous lectures and symposia through the year featuring foremost Western American scholars and artists. Every semester, CSAW operates funded internships providing students place-literacy, research training, and other professional skills.

Get Involved

Book Awards

These awards recognize books that demonstrate excellent scholarly insight or creative vision into the American West. Books published in 2026 are eligible for consideration for the 2027 award cycle.

Research Grants

CSAW offers research grants of up to \$2,000 to assist scholars conducting research at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives or other regional repositories.

Lecture Events

Every semester, CSAW hosts lectures such as the Nall lecture, featuring a scholar or artist of the American West, the Forgotten Frontera lecture, which focuses on Mexican-American scholarship, and other presentations, lectures, and symposia.

Forgotten Frontera

The Forgotten Frontera project aims to document the history of Mexican-American and Tejano history in the Southern Great Plains region, and promotes the recovery and dissemination of an endangered cultural heritage.



For more information, contact csaw.wtamu@gmail.com or visit wtamu.edu/csaw

Thursday

August 27, 2026

7:30am

-

5:00pm

8:00am

-

9:15am

Registration

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

TH 1A: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **Diana Noreen Rivera**, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Corrido Tourism?: Place and Travel in Aurora Lucero White's New Mexico FWP Folk Ballads

Diana Noreen Rivera
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

How the West and the Rest Conceived of "Literature" in the 1930s

Wendy Griswold
Northwestern University

TH 1B: POTENTIAL RELATIVES: CONSTITUTING FRIENDS AND FAMILIES IN AND BEYOND WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Erin Murrah-Mandril**, UT Arlington

"Smiling into the faces of white women": Langston Hughes and the Social Poetics of Friendship in Carmel, 1934

Geneva M Gano
Texas State University

Imagined Families: Envisioning Networks of Relation in Tucson's Barrios

Audrey Goodman
Georgia State University

Modern Lovers, Future Families: Miscegenation and Maternity in Carmel, 1932

Emily Lutenski
Appalachian State University

TH 1C: PACIFIC NORTHWEST LITERATURE AND POETICS

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Patrick Vincent**, University of California, Riverside

Howl at Seventy: Memories of Anti-Fascist Resistance

Gioia Elisa Woods
Northern Arizona University

Pacific Northwest as Literary Region?

Lars Erik Larson
University of Portland

Remembering and Rewriting the Leaves from 1855: Reflections on Beth Piatote's Poem "1855"

Pauline Boisgerault
Rennes 2 University

TH 1D: UNSETTLED HOMEMAKING IN THE WEST

Location: **Composers Hall: Sousa**
Chair: **Jordan Kay Savage**, University of Essex

Alienated Domesticity: The Unhomeliness of Disjointed and Displaced Bangladeshi American Women

Fairooz Saiyara
University of New Mexico

"We Will Walk Together": Belief and Belonging in *A Place for Us*

Makayla C. Steiner
Brigham Young University

Precarious Reproduction and Colonial Survival in Louis Erdrich's *Tracks*

Ifeyinwa Ndukuba
Idaho State University

9:00am

-

5:00pm

Exhibitions & Vendors

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

9:15am

-

10:15am

9:30am

-

10:45am

COFFEE/SNACK BREAK

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

TH 2A: CRITICAL STORYTELLING

Location: **Playwrights**

Hall: **O'Neill**

Chair: **Lourdes Alberto**,
Cal State Los Angeles

CRITICAL Storytelling

José Aranda¹,
Lourdes Alberto²,
Elena Valdez³

1: Rice University;
2: Cal State LA;
3: Highlands
University

Zapotec Indigenous Storytelling in Diaspora and Across Borders

Lourdes Alberto
Cal State Los Angeles

Keeping Words Like Seeds: Language and Land-Based Culture in New Mexico

**Elena Vicentita
Valdez**
New Mexico
Highlands University

The Wind That Echoes Through Us

José Aranda
Rice University

TH 2B: PLACE AND PEDAGOGY IN OREGON

Location: **Playwrights**

Hall: **Williams**

Chair: **Surabhi
Balachander**, Oregon
State University

Pathways West: A Place-Based Approach to 19th Century American Literature

Monique McDade
Oregon State
University

Teaching Emplaced and Student-Imagined Solarpunk Futures

Kathleen Gekiere
University of Oregon

Guide to Oregon Literature

**Surabhi
Balachander, Josh
Stickrod**
Oregon State
University

TH 2C: PURLOINED LETTERS: (DE)POSITIONING PRETENDIANS IN AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURE

Location: **Playwrights**

Hall: **Hellman**

Chair: **Gordon D Henry**,
Northeastern University

Literary Imposterism and Settler Moves to Innocence in American Indian Literatures/Letters

Gordon D Henry
Northeastern
University

Hollywood Screenwriting, Self-Indigenizing Biopics, and Literary/Cinematic Futures w/o Pretendians

Cedar Sherbert
Independent Scholar

Pretendians, Literary Anthologies, and "Tropes" of Self- Indigenization

**Trevino Brings
Plenty**
Portland State
University

Cherokee Claims, Public Statements and (De)Positioning Pretendians: Genealogy and the Case of Thomas King

Jacqueline Keeler
Independent Journalist

TH 2D: TRUTH, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM IN CHICANX/LATINX LITERATURE AND RHETORIC

Location: **Composers**

Hall: **Sousa**

Chair: **Geneva M Gano**,
Texas State University

Testimonio After Truth: A Latinx Turn to Testimonial Form

José Manuel Cortez
University of Oregon

Theorizing Brown Ecologies in the Queer Chicana Testimonio

Moe Gámez
University of Oregon

Origins of Extractivism in Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's Borderscapes

Isaac Salazar
Rice University

TH 2E: GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1: Publishing Advice: Dissertation to Book

Location: **Composers**

Hall: **Bloch**

Chair: **Rob King**, Texas
Tech University
Chair: **Kirby Brown**,
University of Oregon
Chair: **Steven Sexton**,
University of Nevada, Las
Vegas
Chair: **Laura M. Furlan**,
University of
Massachusetts Amherst

Attendees of this roundtable will hear professionals in the field discuss their experiences with the process of reconceiving and editing dissertations for publication as monographs. The panel will parse publishers' expectations for monograph proposals, which can include structural revisions such as incorporations of literature reviews into notes and methodologies into introductions, among others. Attendees will gain insights into revision timelines, resources, and recommended strategies. This roundtable is an opportunity to field your own questions about the revisions and publication process with professionals who publish on subjects related to your field.

11:00-12:15pm: PLENARY 1: Fierce Aunties and Super Indians with Steph Littlebird and Arigon Starr (Playwrights Hall: O'Neill/Williams)

Chair: Brian J Twenter, University of Central Oklahoma



[Steph Littlebird \(Enrolled Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde\)](#) is an artist, illustrator, curator, writer, activist, and auntie known for her vibrant graphic imagery that combines traditional styles of her Indigenous ancestors with contemporary illustration aesthetics. Steph's work often examines issues related to Native identity, cultural resilience, and responsible land stewardship. Her first children's book, *My Powerful Hair* (2023), made in collaboration with NYT bestselling Indigenous author Carole Lindstrom, earned the 2024

Carter G. Woodson Book Award. Steph's work has been commissioned by brands such as Lucasfilms/Star Wars, Yahoo, Luna Bar, and has been featured by media outlets such as PBS News, NPR, and ArtNews.

[Arigon Starr \(Enrolled Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma; Creek, Cherokee, Seneca descent\)](#)

works across a variety of mediums as a comics artist, colorist, letterer, storyteller, scriptwriter, playwright, musician, stage performer, radio performer, publicist, and distribution agent, to name but a few of the multiple hats she wears. She has produced four studio albums and written/acted in multiple plays which have garnered numerous accolades. She is perhaps best known in the comics



world for 3-volume series *Super Indian*, which follows the often-hilarious exploits of local Rez kid/super hero, Hubert Logan and his trusty sidekicks General Bear/Mega Bear and Diogi, as they work to protect the fictional Leaning Oak community from a variety of external threats and internal conflicts. In recognition of Arigon's wide-ranging work, she was honored with IndigiPopX's Legacy Award for "extraordinary work in the field of Native pop culture in its many forms."

12:15pm - 1:15pm
1:30pm - 2:45pm

General Lunch Break

TH 3A: PHOTOS, PROSE POEMS, & A CHORUS OF PRAISE: AN EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE CELEBRATES JANICE GOULD'S THIS MUSIC: RECORD OF A POET BECOMING

Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **Lisa Tatonetti**, Kansas State University

Sensual and Magical Language: Janice Gould in Historical Context

Lisa Tatonetti
Kansas State University

Janice Gould's Lyric Memoir: A Publishing Perspective

Elizabeth Wilder
The University of Arizona Press

A Masterclass In Relationship And Landscape

Deborah Miranda
Emerita, Washington and Lee U

A Mixtape Of Memory

Marie-Elise Wheatwind
University of Arizona Press

TH 3B: CRITICAL TEXAS STUDIES

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Celina Osuna**, The University of Texas at El Paso

Critical Texas Studies: Reframing Regionalism, Place, and Multi-Ethnic Literary Production

Chaney Elizabeth Hill
Rice University

El Paso - Juarez and the Chicano Imaginary

Sophia Martinez Abbud
Utah State University

"El Paso: Myths, Realities, and Representation"

Celina Osuna
The University of Texas at El Paso

The Decolonial Imaginary of the Vaquerita Tejana: Queering Anticolonialism in Emma Perez's Forgetting the Alamo/Bloody Memory

Vanessa Ramirez
University of North Texas

Graduate Student Lunch

Location: **Trophy Room**

TH 3C: SUPREMACISTS, SETTLERS, AND TOURISTS GONE WILD

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Sarah Jane Kerwin**, Oberlin College

Supremacists Gone Native: The Far-Right's "Decolonial Turn"

April Anson
University of Connecticut

Settlers Gone Wild: Backpacking Memoirs, Frontier Heritage, and Feral Futures

Ava Guihama Olson
University of Oregon

TH 3D: GENDER AND GENDERING IN SOCIAL SPACES

Location: **Composers Hall: Sousa**
Chair: **Jim Miranda**, Bentley University

Doctoring the Marriage Plot: Female Physicians and Reproductive Futurity in the West

Emma Zumbro
University of California, Davis

Willa Cather Panel: Contexts of the "Profane Burial" in Cather's My Antonia

Evelyn Funda
Utah State University

Mobility and Masculinity Self-Fashioning in The Bigamist

Maria T. Kane
Washington University in St. Louis

TH 3E: RACE, VIOLENCE, ANSWERS

Location: **Composers Hall: Bloch**
Chair: **Patricia Oman**, Hastings College

Scapegoating the Subaltern: Trauma, Space, and Black Feminine Subjectivity in *Sula*

Mahnaz Poorshahidi
Idaho State University

Specters of Violence in Rae Del Bianco's *Rough Animals*

Chloe Richier
Université Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3

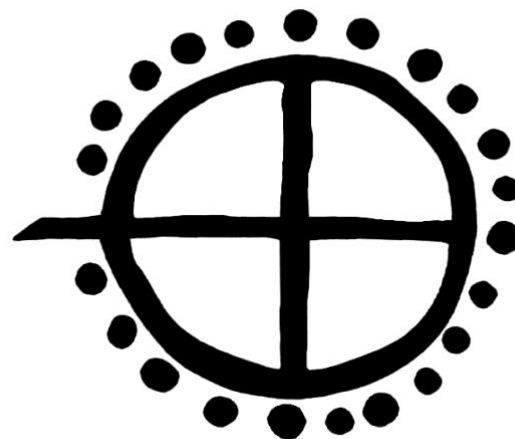
Filling in the Maps: Naomi Hirahara's Mysteries, Japanese American Experience, and the American West

Florence Amamoto
Gustavus Adolphus College

3:00pm - 4:00pm

SODA/SNACK BREAK

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**



3:00pm
-
4:15pm

**TH 4A: READING
AND WRITING
HIGHWAYS IN THE
WEST**

Location: **Playwrights
Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **Surabhi
Balachander**, Oregon
State University
Chair: **Lauren White**,
University of Southern
California

**Trucking the
Border: Gayl
Jones's *Mosquito*
and the Racial
Infrastructure of
Mobility in the
U.S.–Mexico
Borderlands**
Seth Horton
University of Virginia

**The Political
Aesthetics of the
Freeway in the
American West**
Lauren White
University of Southern
California

Wendover Will
Rachel Heise Bolten
Stanford University

**Leslie Marmon
Silko, *Route 66*,
and Indigenous
Placemaking**
Sam Walker
Carroll College

Respondent
Lars Erik Larson
University of Portland

**TH 4B: MYTH AND
MATERIALISM IN
THE DESERT
SOUTHWEST**

Location: **Playwrights
Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Gary Reger**,
Retired

**Horologics of
Desert Encounter:
Toward an Anti-
Synthesis of
Colonial Reading**
Robert Gunn
University of Texas at
El Paso

**The Desert as
Nepantla: Pat
Mora and Gloria
Anzaldúa**
**Melina Vizcaino-
Alemán**
UNM

**The Materialities
of Desert
Placemaking**
Celina Osuna
The University of
Texas at El Paso

**Breathing-Space:
Literary
Atmospherics of
the Mojave Desert**
Meagan Meylor
California State
University, Northridge

**Contemporary
Drought Stories:
Writing for a
Climate-Changed
World**
Veronika Kratz
University of Louisiana
at Lafayette

**The Dual Desert
Imaginary**
**Christopher Scott
Boggs**
Montana State
University

**TH 4C:
MONSTROSITY,
APOCALYPTICISM,
AND FUTURITY IN
INDIGENOUS
NARRATIVES**

Location: **Playwrights
Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Blake M Hausman**,
Oregon State University

**Living with
Monsters,
Together: Love,
Kinship, and
Cherokee Futurity
in Andrea L.
Rogers' *Man Made
Monsters***
Madalynn Madigar
University of Oregon

**Naming the
Impossible: the
Monstrous in
Cherokee Oral
Storytelling**
Chris Teuton
University of
Washington

**Imagining Beyond
the Apocalypse in
Louise Erdrich's
*Future Home of
the Living God***
Lydia Heberling
California State
Polytechnic University,
San Luis Obispo

**TH 4D: ELDERS IN
THE CLASSROOM**
Location: **Composers
Hall: Sousa**
Chair: **Jennifer O'Neal**,
University of Oregon

**Elders as
Educators**
Marta Lu Clifford
University of Oregon

**Relational
Accountability In
Action**
Jennifer O'Neal
University of Oregon

**Teaching
Indigenous
Literatures with
Elders**
Madison Fowler
University of Oregon

**The Northern
Paiute History
Project**
Clara Tai Gorman
University of Oregon

**TH 4F: CREATIVE
WRITING 1**
Location: **Composers
Hall: Seeger/Joplin**
Chair: **Jessica Sanchez
Flores**, Colorado College

**A California
Childhood**
**Megan Riley
McGilchrist**
American School in
London (retired)

**An Asian
Werewolf in
California**
**Anne Mai Yee
Jansen**
California Polytechnic
State University, San
Luis Obispo

**Ode to Black
Womanhood**
**Nylah Arya
Winchester**
Southern Oregon
University

4:30pm - 5:45pm	TH 5A: MULTIETHNIC AND CONTESTED WEST(ERN)S Location: Playwrights Hall: O'Neill Chair: Alex Hunt , West Texas A&M University	TH 5B: INDIGENOUS OREGON Location: Playwrights Hall: Williams Chair: Jonathan Radocay , University of Washington	TH 5C: INDIGENOUS POPULAR CULTURE Location: Playwrights Hall: Hellman Chair: Michelle Raheja , UC Riverside	TH 5E: GENDER, CULTURE, AND CLIMATE Location: Composers Hall: Bloch Chair: Aaron Gabriel Montalvo , Georgia Institute of Technology
	From Restaurant D'Jango to Empanadas Ponderosa: the Western in Chile Richard Parker Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile	Bequeathing an Architecture of Reciprocity: The Literary Inheritances of Celilo Falls Marcel Brousseau University of Oregon	Skoden: Indigenous Hip-Hop's Transformation of the Archive Via Documentary Poetics Shannon Vails Weatherford College	(Un)Common Concerns: Cowgirls and Climate Change Elizabeth Wright Pennsylvania State University
	I Can See by Your Outfit That You are a (Drugstore, Rodeo, Working) Cowboy Jeanetta Calhoun Mish Independent Scholar	David Douglas Among the Kalapuyans: Recovered Records and Indigenous Interactions David Gene Lewis Oregon State University	Teaching Indigenous Comics and Graphic Novels: <i>Super Indian</i> and <i>A Girl Called Echo</i> Brian J Twenter University of Central Oklahoma	"To Transform What We Have Into What We Need": Eco-Punk and Rugged Consumerism in Skottie Young's and Jorge Corona's <i>Middlewest</i> Brian Matthew Ramanis Oregon State University
	This Town Is Big Enough for More Than One Story: Reed, Everett, and the Myth of the American West Amanda Stevens Idaho State University	Beyond Interpretation: Esther Stutzman and the Practice of Presence Natalia Carlton Symbolic Spaces	Indigenous Television Monologues Joanna Hearne University of Oklahoma	Explosivity and the Indigenous Ecotage Novel Patrick Vincent University of California, Riverside
6:00pm - 7:15pm	Dinner Break			

Want to try something outside the hotel for dinner?

These are within a 5-minute walk of the hotel:

Northwest Fare & Upscale Comfort Food

[Gordon Tavern](#) (\$20-\$60)

[6th Street Restaurant & Sports Bar](#) (\$20-\$30)

French Bistro & Asian Flavors

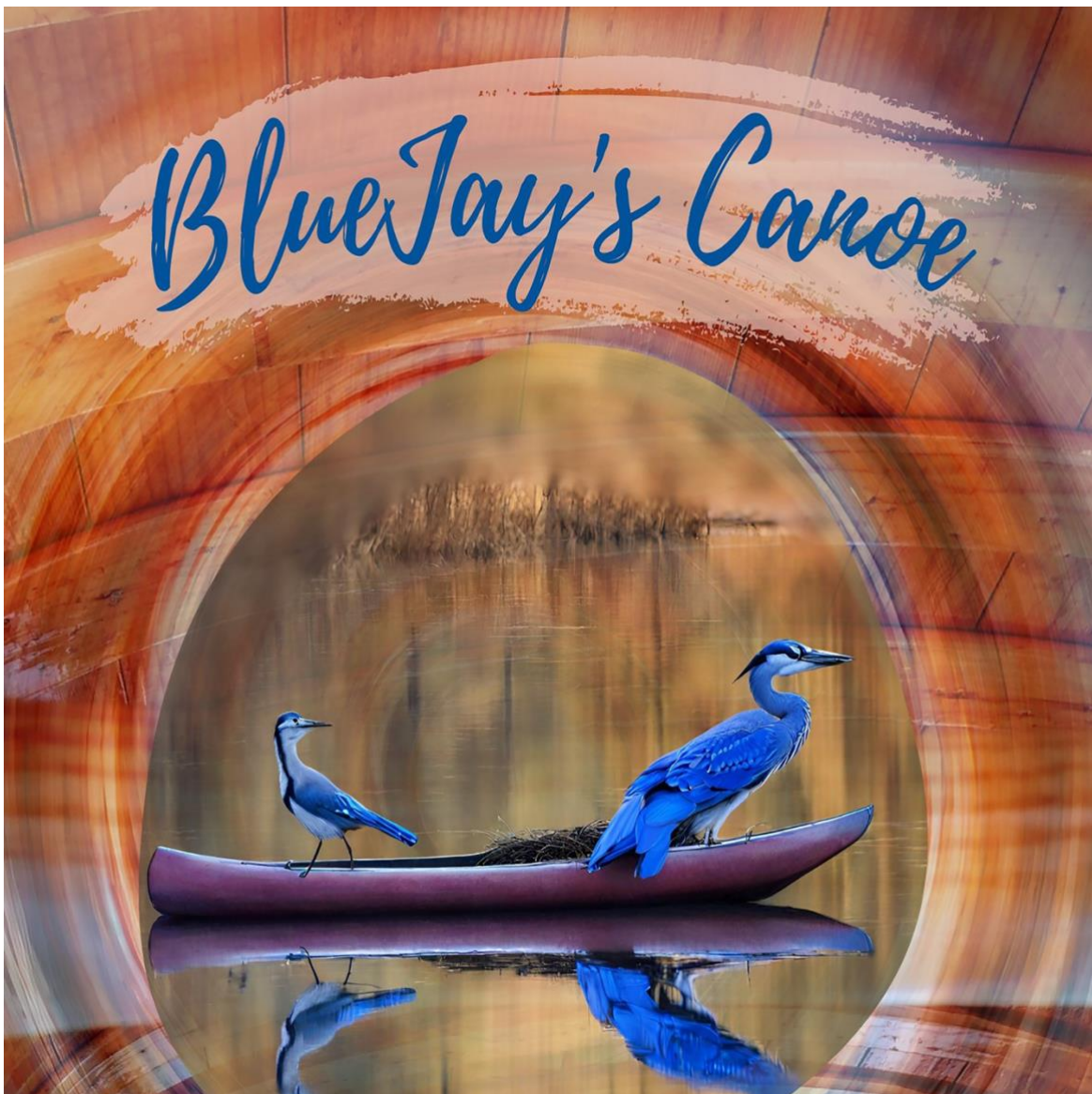
[Marché](#) (\$20-\$70)

[Jade Dumpling & Noodle House](#) (\$20-\$30)

7:30pm PLENARY 2: Concert Reading of “Bluejay’s Canoe” (Playwright’s Hall: O’Neill/Williams)

With Theresa May, illioo Native Theatre, and Marta Lu Clifford, University of Oregon

[BlueJay’s Canoe](#) was written by Theresa May and Marta Lu Clifford (Chinook, Cree, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) and was performed at illioo Native Theatre in partnership with Very Little Theatre in November 2025. *BlueJay’s Canoe* is a story of two contemporary Indigenous families. A story of healing, filled with humor, this is a play about the power of stories in everyday life, or as the play says, “sometimes stories save your life.”



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS

Horizons of Catastrophe in the American West

WILLIAM R. HANDLEY



Every Sky at Home

ESSAYS ON
LANDSCAPE
AND FAMILY

Joe Wilkins

SUZANNE ROBERTS
52 Writing Prompts

Inspiration for the Creative Writer



Ravelings

Essays on Love,
Loss, and Wonder

Lisa Knopp

AMERICAN LIVES SERIES | TOBIAS WOLFF, EDITOR

AMERICAN LIVES SERIES | TOBIAS WOLFF, EDITOR

Jill Christman

The Heart Folds Early

A Memoir

VOL. 60 NO. 3 FALL 2025

Western American Literature

A Journal of Literary, Cultural,
and Place Studies

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Friday

August 28, 2026

7:00am **President's Breakfast**

Location: **Trophy Room**

8:00am

7:30am **Registration**

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

5:00pm

8:00am

-

9:15am

F1 A: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & RELATIONSHIP IN LITERATURE, ART, AND FILM

Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**

Chair: **Mandy Suhr-Sytsma**, Emory University

Animal People's Knowledge(s) and Ecological Relationality in Indigenous Speculative Fiction

Aniqa Jahangeer
Idaho State University

Flowing Relations: Kinship, Sovereignty, and More-than-human Personhood in Western Indigenous and Black Native Art and Poetry

India Raven Moffett
Clackamas Community College

A Hollywood Makeover for Indigenous Storytellers: Filmic Reimaginings of Storytellers and Elders in Indigenous Adaptations

Amy Fatzinger
University of Arizona

F1 B: MORE THAN EPHEMERA: THE POLITICS OF PAPER

Location: **Playwrights**

Hall: **Williams**

Chair: **Amy Gore**, North Dakota State University

A Hunch that Passed for History: Records and Reputations in Nineteenth-Century California

Tara Penry
Boise State University

Living Documents: The Counterhegemonic Strategies of the CAIRNS 'Articles of Treaty' Exhibit

Shannon Vails
Weatherford College

Procedural Violence: Police Misconduct Reports and the Production of Institutional Truth

Veronica Morales
University of Southern California

F1 C: REPRESENTING INDIGENITY IN LITERATURE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND FILM

Location:

Playwrights Hall: Hellman

Chair: **Jeanetta Calhoun Mish**, Independent Scholar

Le Guin, Indigeneity, History

Zak Breckenridge
University of Southern California

Vanishing: Polaroid, the Wild West, and the Photography of Edward Curtis in Border Fiction

Madeline Hennessey
University of Michigan

Whiteness, Indigeneity, and the Myth of Big Sky Country in *Montana Story* (2021)

K Hadley
University of Oregon

F1 D: PLACING ADOLESCENCE: CHICANA GIRLHOOD, REGIONAL LITERATURE, AND THE MAKING OF OXNARD

Location: **Composers**

Hall: **Sousa**

Chair: **Lourdes Alberto**, Cal State Los Angeles

Lourdes Alberto, California State University, Los Angeles;
Cristina Herrera, Portland State University;
Eliza Rodriguez, Loyola Marymount University;
Ella Diaz, San Jose State University;
Cristina Rhodes, Shippensburg University

F1 E: CLI-FI AND SCALE

Location:

Composers Hall: Bloch

Chair: **Chaney Elizabeth Hill**, Rice University

Cli-Fi & The Western: Risk Narratives And Community

Aaron Michael Lavery
University of Idaho

On the Seductions of Competency in Climate Fiction

Matt Burkhart
Case Western Reserve University

Silko's Thin Ice: The Global Literary Imagination and Earth System Thinking

Alex Hunt
West Texas A&M University

9:00am Exhibitions & Vendors
Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

5:00pm
9:15am Coffee/Snack Break
Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

10:15am

9:30am **F 2A: LAND, SURVIVANCE, AND REFUSAL IN INDIGENOUS STORY AND POETICS**
Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **April Anson**, University of Connecticut

10:45am

"What lies beneath the surface of maps and names?": Cultural and Poetic Palimpsests in the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation's Land-Back Efforts and Deborah A. Miranda's *Indian Cartography and Altar for Broken Things*
Jordana Finnegan Griffiths
Foothill College

Activist Constructions: Reading Land and/as Indigenous Agency
Chadwick Allen
University of Washington

Since Time Immemorial: The Poetic Refusal of Settler Time
Tia Tidwell^{1,2}
1: University of Alaska Fairbanks;
2: Nasragmiut Tribe

F 2B: REDEFINING LAND MANAGEMENT: FROM RESOURCE TO RECIPROCITY
Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Kristen Brown**, Northern State University

Deuter-agonies: The Unmanageable Life of Alice Sakaguchi in Hiroshi Nakamura's *Treadmill*
Mika Kennedy
Ithaca College

Indigenous Literatures on Allotment and Colonial Land Privatization
Jonathan Radocay
University of Washington

Keyword: Reclamation
Quinn Grover
BYU-Idaho

Resourcing Love: Ecorelational Literacies and A Call for Rematriation
Kristen Brown
Northern State University

Rural/Wilderness
Surabhi Balachander
Oregon State University

Wastelands of Decolonial Resurgence: Managing Land and Refuse/al in

F 2C: VOICING RELATIONAL PRACTICE ACROSS LANDS, WATERS AND DATA
Location: **Playwrights Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Lana Lopesi**, University of Oregon

Lateral Love and Lateral Violence: Addressing Our Internalized Colonialism and Calling for the Resurgence of Kinship Reciprocal Responsibilities
Rachel L Cushman
Long Tom Watershed Council

Ocean Feminist Orientations toward Relationality
Lana Lopesi
University of Oregon

Expanding Pacific Worlds: Histories of Trans-Indigenous Relationality in the PNW
Sophie Lilinoe Grewell
University of Oregon

Reclaiming Indigenous Voices: Relationality and Indigenous Data Sovereignty in

F 2D: NAVIGATING POLITICAL ASSAULTS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH
Location: **Composers Hall: Sousa**
Chair: **Sara Spurgeon**, Texas Tech University
Chair: **Amanda J. Zink**, Western Literature Association
Chair: **José Aranda**, Rice University

The State and Academic Freedom
Amanda J. Zink
Massachusetts College of Art & Design

Academic Freedom, Censorship, and "the Texas Model"
Sara Spurgeon
Texas Tech University

Comment/Respondent
José Aranda
Rice University

F 2E: "THE END(S) OF WESTERN NARRATIVE": A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF WILLIAM HANDLEY'S HORIZONS OF CATASTROPHE IN THE AMERICAN WEST
Location: **Composers Hall: Bloch**
Chair: **Alex Trimble Young**, Arizona State University

Remarks
Alex Trimble Young
Arizona State University

Dana Phillips
Towson University

Audrey Goodman
Georgia State University

Nancy S. Cook
Professor Emerita, The University of Montana

Casey Shoop
University of Oregon

Respondent
William Handley
University of Southern California

F 2F: DOCUMENTING THE UN-SCENE: SOUNDS, SITES, and STORIES IN INDIGENOUS AND BORDER ART
Location: **Composers Hall: Seeger/Joplin**
Chair: **Melina Vizcaino-Aleman**, UNM

Crossing the Line: Gina Valdés's Visual Storytelling
Melina Vizcaino-Aleman
UNM

Mining the American Southwest: An Exploration of Uranium Mining in Indigenous Works of the American Southwest
Anne {Marie} Carrica
University of New Mexico

Raven Chacon's Graphic Scores: Resignifying the American Ledger
Karen Roybal
Colorado College

**Gerald Vizenor's
and Leanne
Betasamosake
Simpson's
Indigenous
Narratives**

Elpida Ziavra
National and
Kapodistrian University
of Athens

**Galleries,
Libraries,
Archives, and
Museums**

Clara Tai Gorman
University of
Oregon

**Violence Against
the Land is
Violence Against
the People: Land
Management
Tactics in Linda
Hogan's *Solar
Storms***

Jessica Cory
Appalachian State
University

**Grassing
Gettysburg:
Management,
Memory, and
Meaning**

Amy Hamilton
NMU

**(Un)documented
Ecologies**

Rafael A. Martínez
Arizona State
University

Aridity

Gary Reger
Retired



**Need to squirrel away some more
books before winter? Check out
Hodgepodge Books in the Vendors
area!**

12:15pm - Lunch Break

1:15pm

Distinguished Achievement Award Recipients

Moderators: Kirby Brown, University of Oregon, Susan Bernardin, Oregon State University



Elizabeth Woody (Warm Springs, Wasco, Yakama, Navajo) is a celebrated author, poet, lecturer, educator, artist, activist, and former Oregon Poet Laureate (2016-18). She is the author of multiple award-winning collections of poetry and a contributor to numerous anthologies and edited poetry collections. Elizabeth is currently the Executive Director of the Museum at Warm Springs and serves on multiple advisory boards for organizations throughout the region and across the country. She has taught at Portland State University and at the Institute for American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Esther Stutzman (Yoncalla Kalapuya, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians) is a widely respected storyteller, culture keeper, language warrior, land steward, educator, author, and public advocate for Kalapuya people, history, lands, and language. She and her family, working with linguistic experts and allies, worked to revive the Kalapuya language, producing the **first ever multi-volume dictionary** in 2023, and was instrumental in returning Kalapuya language, iconography, and culture back to the **Whilamut Natural Area** in the Eugene-Springfield area. Esther has also worked as a K-12 curriculum developer in Coos Bay, Oregon with Indian education programs and serves as a public educator and member for multiple local and regional cultural and historical societies and organizations.





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"This magnificent memoir, long overdue, will not only keep Janice Gould's
remarkable poetry alive, but the heartfelt and heart-seeing life of the poet
herself. Thank you, Janice for leaving us the gifts."

Greg Sarris, Chairman of The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria and
author of the forthcoming novel, *The Last Human Bear*



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12:15pm

-

Lunch Break

1:15pm

1:30pm

-

2:45pm

F 3A: KINSHIP, RELATIONALITY, AND RECIPROCITY ACROSS CONTEXTS

Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **Yingwen Yu**, Texas Christian University

Flows: Mapping Dispossessions and Reimagining Kinship in Payahuunadü

Lydia Heberling, Grace Yeh
California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo

From Extraction To Reciprocity: Reimagining Economic Models Through The Lens Of Relational Value.

Natalia Carlton
Symbolic Spaces

No Space For The Dead: Spatial Politics And Crematories In Urbanizing Cities

Anran Hou
University of Arizona

F 3B: RESIDUAL TRUTH IN PLAIN SIGHT

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Shannon Vails**, Weatherford College

The Spatial Justice of Indigenous Paper

Amy Gore
North Dakota State University

Settler Epistolarity: Charles M. Russell's Illustrated Letters and the Inner Worlds of the West

Jerome Tharaud
Brandeis University

Shifting Foundations: An Ecological Exploration of Homes in Western (Re)settlement

Matthew Quinn Evertson
Western Colorado University

F 3C: CARCERREALITY, COLONIALITY, NARCOCULTURA, AND NEOLIBERALISM

Location: **Playwrights Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Seth Horton**, University of Virginia

Carceral Landscapes: Colonial Governance, Indigeneity, and the Afterlives of Confinement in Spain and California

Veronica Morales
University of Southern California

El Gran Mojado vs. SUPERNAFTA: NAFTA, Narcos, and Neoliberalism in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*

Carolyn Elise Starr
University of Southern California

Playing Death: Digital Necropolitics and Narcocultura in the Video Game Borderlands of the American West

Chris Muniz
University of Southern California

F 3E: GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2: JOURNALS AND ARTICLES

Location: **Composers Hall: Bloch**
Chair: **Lauren White**, University of Southern California
Chair: **Surabhi Balachander**, Oregon State University
Chair: **Ryan Hediger**, Kent State University
Chair: **Amy Hamilton**, NMU

This panel is designed to provide graduate students with advice on publishing a journal article. The aim of this roundtable is to answer common questions about the publishing process. Panelists will share guidance for turning seminar papers and dissertation chapters into publishable article drafts, explaining the differences between chapters and articles. The panel will help graduate students understand how to compare and evaluate journals to determine the best fit for their submission. Most importantly, panelists will consider the makings of a strong article. Attendees can also expect to receive advice for proposing an abstract to a special issue. The panel will outline the process of submitting, editing, and, ultimately, publishing a journal article.

F 3F: RELATIONAL IDENTITY BEYOND THE NATION-STATE

Location: **Composers Hall: Seeger/Joplin**
Chair: **Anthony Michael Ryder**, University of Oregon / Independent Artist

Health from Holistic Viewpoints in Indigenous Communities

Christina Nicole Thomas
University Of Oregon

Indigenous Interrelationship Across Waters with Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Keyen Skyy Singer
University of Oregon, Native American Student Union

Lived Experience And The Renewal of Relation

Anthony Michael Ryder
Anthony Michael Ryder

Global Indigeneity and Archiving the Story of the Klamath River

Marisol Peters
University of Oregon

3:00pm - 4:00pm
Soda/Snack Break
 Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

3:00pm - 4:15pm	F 4A: HOW THE WEST WAS RUN: RUNNING IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE Location: Playwrights Hall: O'Neill Chair: Emily J. Rau, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chair: Sarah Jane Kerwin, Oberlin College <i>Spirit Run, Transrhetoricity, and the Pluriverse</i> Katelen Marie Cowger University of Oklahoma <i>Tracktown and TrackTown</i> Sarah Jane Kerwin Oberlin College Burro Racing's Western Heritage Patricia {Jane} Jewell University of Michigan Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the West, and the Legacy of Eugenics in Women's Running Jessica Tebo University of Colorado-Boulder Running as Ceremony in <i>The Seed Keeper</i> Emily J. Rau University of Nebraska-Lincoln The Running Revolution and the Narrative Ecology of the Native American Novel Jerome Tharaud Brandeis University	F 4B: INDIGENOUS GENRE FICTION Location: Playwrights Hall: Williams Chair: Miriam Brown Spiers, Kennesaw State University <i>'To dance with dragons again': Indigenous Survivance in Historical Fantasy</i> Miriam Brown Spiers Kennesaw State University <i>Indigenous Romance and the Power of Embodied Joy</i> Mandy Suhr-Sytsma Emory University <i>"The Land is Everywhere or Nowhere": Urban NDN Literature</i> Steven Sexton University of Nevada, Las Vegas <i>Teaching Stephen Graham Jones's <i>The Only Good Indians</i> at Universities and Community Colleges</i> Blake M Hausman Oregon State University	F 4C: INDIGENOUS MATERIALITIES AND VISUALITIES Location: Playwrights Hall: Hellman Chair: Joanna Hearne, University of Oklahoma <i>Investing in Futurity: Cara Romero, Citlali Fabián and Indigenous Photography</i> Michelle Raheja UC Riverside <i>Oberlin's Beaded Dakota Hymnal</i> Caleigh Lyons Brown University	F 4D: BREAKING WITH SETTLER MASCULINITY Location: Composers Hall: Sousa Chair: Peter Bayers, Fairfield University <i>"I don't believe in shootin' healthy animals": Veterinary Biopolitics in Larry McMurtry's <i>Horsemen, Pass By</i></i> Raymond Malewitz Oregon State University <i>"You Won't Find a Guy that Loves the Woods More than a Logger:" Resource Work and Environmental Ethics in Ash Davidson's <i>Damnation Spring</i></i> Aaron Gabriel Montalvo Georgia Institute of Technology <i>The Uncanny Double in <i>Blood Meridian</i></i> Lorenzo Simon Tomescu National Taiwan Normal University	F 4E: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP Location: Composers Hall: Bloch Chair: Anne (Mai Yee) Jansen, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo <i>Tarot in Troubled Times: A Speculative Divination Mini-Workshop</i> Anne Mai Yee Jansen California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo	F 4F: CREATIVE WRITING 2 Location: Composers Hall: Seeger/Joplin Chair: Megan Riley McGilchrist, American School in London (retired) <i>Pilgrims on the Plains: Why Author Home Sites Pull Us In</i> Susan Naramore Maher University of Minnesota Duluth <i>The vivencias of a Nahua Woman in Movement</i> Jessica Sanchez Flores Colorado College
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4:30pm
-
5:45pm

F 5A: OREGON'S WATERS; INDIGENOUS RIVER RELATIONS IN LITERATURE, FILM, AND ART
Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill**
Chair: **Luhui Whitebear**, Oregon State University

Rivers in Lillian Pitt's Public Art
Laura M. Furlan
University of Massachusetts Amherst

The (Columbia) River Remembers: Water Ways in Elizabeth Woody, Joe Feddersen, and James Lavadour
Susan Bernardin
Oregon State University

The Joy of Building New Relations in *First Descent: Kayaking the Klamath River* (2025)
Channette Romero
University of Georgia

F 5B: GLIMPSES OF HUMANITY, YESTERDAY AND TODAY
Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**
Chair: **Marcel Brousseau**, University of Oregon

Borders and Beasts in Victoriano Cárdenas' *Portraits as Animal*
Jim Vigil Miranda
Bentley University

Marking Time: The Effect of Material Dirt on John Grady's Romantic Temporality
Jordan Kay Savage
University of Essex

Stephen Graham Jones and the Dilemma of the Native Historical Novel
Jack Bradford
University of Virginia

F 5C: OUT ON THE LAND: LABOR, EXTRACTION, AND THE WEST
Location: **Playwrights Hall: Hellman**
Chair: **Ryan Hediger**, Kent State University

Unsettling Colonial Dreams: Labor, Violence, and Affective Dissonance in Denis Johnson's *Train Dreams* (paper title)
Jennifer Ladino
University of Idaho

Domestic Masculinity in Clint Bentley's *Train Dreams* (2025)

Peter Bayers
Fairfield University

Masculinity and the Past in Kelly Reichardt's *Old Joy*
Sylvan Goldberg
Colorado College

On the Land, in the Water, and in the Community: Field-based Environmental Humanities Education
Kevin Maier
University of Alaska Southeast

The New West(ern Civ): Public Universities, Native Land, and the Gen Ed Culture Wars
Nathan Straight

F 5D: WORDS OF FIRE: EXPLORING MULCULTURAL WESTERN NARRATIVES
Location: **Composers Hall: Sousa**
Chair: **Timothy Bradford**, University of Oklahoma

Reflections on a Western Literature Course Based on the 2025 WLA Conference Content
Timothy Bradford
University of Oklahoma

Constructing the Frontier: Myth, Power, and the Architecture of Scarcity in *Fallout: New Vegas*
Ryan Tom Thomas
University of Oklahoma

"Whose Name Has Been Stolen": Indigenous Theater, Tragedy, and What Comes Next
David Mackowski
University of Oklahoma

Frontier Logic in Vietnam: Native American Service and U.S. Contradictions
Winnie Son Du
University of Oklahoma

F 5E: ECOCRITICISM, ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES, AND/AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON: HISTORIES, LEGACIES, FUTURES
Location: **Composers Hall: Bloch**
Chair: **Kirby Brown**, University of Oregon

Remarks
Molly Westling
University of Oregon

Sarah Wald
University of Oregon

David Vazquez
American University

Remarks
April Anson
University of Connecticut

Remarks
Chris Lozano
University of Oregon

F 5F: GENDER, GENRE, & THE WEST
Location: **Composers Hall: Seeger/Joplin**
Chair: **Patricia (Jane) Jewell**, University of Michigan

Fantasizing Asian American Settler Colonialism Through *The Thousand (and One) Crimes of Ming Tsu*
Mika Kennedy
Ithaca College

Twenty-First Century White American Womanhood in Frontier Horror Film *The Wind* (2018)
Patricia Oman
Hastings College

Vengeance Against Sexual and Racial Molestation: Vizenor's *Father Meme* as a "Weird Western"
Crista Fiala
University of Connecticut

Utah State
University

**Wild Animals:
Figures for a
Postlabor
Imaginary in the
West and
Beyond**

Ryan Hediger
Kent State
University

6:30pm **Cocktail Hour**
- Location: **Conference Center Lobby**
7:00pm Cash Bar

7:00pm **Awards Banquet**
- Location: **Playwrights Hall: O'Neill/Williams**
11:00pm Cash Bar, Dinner Buffet, Awards Ceremony, Dance with DJ Kunu Bearchum (Northern Cheyenne and Ho-Chunk)

Kunu Bearchum, our DJ for this year's Awards Banquet and Dance, is a producer, filmmaker, and recording artist from the Northern Cheyenne and Ho-Chunk Nations. Owner of the multimedia company Morning Star Creative, Bearchum describes his music as "West Coast hip hop" with "Native influence."



Photo from *Eugene Weekly*, 5/23/24

Saturday

August 29, 2026

8:00am

Exhibitions & Vendors

-

Location: **Conference Center Lobby**

1:00pm

8:30am

Journal Meeting

-

Location: **Mezzanine: Board**

9:45am

Room

**S 1A: PUBLIC HUMANITIES
FOR COLLECTIVE
FUTURITIES**

Location: **Playwrights Hall:**

O'Neill

Chair: **José Aranda**, Rice
University

**Futurity Praxis:
Centering Tribal
Sovereignty in
Environmental
Organizing in the PNW**

Madison Fowler
University of Oregon

**"Lucha Enterna": Anti-
mining Feminist Hip Hop
Remixing Archival
Imagery with
Participation of Shuar
Luchadoras in Ecuador**

Michelle Habel-Pallan
University of Washington

**Notes on Water as
Relationality from
*Surfeminists Get It
Together for Climate
Times***

Krista Comer
Rice University

**S 1B: BUILDING
SOLIDARITY FROM TURTLE
ISLAND AND OCEANIA TO
PALESTINE: ART AS
RESISTANCE AND CARE**

Location: **Playwrights Hall:**

Williams

Chair: **Patrizia Zanella**, University
of Lausanne

**Building Solidarity from
Turtle Island and
Oceania to Palestine: Art
as Resistance and Care**

Luhui Whitebear
Oregon State University

**Cultivating Resistance
and Care Through Art
and Activism: From Te
Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa to
Palestine**

Patricia Ann Fifita
Oregon State University

**Handala and the Jingle
Dress Dancer: Art as
Action, Solidarity, and
Care**

**Colleta Macy¹, Patrizia
Zanella²**

1: NA; 2: University of
Lausanne

**S 1C: QUEER(ING)
WESTS**

Location: **Playwrights**

Hall: Hellman

Chair: **Sara Gallagher**,
Durham College

**Queernormativity on
the Frontier:
Reimagining Norms in
the Contemporary
Western**

Sara Gallagher
Durham College

**Tranny Dykes Laying
Pipe: Surveillance
Entertainment, Sex
Work, And Trans
Labor Images**

Camilla Hayes
University of New Mexico

**The Queer Chicanx
Desert**

Isaac Salazar
Rice University

**Divorce, Murder,
Steroids, and
Lesbians: The Desert
West as Permission
for Transgression in
Desert Hearts and
*Love Lies Bleeding***

Natalie Colby
Northern Michigan
University

10:00am
-
11:15am

**S 2A: TIERRA VIVA -
LATINX
ENVIRONMENTALISMS,
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE,
AND PUBLIC HUMANITIES**
Location: **Playwrights Hall:
O'Neill**

Chair: **Sarah Wald**, University of
Oregon

**Alchemical
Collaborative**

Priscilla Ybarra
University of California, Santa
Barbara

Nuts and Bolts

Sarah Wald
University of Oregon

**Public Humanities
Perspectives**

Ava Guihama Olson
University of Oregon

**Decoloniality and the
Evolution of Justice**

David Vazquez
American University

**Mentoring Networks and
Graduate Student
Inclusion**

Moe Gámez
University of Oregon

**S 2B: INDIGENEITY IN
GLOBAL CONTEXTS**
Location: **Playwrights Hall:
Williams**

Chair: **Mika Kennedy**, Ithaca
College

**Storytelling as
Survivance:
Reimagining the Future
in the Ruins of
Displacement in *The
Right Bank of the Argun
River***

Qingqing Yang
The University of Arizona

**A River Runs Through
Us: Indigenous
American and Indian
Fluvial Relationality in
Shobha Rao's *Indian
Country***

Arjun Chopra
University of California,
Riverside

**Transmotion at Sea:
Documentary, Oceanic
Sovereignty, and
Austronesian Futures**

Yingwen Yu
Texas Christian University

**S 2C: INDIGENOUS
WONDERS IN PASSING**
Location: **Playwrights Hall:
Hellman**

Chair: **Madalynn Madigar**,
University of Oregon

**Ecospiritual
Assemblage through
Permutations of Black
Elk in American Public
Lands**

Molly Elizabeth Porter
University of Washington

**Leslie Marmon Silko's
Oceanic Subtexts**

Josh Beckelhimer
University of Southern
California

**Plants "Out of Place":
Weeds as Metaphors in
*Love Medicine***

Carolyn Kuchera
University of New Mexico-
Gallup

11:30am
-
1:00pm

**Business Meeting for
all WLA Members**
Location: **Playwrights Hall: Williams**



Travel Lane County created a website for our conference to show us some of what the Whilamut Valley offers. They also organized **custom tours** just for us that include transportation from and back to The Graduate. Follow the links to learn more about the offerings listed below. Grab some friends and get out there! Questions: visit the Excursion tables in the Conference Center Lobby.

Saturday, August 29

Alton Baker | A Whilamut River Walk & Urban Forest Bath

August 29, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm. \$39.95 per person

BOOK NOW

Willamette Valley Wine Tasting Excursion

August 29, 1:30 pm – 5:30 pm. \$79.00 per person

BOOK NOW

Sunday, August 30

Central Oregon Coast Excursion

August 30, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. \$149.00 per person

BOOK NOW

McKenzie River Whitewater Rafting

August 30, 8:30 am – 2:30 pm. \$90 per person. Minimum of four participants required. \$20 refund if six participants or more.

To pre-register, contact Jonnie Helfrich at jonnie@helfrich.com or 541.726.5039 through HelfrichMcKenzieRafting.com.

Fall Creek | Farm to Forest Tour

August 30, 1:30 pm – 7:00 pm. \$175.00 per person

BOOK NOW



Distinguished Achievement Awards

- Esther Stutzman (Yoncalla Kalapuya, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians)
- Elizabeth Woody (Warm Springs, Wasco, Yakama, Navajo)

Delbert and Edith Wylder Award

- Alex Hunt (West Texas A&M University)

Thomas J. Lyon Book Award

- Celina Osuna (University of Texas at El Paso) for *Desert Distortion: Revealing the Abundance of Contemporary Borderlands Ecology* (Texas Tech UP 2025)

Louis Owens Award:

- Ava Olson (University of Oregon) for "Settlers Gone Wild: Backpacking Memoirs, Frontier Heritage, and Feral Futures"

J. Golden Taylor Award

- Isaac Salazar (Rice University) for "The Queer Chicanx Desert of Arturo Islas and Laura Aguilar"

Don D. Walker Award

- Amy Gore (North Dakota State University) for "Between Editions: Collaboration, Indigenous Book History, and the Paratextual Legacy of Zitkála-Šá's *American Indian Stories*."

Dorys Crow Grover Award

- Veronica Morales (University of Southern California) for "Carceral Landscapes: Indigeneity and the Afterlives of Confinement and Colonization in California"

Creative Writing Award

- Megan McGilchrist (American School in London) for "My California Childhood"



Executive Council

Kirby Brown	President	University of Oregon
José Aranda	President Elect	Rice University
Sarah Jane Kerwin & Emily Rau	Vice-Presidents	Oberlin College
Kalenda Eaton	Past President	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Audrey Goodman	Exec. Secretary	University of Oklahoma
Krista Comer	Treasurer	Georgia State University
Amy Hamilton	Editor, <i>WAL</i>	Rice University
Amanda Zink	Director of Operations	Northern Michigan University
Rachel Heise Bolton	2026	Massachusetts College of Art & Design
Kristen Brown	2026	Stanford University
Bernadette V. Russo	2026	Northern State University
Brian J. Twenter	2026	Mt. St. Vincent University
Rob E. King	2026	Halifax, Canada
Zachary Hernandez	2027	Central Oklahoma University
Emily Rau	2027	Grad Rep, Texas Tech University
Ryan Wander	2027	Texas A&M University
Erin Murrah-Mandril	2027	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lauren White	2027	Valdosta State University
Surabhi Balachander	2028	University of Texas at Arlington
Laura Furlan	2028	Grad Rep, University of Southern California
Noreen Rivera	2028	Oregon State University
Melina Vizcaino-Alemán	2028	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
		University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley
		University of New Mexico

WLA Annual Conference Sites + Presidents

Year	Location	President
1966	Salt Lake City, Utah	C. L. Sonnichsen
1967	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Delbert E. Wylder
1968	Colorado Springs, Colorado	Jim L. Fife
1969	Provo, Utah	Morton L. Ross
1970	Sun Valley, Idaho	Don D. Walker
1971	Red Cloud, Nebraska	John R. Milton
1972	Jackson Hole, Wyoming	Thomas J. Lyon
1973	Austin, Texas	Max Westbrook
1974	Sonoma (California)	John S. Bullen
1975	Durango, Colorado	Maynard Fox
1976	Bellingham, Washington	L. L. Lee
1977	Sioux Falls, South Dakota	Arthur R. Huseboe
1978	Park City, Utah	Mary Washington
1979	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Richard Etulain
1980	St. Louis, Missouri	Bernice Slote & Helen Stauffer
1981	Boise, Idaho	James H. Maguire
1982	Denver, Colorado	Martin Bucco
1983	St. Paul, Minnesota	George Day
1984	Reno, Nevada	Ann Ronald
1985	Fort Worth, Texas	Gerald Haslam
1986	Durango, Colorado	Tom Pilkington
1987	Lincoln, Nebraska	Susan J. Rosowski
1988	Eugene, Oregon	Glen Love
1989	Coeur D'Alene, Idaho	Barbara Meldrum
1990	Denton, Texas	Lawrence Clayton
1991	Estes Park, Colorado	James C. Work
1992	Reno, Nevada	Joseph Flora
1993	Wichita, Kansas	Diane Quantic
1994	Salt Lake City, Utah	Stephen Tatum
1995	Vancouver, British Columbia	Laurie Ricou
1996	Lincoln, Nebraska	Susanne K. George Bloomfield
1997	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Gary Scharnhorst

CELEBRATION 60TH ANNIVERSARY

1998	Banff, Alberta	Robert Thacker
1999	Sacramento, California	Michael Kowalewski
2000	Norman, Oklahoma	Robert Murray Davis
2001	Omaha, Nebraska	Susan Naramore Maher
2002	Tucson, Arizona	Judy Nolte Temple
2003	Houston, Texas	Krista Comer
2004	Big Sky, Montana	Susan Kollin
2005	Los Angeles, California	William R. Handley
2006	Boise, Idaho	Tara Penry
2007	Tacoma, Washington	Ann Putnam
2008	Boulder, Colorado	Karen Ramirez & Nicolas Witschi
2009	Spearfish, South Dakota	David Cremean
2010	Prescott Resort, Arizona	Gioia Woods
2011	Missoula, Montana	Nancy Cook & Bonney MacDonald
2012	Lubbock, Texas	Sara Spurgeon
2013	Berkeley, California	Richard Hutson
2014	Victoria, Canada	Anne L. Kaufman & Laurie Ricou
2015	Reno, Nevada	Susan Bernardin & David Fenimore
2016	Big Sky, Montana	Linda Karell
2017	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Florence Amamoto & Susan Maher
2018	St. Louis, Missouri	Emily Lutenski & Michael Johnson
2019	Estes Park, Colorado	SueEllen Campbell & Alex Hunt
2020	Virtual in lieu of San Diego, CA	Kerry Fine and Rebecca Lush
2021-22	Santa Fe, New Mexico	Audrey Goodman & Lisa Tatonetti
2023	Fort Hall, Idaho	Jennifer Ladino & Amanda Zink
2024	Tucson, Arizona	Billy J. Stratton
2025	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Kalenda Eaton
2026	Eugene, Oregon	Kirby Brown

WLA, We Have a Problem:

Engineering the Future of U.S. West Studies



Local Host: Rice Professor José F. Aranda, Jr., President WLA 2027

Conference Site: Houston Marriott Medical Center/Museum District

Call for Papers

WLA, We Have a Problem: Engineering the Future of U.S. West Studies will convene scholars, writers, and activists to tackle the historic challenges facing humanities education broadly across the subfields that comprise today's US West Studies. The conference title takes off from the famous "Houston, we have a problem" statement beamed to NASA from outer space some 55 years ago. A sudden and potentially catastrophic problem had arisen that threatened the Apollo crew, required immediate address, and ultimately changed the mission. Like Apollo 13, the "crisis of humanities" has been pointing us to problems where lives and minds and the future of many missions are at stake. Showcasing Houston as a global city, this conference answers the moment of historic challenge with aspirations to engineer not just a safe return from peril but with a mission to build the future differently.

To navigate the future of WLA and U.S. West Studies, the conference invites work that addresses where peoples, places, and histories continue to be the foundation of humanistic study: the arts. These arts include literature but so too the visual arts, music, cinema, television, architecture, and photography. Anywhere cultural producers ask us to wonder about the world or encourage us to ask questions about our shared environment can bring new knowledges. Those communities most vexed by the issues of the day shed light on the imagination as a site of hopefulness, a broad space to be more than the sum of our disputes, disagreements, disappointments.

To take on the mission of Engineering the Future of US West Studies, WLA 2027 welcomes proposals that reflect both the gravity of our times but also aspire toward a better world to come. We encourage proposal for papers, panels, roundtables, lightning rounds, structured conversations, and other formats that explore any of the themes listed above or on the following topics.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">—The New Silent Majority: Feminists and Feminist Solidarities—Indigenous cultural production and activism in conservative states—After a Day Without a Mexican What Comes Next?—What if Juneteenth was celebrated every day, starting in Texas?—Imagining queerness and queer spaces post-MAGA—Emerging pedagogies on reproductive justice—Any aspect of the public arts in the US West that challenge settler imaginaries—New or experimental forms of literary expression that expand notions of self and environment—Narrative in any medium that chronicle climate awareness through extreme events | <ul style="list-style-type: none">—Community solidarity through activist protest, witnessing, reporting, testifying—Re-engineering the classroom in an era of A.I.—Book clubs as insurgent sites of knowledge production alongside Citizen Readers—Data Centers, Library Closings, and Book Bans—Reimagining humanist education as separate from the corporate university—Redefining what separates the urban from the rural in the US West—The Moon, Mars and beyond: The challenges/opportunities of the next Space Frontier—ICE, Immigration, and Brownness—Joy and Counter-Cultures 2.0 |
|---|---|