

Call for Papers: The Innocent Midwest

The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature invites essays for an upcoming issue of its peer-reviewed journal *Midwestern Miscellany* on the topic of The Innocent Midwest, to be guest edited by Marcia Noe (Marcia-Noe@utc.edu).

In her recent book *The Innocent Midwest: Culture, Region, and Identity, 1793-1930* (Ohio University Press, 2026), Marcia Noe traces the construction of the trope of Midwestern innocence across multiple centuries, arguing that it persists, even today, because of the national needs and interests it meets. "We need the Midwest to be innocent and the most American part of America," she argues, "so that we can like ourselves as Americans" (172). For this issue of *Midwestern Miscellany*, SSML seeks essays that explore the paradox of the Midwest further.

Essays may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- The persistence of the trope of the Innocent Midwest into the 20th and early 21st centuries
- The role of different genres and media (e.g., children's literature, situational comedies, horror films, news media, political speeches) in perpetuating or deconstructing the Midwest as innocent
- The influence of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and/or diaspora on depictions of Midwestern innocence
- The role of nostalgia in perpetuating the trope of Midwest innocence
- Theories of region, place, or national myth that provide new understanding of the the trope of the Innocent Midwest

Please send queries and/or essays to Marcia Noe (Marcia-Noe@utc.edu) by August 1, 2026. Finished essays should be 3,000-6,000 words and should be accompanied by a recent CV.