



CFP: 2025 SSAWW Conference

“Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures: 25 Years of SSAWW”

November 6-9, 2025
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Marriott Old City

For the 2025 SSAWW Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, we invite proposals on the theme **“Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures”** as we commemorate twenty-five years of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers.

“Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures” celebrates the first twenty-five years of SSAWW and its mission to promote and advance the study of American women writers through research, teaching, and publication, while also looking ahead to our plans for the future. As a community, we engage with the creative work of women across the Americas who foster change and build networks that sustain us through difficult times. The past 25 years have shown us that historical precedence cannot be assured for collective futures. As we write this, we acknowledge the tension of our current moment alongside our desire to celebrate the accomplishments of our community of activists, allies, feminists, scholars, students, teachers, and writers. We invite proposals that reflect not only on how our organization’s impact has opened up the study of so many different women writers but also how we offer new definitions for what a writer is and what a writer does. How have the writers we study experienced similar times of tension? How have such times affected our scholarship? What do alternative forms of authorship look like both then and now? How did nineteenth-century women write about, promote, and critique organizations and organizational thinking in moments of crisis? How did they mentor one another or represent mentoring relationships in their work? How do we honor our commitment to these authors, our organization, and these enterprises more broadly in the face of limited resources and structural changes within academia? And finally, how do we nourish one another and our work through such times?

Our conference embraces the capacity of creative work to engage with and represent the past and to imagine limitless futures. We welcome proposals that focus on class, disability, gender, race,

and sexuality. While we encourage papers, panels, roundtables, and workshops that explore our theme, however, our 2025 conference is not restricted to them. As we return to Philadelphia, we welcome contributions that highlight the city's women writers and artists, organizers and organizations. And as always, we encourage panel proposals from affiliated societies.

In the spirit of celebrating the past(s), present(s), and future(s) of the study of American women writers, the 2025 conference will offer numerous opportunities for community-building and personal and professional flourishing: workshops, mentoring, and brainstorming sessions for that colleagues at all stages, from graduate students to retirees; meetings with journal editors; roundtables and discussions about teaching and learning.

Proposals for panels, roundtables, and individual papers are to be submitted no later than **February 28th, 2025**. Details on proposal submissions can be found below. Please check the SSAWW listserv and website for updates on our 2025 Conference.

Proposals are welcome on subjects from early American literature to the literature of the present. Proposals might engage with these topics but are not limited to them:

I. The Role of the Society for the Study of American Women Writers

- for the larger academic community of scholars
- as a space of support, mentorship, alliances, and solidarity
- as a partner in recovery
- as an organization of affiliated societies
- in showcasing, supporting, and creating regional reading groups
- in honoring its founding (i.e., members, their scholarship, and their vision)
- in preparing new scholars for the future, including for the job market

II. The Implication(s) of the Society's "AWW"

- what we mean by "American," "Women," and "Writers"
- how these definitions have traditionally shaped the scholarship supported by the organization
- who might be included by expanding definitions of these terms

III. The Relationship between Content and Community

- interplay between historical genealogies of women and women-identifying writers
- mentoring relationships between women authors
- explorations of the historical genealogies of SSAWW and/or our affiliate societies with a focus on the exchange across generations of scholars

IV. The "Study" and/or "Recovery" of American Women Writers

- the history of this work (finding and studying “new” pasts)
- what it means to do this work today
- the future(s) of this work
- recovery, regrounding, regrouping, reshaping
- the limits and complexities of recovery
- how the field has changed (especially in the last twenty-five years)
- why we continue to study American women writers

V. Past(s) and Future(s) in American Women’s Writing

- (re)writing the past
- understanding histories within American women’s writing
- imagining futures

VI. Future(s) of the Humanities: Public, Digital, Medical, Environmental

- digital humanities and new media
- the public humanities and engagement with local communities
- medical humanities
- environmental humanities, the anthropocene, and changing climates

VII. Teaching and Pedagogy

- AWW in the classroom
- what it means to teach in the shadow of political pressures and restrictions

VIII. Professional Development

- navigating the academic world in 2025
- how scholars respond to increasing service workloads at their institutions and in the profession
- moving into administration to enact positive change

Please send your submissions as PDFs to ssaww.conferences@gmail.com

Deadline: February 28th, 2025

Individual paper proposals: Interested participants should provide a tentative paper title as well as a proposal of approximately 250 to 300 words.

Pre-formed panel proposals: Interested participants should provide a tentative panel title and contact information for the session chair. In addition, please submit a tentative title and a brief

proposal of approximately 250 to 300 words for each participant. Note that panels typically consist of three, but no more than four, presenters who are each allotted between fifteen and twenty minutes to present their work with time remaining for discussion.

Pre-formed roundtable proposals: Interested participants should provide a tentative roundtable title and the contact information for the session chair. In addition, please submit a title and brief proposal of approximately 150 to 250 words for each participant. Note that roundtables typically consist of five to six participants allocated around six to eight minutes to present their work with time remaining for discussion.

Workshop and exhibition proposals: Interested participants should provide a tentative session title as well as a brief workshop/exhibition overview of approximately 150 to 250 words.

Special sessions (for SSAWW affiliate organizations): SSAWW affiliate organizations should provide a tentative panel title and contact information of the session chair. In addition, please submit a tentative title and a brief proposal of approximately 250 to 300 words for each participant. Note that panels typically consist of three, but no more than four, presenters who are each allotted between fifteen and twenty minutes to present their work with time remaining for discussion.

For any special sessions (such as a syllabus/assignment exchange, film screening, etc.) that does not follow this format, please contact Dr. Ellen Gruber Garvey directly at ssaww.vpdevelopment@gmail.com with a query.

For complete sessions, please ensure that notifications are sent to potential participants by mid-January at the latest to allow those whose proposals are not accepted for the panel or roundtable to submit individual paper proposals by the submission deadline of **February 28, 2025**. Chairs will be asked to provide an abstract for the panel as a whole (approximately 250 to 300 words) as well as the contact information and a brief biographical statement (no longer than 60 words) for each participant, each individual abstract, and any A/V requirements (please note that while we do recognize the need for support for some presentations, there are always high costs associated with securing this equipment that we would like to limit).

Participants are allowed to appear on the final program no more than twice in an effort to allow as many individuals as possible the opportunity to participate. Participants will be listed in the program if they are presenting a paper, participating in a roundtable or workshop, or serving as the chair for a session. Participating in two different roles in the same session (e.g., as the chair and a panelist) would therefore count as two listings in the program. Please note that it is not permissible to present on two panels, though individuals can present as part of a panel and a roundtable session.

For help regarding any technical issues with submitting proposals or questions about the participation guidelines, please contact Isabela Creighton, Conference Associate for the 2025 conference, at ssaww.conferences@gmail.com; she is also the contact person for scheduling, A/V requests, etc.

For questions regarding the conference itself, please contact the Vice President of Organizational Matters, Dr. Patrick Allen via email at ssaww.vporganizationalmatters@gmail.com

Note that selected participants must be members of SSAWW no later than **June 6, 2025** in order to secure their place on the conference program.

We look forward to receiving proposals for the many thoughtful and informative sessions that our SSAWW members always produce and to seeing you in Philadelphia for yet another powerful SSAWW Conference.

For conference updates and additional information about the Society for the Study of American Women Writers, please visit the [2025 SSAWW Conference block](#) on our main page.