

MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of English - English Week
12th Annual MSU Undergraduate Literature Conference, March 26-27, 2026

THURSDAY, March 26th, 2026, 9:30AM – 4:45PM (PSU 313)

9:30-10:45AM: FAULKNER

Moderator:

- **Reece Kinnaird (MSU)**, The Effects of Childhood Trauma on Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*
- **Mikayla Peterson (MSU)**, The Silenced Women of *Light in August*

11:00AM-12:15PM: QUEER READING

Moderator:

- **Zane Prater (MSU)**, The Jester's Privilege: Aestheticism as a Method of Concealing Controversial Meanings in the Works of Oscar Wilde
- **Mary Bates (MSU)**, *The Price of Salt* and the Lesbian Experience
- **Madalyn Levine (MSU)**, Queerly Never After: How Discriminating Language in *Monster* (2023) and *Young Mungo* (2022) Leads Boys to Tragic Endings

12:30-1:45PM: FANTASY, SCI FI, HORROR

Moderator:

- **Nicholas Holland (MSU)**, The King, the Wizard, and the Industrial Revolution: Tolkien's Anti-Industrial Sentiments in *The Lord of the Rings*
- **Mary Scarlett Jones (Auburn)**, Dominance and Desire: Using Science Fiction to Examine Competition Between Humanity and the Natural World
- **Abby Brown (MSU)**, Grief in Netflix's *The Haunting of Hill House*

2:00-3:15PM: SNACK AND CHAT

Join us for informal discussion of English Department programs and organizations!

3:30-4:45PM: POETRY IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Moderator:

- **Ella Alt (Webster)**, Forever and Always: Symbolism of Eternal Love in Ben Jonson's "Song: To Celia"
- **Ella Gamble (Auburn)**, Silent Heroines, As Edified by Felicia Hemans
- **Mari Gomez (MSU)**, *The Poet X*: The Importance of Academic Third Spaces for Artful Expressions of Personal Trauma and Systemic Oppression

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FRIDAY, March 27th, 2026, 9:05AM – 3:45PM (PSU 313)

9:05-9:55AM: NARRATION AND TIME

Moderator:

- **Michelle Shannon (MSU)**, *Old Habits and New Loyalties: Sarty Snopes's Moral Growth in Faulkner's "Barn Burning"*
- **Taylor Ward (MSU)**, *When the Universe Stilled and Hushed: Queer Temporality and Reimagining Benjamin in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury**
- **Katie Weeks (MSU)**, *Major Milroy's Clock: Differing Depictions of Neurodivergence in Wilkie Collins' *Armadale**

10:10-11:00AM: TOMMY ORANGE'S *THERE THERE*

Moderator:

- **Zac Ellis (MSU)**, *There There: Hybridity in Modern Native Culture*
- **Quincy Hodges (MSU)**, *Life in a Song: Music and Identity in *There There**
- **Riley Talbert (MSU)**, *The Anti-Colonial Implications of Polyphony in *There There* and *Beloved**

11:15AM-12:05PM: SNACK AND CHAT

Join us for informal discussion of English Department programs and organizations!

12:20-1:10PM: GENRES AND TYPES

Moderator:

- **Aubrey Costello (MSSU)**, *Marginalized Groups and Monster Theory in Bram Stoker's *Dracula**
- **Nicole Rokusek (MSU)**, *Daisy Miller: A Manic Pixie Dream Girl*
- **Maggie Shay Jordan (Florida Southern)**, *Constructing Chaos: Examining the Escape Fantasy in *Dead Poets Society* and *The Secret History**

1:25-2:15PM: CONTEMPORARY ASIAN AMERICAN NARRATIVE

Moderator:

- **Sarah Prescott (MSSU)**, *The True Taste of Hospitality: Ownership, Nostalgia, and the Language of Food in Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt**
- **Lexi Brown (MSSU)**, *Literary Anti-Heroines: Disaffection, Desire, and Alienation in Jean Kyoung Frazier's *Pizza Girl**
- **Andi Caravella (MSU)**, *Format and Content in *American Born Chinese*: The Transformative Power of Graphic Novels*

2:30-3:45PM: AMERICAN LITERATURE

Moderator:

- **Charley Melton-Hovland (MSU)**, *Organized Religion as an Oppressive Structure in Faulkner's *Light in August**
- **Haylee Esser (MSU)**, *Feminist Themes in *Light in August*: Faulkner's Subtle Message to the Male Reader*
- **Ben Neufeld (MSU)**, *The Spectacle: Femininity and Material Culture in Chopin and Wharton*
- **LeAnn Skidmore (MSU)**, *Audrey Lorde and June Jordan: The Poetics of Sexual Gratification and Oppression*