

PROVISIONAL LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This document, composed by the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program at MSU is considered a living document. It has been redacted to accommodate space considerations.

We acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg—the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. The University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize that settler and Indigenous signatories understood the terms of treaties in starkly different terms. According to a map within the University archive, Anishinaabeg maintained an ‘Indian Encampment’ south of the Red Cedar River when classes were first held at the University (then known as Michigan Agricultural College) on May 13, 1857.

We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations (Bay Mills Indian Community, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Hannahville Indian Community, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians), as well as other Indigenous people and historic tribes in Michigan (Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Grand River Bands of Ottawa Indians, Mackinac Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians, and Swan Creek Black River Confederated Ojibwa Tribes), across Turtle Island, and throughout the Fourth World.

We collectively understand that offering Land Acknowledgements or Land Recognitions do not absolve settler-colonial privilege or diminish colonial structures of violence, at either the individual or institutional level. We recognize that Land Acknowledgements must be preceded and followed with ongoing and unwavering commitments to American Indian and Indigenous communities. We affirm Indigenous sovereignty and hold Michigan State University accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

Inquiries can be sent to Prof. Kristin Arola, Interim-Director of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (arola@aiis.msu.edu).

Society for the Study of  
MIDWESTERN  
LITERATURE

MAY 29–30  
2025

WRITING THE MIDWEST

2025 Symposium of Scholars and Creative Writers

Kellogg Hotel and Convention Center  
East Lansing, MI

THURSDAY, MAY 29

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM	
Registration	South Lobby
Book Display	104

SESSION A 9:00–10:15 AM	
Prose and Poetry	103AB
Readiness Is All: Beyond the Cliche of ‘Time Gives Critical Distance’ in Creative Writing	
Moderator: Rachael Price	
“Long Hauler of Short Stories,” Dawn Burns, Michigan State University	
“Turning Trauma into Art Through Poetic Collage,” Mary Catherine Harper, Defiance College	
TBA, Amy Wise	
TBA, Bex Miller, Southern New Hampshire University	
TBA, Michelle Willman	

Criticism	105AB
Theodore Roethke and ... Poetic Affinities	
Moderator: William Barillas	
“Poems of Becoming: William Carlos Williams’s ‘By the road to the contagious hospital’ and Theodore Roethke’s ‘Cuttings,’” John Rohrkemper, Elizabethtown College	
“The Ecstatic Bird, The Lost Self, the Delicious Word Death: Roethke’s ‘The Far Field’ and Whitman’s ‘Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,’” Lynn Domina, Northern Michigan University	
“When Nature Nurtures: Whitman’s Techniques of Cataloging and Anaphora in Theodore Roethke’s ‘The Abyss’ and Mary Oliver’s ‘Hum Hum,’” Karen Lulich Horwath, Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy	
“Darkness of Shade and Sea: Roethke’s ‘In a Dark Time,’ and Tess Gallagher’s Unpublished Poem, ‘Sitting in the Dark,’” Madeline Bruessow, Independent Scholar, and Sherrin Frances, Saginaw Valley State University	

SESSION B 10:30–11:45 AM	
Criticism	103AB
The Postmodern Midwest	
Moderator: Jon Lauck	
“In Tall Grass and Deindustrialized Cities: The Midwest as Horror in Three Films,” Wes Bishop, Jacksonville State University	
“‘There Were, Of Course, Losses’: Violence, Decline, and Disaster in Katherine Zlabek’s <i>When</i> ,” Matthew J. Darling, Gannon University	

Criticism	105AB
Theodore Roethke and ... Poets on Roethke	
Moderator: Sherrin Frances	
Monica Rico, University of Michigan, Bear Writers’ Conference	
Anita Skeen, Professor Emerita, RCAH Center for Poetry, Michigan State University	
Donny Winter, Delta College	

Prose and Poetry	102
At Home in the Midwest	
Moderator: Dawn Burns	
“Fool in a Blue House: A Meditation on Midwestern Domesticity,” Katherine Gaffney, University of Illinois	
“Too Alone,” Elizabeth Trueblood, University of Olivet	
“Just Family,” Hannah Feustle, University of Michigan	
“glitch, Michigan,” David Greenspan, University of Michigan	

LUNCH BREAK & MEETINGS	12:00–1:00 PM
Editorial Committee	Brody Square
Student Mentoring Cafe	Brody Square

SESSION C 1:15–2:30 PM	
Criticism	103AB
1925	
Moderator: Patricia Oman	
“‘That’s My Middle West’: Nick Carraway’s ‘Reflective Nostalgia’ and <i>The Great Gatsby</i> at 100,” David Buehrer, Valdosta State University	
“‘To Wait and Doubt’: The Ethos of Sinclair Lewis’s <i>Arrowsmith</i> (1925),” Jeffrey Hotz, East Stroudsburg State University	
“Floyd Dell’s Radical, Optimistic, and Diverse Rejection of Sexual Thrallldom in His Two 1925 Novels, <i>This Mad Ideal</i> and <i>Runaway</i> ,” Marilyn Judith Atlas, Ohio University	
“ <i>The Great Gatsby</i> and the Loathsome Eugenicians,” John Rohrkemper, Elizabethtown College	

Prose	105AB
Stone Cold: Writing About Climate Change in the Midwest	
Moderator: Mary Obuchowski	
“A Horse Named Climate Grief,” Gretchen Lida Comcowich, Gateway Technical College	
“The Mourner’s Bestiary,” Eiren Caffall	
“The Conceivable Future: Planning Families and Taking Action in the Age of Climate Change,” Josephine Ferorelli	



THURSDAY, MAY 29 (CONT.)

Prose	102
Space and Place in Midwestern Fiction	
Moderator: Rachael Price	
“Moral Treatment,” Stephanie Carpenter, Michigan Tech University	
“Seeing People Where They Live: The Role of Physical Environment in Midwestern Fiction,” Patrick Garry, University of South Dakota	
“The Tenure Track,” Rachael Price, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	

SESSION D2:45–4:00 PM

Criticism	103AB
Trailblazing Women of the Midwest	
Moderator: Marcia Noe	
“The Economics of Liberation: Midwestern Anarchist Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Industrial Capitalism,” Michelle Campbell, University of Michigan	
“The Little Roomers: Women Writers of Chicago’s Progressive-Era Arts Society,” Ellyn Ruhlmann, Western Michigan University	
“Cather’s Pioneer Mothers,” Patricia Oman, Hastings College	

Prose and Poetry105AB

Midwest Tensions	
Moderator: Jeffrey Hotz	
“Poetry from Michigan’s Wild North,” Lynn Domina, Northern Michigan University	
“Locked Out: Fiction,” Caitlin Horrocks, Grand Valley State University	
“Michigan’s CON-CON 11: Women and State Constitution-Making in 1961,” Lynn Liberato	

Criticism102

Hemingway in 2025	
Moderator: Michael Kim Roos	
“Hemingway’s Revisions of ‘Indian Camp,’” John Beall, Collegiate School, New York City	
“‘Nothing Was Ever Lost’: Chaos, Change, Chesterton, and Choice in Hemingway’s ‘The Three-Day Blow,’” Katherine Palmer, North Central Michigan College	
“Goddam Puritans: What’s Dayton, Ohio Doing in Hemingway’s <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> ?,” Michael Kim Roos, University of Cincinnati--Blue Ash College	

SESSION E4:15–5:30 PM

Criticism	103AB
Hearing the Heartland	
Moderator: Jon Lauck	
“The Dean of Realism: William Dean Howells and the Origins of Midwestern Style,” Scott Emmert, University of Wisconsin--Oshkosh	
“Sinclair Lewis: Revisiting a Midwestern Rebel in the Twenty-First Century,” Rachael Price, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	
“‘Back There in Illinois’: Edgar Lee Masters and the Midwestern Populist Perspective,” Jason Stacy, Southern Illinois University--Edwardsville	
“Lorraine Hansberry’s <i>Queerly Divided Selves</i> ,” Ann Kopecky, University of Pennsylvania	

Poetry105AB

Poetry, Place, and the Land	
Moderator: Edward Morin	
“How Fish Is Made,” Tuuli Qin-Terrill, Northern Michigan University	
“Poetry from Michigan’s Wild North,” Lynn Domina, Northern Michigan University	
“As We Move the Land Sings: Readings From Commonwealth,” D.A. Lockhart	
“‘Enfant Terrible’ and Other Poems,” Edward Morin, College for Creative Studies	

MEETINGS5:45–6:45 PM

Executive Advisory Council Meeting	103AB
Light Meal	

PLENARY7:00–8:00 PM

David D. Anderson Plenary Presentation	105AB
Wilson C. Chen and Maggie E. Morris Davis	

PERFORMANCE8:15–9:15 PM

An Evening of Hemingway-Themed Music and Other Songs	103AB
Michael Kim Roos	

FRIDAY, MAY 30

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Registration	South Lobby
Book Display	104

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING8:00–9:00 AM

Meeting and Continental Breakfast	104
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SESSION F9:00–10:15 AM

Criticism	103AB
Midwestern Gothic	
Moderator: Robert Beasecker	
“American Nightmare: A Gothic Look at Donald Ray Pollock’s <i>Knockemstiff</i> ,” Keriann Kaufmann, University of Denver	
“‘A Handful of Men’: Gender Politics in Bonnie Jo Campbell’s <i>The Waters</i> ,” Charles Cunningham, Eastern Michigan University	
“The Matriarchal Zook Family Women in the Novel <i>The Waters</i> by Bonnie Jo Campbell,” Janet Ruth Heller, Michigan College English Association	

Criticism105AB

Reading and Writing the Midwest	
Moderator: Marilyn Judith Atlas	
“Mapping the Midwest,” Adam Ochonicky, University of Wisconsin--Oshkosh	
“Am I the A**hole of Spoon River? Using Social Media to Teach a Classic Midwestern Text,” Rachael Price, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	
“An Ethical Case for Multimodal Projects in Literature Courses,” Patricia Oman, Hastings College	

Poetry102

Reckonings in Poetry	
Moderator: Scott Emmert	
“The Mime Who Yelled: Playing with Philosophy Through Storytelling and Creative Writing,” Ashley Romo, Michigan State University	
“Zero F*cks: Deconstructing Religious Indoctrination Through Poetry,” Bex Miller, Southern New Hampshire University	
“He Was a Spellbinder,” Mackenzi Butson, Northwestern University	

SESSION G10:30–11:45 AM

Criticism	103AB
Modernity and the Midwest	
Moderator: Meg Gillette	
“ <i>Poetry: A Magazine of Verse</i> : Changing Times, Revising Roles,” Phil Greasley, University of Kentucky (read by Mary Obuchowski)	
“Gender and Social Commentary in the Cozy Mysteries of Charlotte Murray Russell,” Nicole Grafon and Lily Thomas, Augustana College	

Prose105AB

Reckonings in Creative Nonfiction	
Moderator: Rachael Price	
“Discrimination Against Jews in the Midwest,” Janet Ruth Heller, Michigan College English Association	
“Go Gentle: A Sketch of My Father at the End,” John Rohrkemper, Elizabethtown College	
“Michael Martone, U.S. Highway 30, LaPorte County, Indiana,” Dawn Burns, Michigan State University	
“West: A Reflection on War, Trauma, Colonialism, and the White Settler Identity,” Angela Williamson Emmert	

Poetry102

The Past Is Poetry	
Moderator: Michael Kim Roos	
“Poems for My Father,” Cecil Sayre	
“Track, Physics, and Song,” Edward Morin, College for Creative Studies	

LUNCHEON12:00–1:30 PM

Awards	Room
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MARK TWAIN AWARD READING1:45–3:00 PM

Ana Castillo	105AB
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SESSION H3:15–5:15 PM

Poetry	103AB
A Poetry Reading by Linda Nemec Foster and Scott M. Bade	
Moderator: Janet Ruth Heller	
“Embrace the World: A Poetry Reading by Linda Nemec Foster,” Linda Nemec Foster, Aquinas College	
“Poems from the <i>Preemptive Elegy</i> and Other Books,” Scott M. Bade, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts	

MEETING5:30–7:00 PM

Board of Directors	Olympus Room
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