

Beyond the Page

Storytelling Across Media and Borders
in Precarious Times



FEATURING KEYNOTE ADDRESSES BY

*Cathy Park Hong
& Hanya Yanagihara*

APRIL 29 — MAY 2 · 2026

AUSTIN, TEXAS · HOTEL ZAZA

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF THE MULTI-ETHNIC LITERATURE OF THE UNITED STATES

WELCOME

Letter from the President

Dear colleagues, friends, and fellow travelers,

It is my great privilege to welcome you to MELUS 2026 in Austin, Texas. Whether you are arriving from across the country or the world, returning to a community you have helped build, or joining us for the first time, we are glad you are here. Over the next four days we will gather at two of Austin's most striking venues – Hotel ZaZa from Wednesday through Friday, and the W Austin on Saturday, just two blocks south – to do what this Society has done for more than five decades: take seriously the full breadth of what American literature has been, is, and might yet become.

This year's theme, *Beyond the Page: Storytelling Across Media and Borders in Precarious Times*, asks us to consider what becomes of literary study when we follow our objects of inquiry into film, television, comics, performance, the digital, and beyond – and what becomes of those forms when we read them with the rigor and care our field has long brought to the printed word. The panels, plenaries, and workshops gathered here take up that question from a remarkable range of vantage points: speculative aesthetics and Afrofuturism, transpacific poetics and Latinx fashion, Indigenous futurities and Asian American performance, ecological imagination and ethical archives, and much else besides. The program reflects both the depth of our field and its capacity to keep moving.

The phrase "in precarious times" is no decoration. We meet at a moment when ethnic studies programs are under direct attack in Texas and elsewhere, when book bans and curriculum restrictions have become routine, when the lives and livelihoods of many in our communities – students, colleagues, the writers we study – are subject to renewed forms of state violence. That MELUS continues to grow, that this conference is among our largest yet, that scholars have traveled here from across the United States and from abroad: these facts are themselves a form of answer. We are not retreating. We are gathering.

I am deeply grateful to our two extraordinary keynote speakers, Cathy Park Hong and Hanya Yanagihara, whose work in poetry, essay, and the novel exemplifies the imaginative reach this conference celebrates. I thank our host institutions – Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas at Austin – and the local site committee whose tireless work has made this gathering possible. I thank the program committee for the care with which they shaped this year's offerings, and the MELUS Executive Council for stewarding the Society through a year of growth and challenge. And I thank Frederick Luis Aldama, whose partnership at every stage has been

indispensable.

Finally, I thank you. Without your scholarship, your teaching, your travel, and your willingness to spend four days in a hotel ballroom in the Texas heat with strangers who become friends, none of this would matter. Welcome to Austin. Welcome to MELUS 2026. Let us get to work.

Christopher González

President, MELUS

Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Endowed Chair in the Humanities

Southern Methodist University

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Land Acknowledgment

MELUS 2026 takes place on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous peoples who have lived, traveled, traded, and made their lives across what is now called central Texas. We acknowledge that these lands were taken through colonization, dispossession, and violence, and that the histories we gather here to study are not separable from those longer histories of removal and survival. We acknowledge as well that Indigenous peoples remain present in this region today — as scholars, writers, organizers, neighbors, and members of sovereign nations whose claims to these lands precede and exceed the institutions that now occupy them.

For a society devoted to the study of multi-ethnic literatures of the United States, this acknowledgment is not a preface to be performed and set aside. It is an orientation. The literatures we read, the categories we work with, the borders we cross in our scholarship — all are shaped by the foundational and ongoing fact of settler colonialism on this continent. We commit, in this gathering and beyond it, to keeping that fact at the center of our work: in our citations, our syllabi, our research questions, and our institutional advocacy. We support Indigenous-led scholarship, sovereignty, and self-determination, and we recognize our responsibilities — as scholars, teachers, and members of this Society — to the lands and peoples among whom we are gathered.

THE SOCIETY

About MELUS

The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) was founded in 1973 to expand the study of American literature to include the literatures of all ethnic groups in the United States – African American, Asian American, Latinx, Native American, Jewish American, Arab American, and others. For more than five decades, MELUS has been a central venue for scholarship that takes seriously the full breadth of American literary production across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines.

MELUS publishes the journal *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.*, currently edited by Gary Totten, in partnership with Oxford University Press. The journal appears quarterly and has been one of the field's anchor publications since its founding. Special issues, recent essays, and submission guidelines are available through the Oxford Academic platform.

The Society holds an annual conference each spring – this year in Austin, Texas, hosted by Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas at Austin – and presents annual awards recognizing distinguished scholarship in multi-ethnic American literary studies.

THE CONFERENCE

Beyond the Page

The phrase "beyond the page" carries a deliberate ambiguity. It points outward – to the films, television series, comics, performance pieces, podcasts, social-media artifacts, video games, and digital archives that have become inseparable from how stories now move through American culture. It points inward – to the longer history of how multi-ethnic literatures have always exceeded the printed page, drawing on oral tradition, music, ritual, embodied practice, and visual art in ways that the institutional category of "literature" has often been slow to recognize. And it points across – to the borders, both geographic and disciplinary, that our scholarship has long been concerned with crossing.

To gather under this banner in 2026 is to ask what storytelling does in a moment when the conditions for telling stories – and the conditions for the people who tell them – are increasingly precarious. Ethnic studies programs are under legislative attack. Books are banned from school libraries. Faculty face threats to academic freedom that would have seemed unthinkable a decade

ago. Our students arrive in classrooms shaped by surveillance, displacement, and uncertainty about whether the institutions that house our work will remain hospitable to it. In such a moment, "beyond the page" is not only a methodological provocation. It is a description of where the urgent work of our field is increasingly being done: in community archives, in digital exhibits, in independent presses, in performance spaces, on social-media platforms, in the spaces between formal scholarship and public-facing intellectual life.

The conference theme also asks us to think carefully about *borders*: the U.S.-Mexico border that runs through so much of the scholarship gathered here; the transpacific and transatlantic crossings that have shaped Asian American and Black diasporic literatures; the borders between high and popular culture that our field has always been willing to cross; the borders between disciplines that comparative ethnic studies has always exceeded. Borders are sites of violence and of generative possibility, often at the same time. Multi-ethnic literary studies has long been a discipline that takes seriously what happens at borders rather than what happens despite them.

Our two plenary speakers – Cathy Park Hong, whose poetry and essays have redefined what Asian American letters can do, and Hanya Yanagihara, whose novels span centuries and continents to interrogate the costs of cultural encounter – model the theme's range. So do the more than seventy panels that follow. Whether you are working on nineteenth-century Black periodicals or contemporary Latina horror cinema, on Indigenous sound studies or Italian American foodways, on the speculative imagination or the political economy of literary form, you will find in this program colleagues asking adjacent questions and a community that takes those questions seriously. That, finally, is what MELUS is for.

Cathy Park Hong



MIGUEL ÁNGEL HERNÁNDEZ '26

FRIDAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

May 1

12:45 PM · AWARDS LUNCHEON

★ ★ ★

SELECTED WORKS

Minor Feelings: An Asian American

Reckoning

2020 · ESSAYS

Engine Empire

2012 · POEMS

Dance Dance Revolution

2007 · POEMS

Translating Mo'um

2002 · POEMS

POET, ESSAYIST, AND ONE OF THE MOST VITAL VOICES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LETTERS

Hanya Yanagihara

SATURDAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

May 2

4:45 PM · W AUSTIN · GREAT ROOM ABC

★ ★ ★

SELECTED WORKS

To Paradise

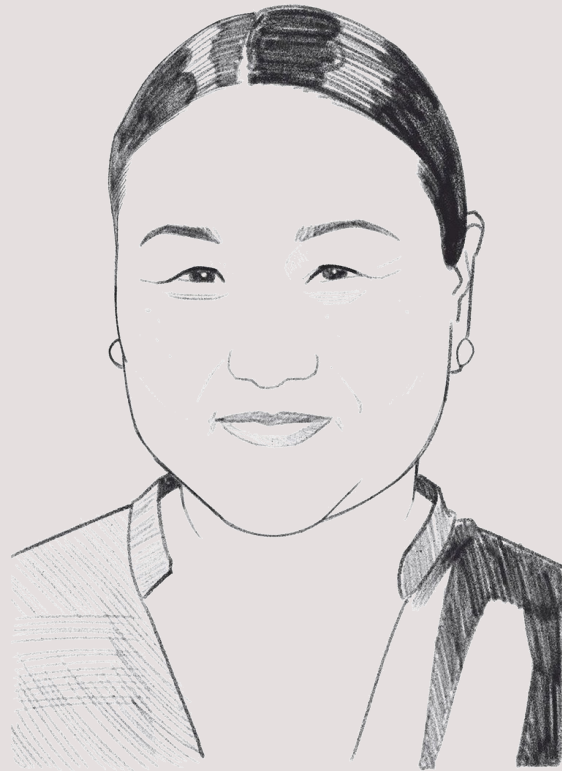
2022 · NOVEL

A Little Life

2015 · NOVEL

The People in the Trees

2013 · NOVEL



MIGUEL ÁNGEL HERNÁNDEZ '26

NOVELIST, EDITOR, AND ONE OF THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL LITERARY VOICES OF OUR CENTURY

DAY ONE

Wednesday

April 29, 2026

6:00 PM-9:00 PM – Open Mic Night and Reception, [For early arrivals · Optional · Location: Group Therapy Restaurant and Bar, 7th Floor Hotel ZaZa]



DAY TWO

Thursday

April 30, 2026

8:00 AM – Registration Opens [Open through 6:00 PM]

SESSION 1

8:30–9:45 AM

1A

Harlem Renaissance & Early Black Women's Writing

RAINMAKER

"Revisiting Countertestimony and the Reception of Charles Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901) in Wilmington"

R.J. Boutelle
University of Cincinnati

"Queer Care in 'Dave's Neckliss'"

Eric Norton
Marymount University

"Typing and Testifying in Pauline Hopkins' Novels *Contending Forces* and *Hagar's Daughter*"

Abigail Horne
Hampden-Sydney College

"Radiating into the Past: Speculative Ancestry with Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Joseph Bruchac"

Rachel Northrop
University of Miami

1B

Tierra y Texto: Chicana/o Literature, Ecology, and Place

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"In Times of Crisis, or the Crisis of Time: War, Dispossession, and Temporal Ecologies in Helena María Viramontes's 'The Cariboo Cafe,'"

Edward Avila
Minnesota State University, Mankato

"Arboreal Anzaldúa: The Significance of Mesquite Trees Across Gloria Anzaldúa's Prose and Poetry"

Diana Noreen Rivera
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

"Fabulation and Monument in Villarreal's Borderland Storytelling"

Chris Meade
Appalachian State University

1C **Memory, Market, and Resistance: Vietnamese American Literature** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES B**

"Inherited Loyalties: Gendered Memory and Migrant Positioning in Viet Thanh Nguyen's 'War Years'"

Neda Ghayour
Northern Illinois University

"Rewriting War: Diaspora, Media, and Power in Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*"

Ana Ramírez
California State University, Long Beach

"'Còn nước, còn tát': Hope for a Decolonial Future Across Vietnamese American Storytelling"

Karen Siu
Rice University

"Negotiating Race in the Literary Marketplace: Reflexive Opacity and the Diasporic Vietnamese Writer"

Brian Nguyen
University of Michigan

1D **Women of Color Caucus (WOCC) Business Meeting** **GOLD STANDARD**
[SPECIAL SESSION]

Chairs: Sherry Johnson, Grand Valley State University & Leah Milne, University of Indianapolis

1E **Crossing the Color Line: Comparative Form and 19th-Century Traditions** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

"Genre as Strategy: Form, Voice, and Identity in Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*"

Siting Wang
University of Texas at Dallas

"Ownership and Filiation in the Gothic Novels *Of One Blood* by Pauline Hopkins and *Sab* by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda"

Lilia Martinez
University of Texas at Dallas

"Performing Belonging: Bilingual Adaptation, Hybrid Identity, and Multimodal Literacies on the Children's Stage"

Rosita Beidaghi
University of Texas–San Antonio

"Digressing Toward the East: A Transpacific Poetics in Melville's *Typee*"

Yun Song
Changzhou University

SESSION 2 10:00–11:15 AM

2A

Archives and Accountability: From Reconstruction to the Present

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"Stranger than Fiction': Horror and Speculation in Nonfiction Writing by James Weldon Johnson and Charles Chesnutt"

Lesley Larkin
Northern Michigan University

"To Make a World: Historical Recovery and Performance in Suzan-Lori Parks's *Sally & Tom* (2024)"

Marissa Kessenich
University of Virginia

"We Need to See the Present Waver': An Ethics of Seeing and Reconstructing the Archives in Rebecca Hall's *Wake*"

Ash Johnston
University of Connecticut

"But I was there too, and I seen it differently': Multidirectional Memory in James McBride's *The Good Lord Bird*"

Jens Evers
University of Kansas

2B

Cruzando: Border, Migration, and Latinx Narrative

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"Resembling a Citizen: Neoliberal Migrancy in *The Deportation of Wopper Barraza*"

Kevin Concannon
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

"I'm Dead': Globalization, Capitalism, Border Regimes, and Migrants in *Signs Preceding the End of the World* and *Sleep Dealer*"

Riley Davoren
University of South Carolina

"The Politics of Silence and Translation: Rearticulating Border Identity in *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*"

Tsukasa Sugiura
Texas A&M University

"Muzzled Truths: Testimonio, Legal Discourse, and the Latinx Novel"

Christian Holt
University of South Carolina

2C

East Asian American Literature: Bodies, Borders, and Time

RAINMAKER

"The (Un)Becoming: Traversing Borders in/out of Younghill Kang's *East Goes West*"

Hyeona Park
University of Virginia

"The Alimentary Scene of Loss: (Un)Knotting Grief and the Militarized Korean Diasporic Female Body in Grace Cho's *Tastes Like War* (2021)"

Janet Eunjin Cho
Willamette University

2D Contemporary Indigenous Voices: Fiction, Survivance, and the Digital

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS

"Narrative Frontiers and Gothic Temporalities in Stephen Graham Jones's *The Only Good Indians*"

Maddie Lacy
Rice University

"Tommy Pico's IRL: An Epic of Survivance in the Age of Web 2.0"

Paulina Hernández-Trejo
University of Notre Dame

"Omniscient Narration and Transnational Perspective in Linda Hogan's *The People of the Whale*"

Ally Barber
Southern Methodist University

2E Exploring Ethnic Literature in the Federal Writers' Project Archives [ROUNDTABLE]

GOLD STANDARD

J.J. Butts

Michele Fazio

Taliah Hanna

Mason Schwenneker

Kristin Stowell

David Taylor

Agnieszka Tuszynska

SESSION 3

11:30 AM–12:45 PM

3B Manifesting Joy and the Pleasure of Latinx Literature

GOLD STANDARD

Chair: Regina Marie Mills, University of Michigan

"El júbilo en el reclamo culinario: Salvadoran Americans' Journey Through Recipes and Stories"

Elena Foulis & Alexandra Rodriguez Sabogal
Texas A&M University–San Antonio

"The Joy of Aging Well: Sandra Cisneros and Her Wicked Ways"

Leigh Johnson
Middle Tennessee State University

"Mapping Latino Political Speech in the U.S. 200 Years of Self/determination"

Erin Murrah–Mandril
University of Texas at Arlington

"Joyful Resilience: Myriam Gurba's Irreverent Revitalization of the 'Rape Canon'"

Suzanne Uzzilia
LaGuardia Community College, City University of NY

3C South Asian Diasporic Literature: Identity, Xenophobia, and Queer Reclamation

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"(Un)/(Re) Forming Home, Belonging, and Immigrant Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Mrs. Sen's' and Mira Nair's 'The Namesake'"

Swati Gilotra
University of Georgia

"Mapping the Other: Xenophobia and the Politics of Representation in Contemporary South Asian Diasporic Texts"

Parama Sarkar
University of Toledo

"Echoes of the Peacock: Sonic Storytelling and Spatial Discord in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*"

Nishtha Kishore
University of Delhi

"The Art of Reclamation: Political Practices of Queer South Asian American Artists in the San Francisco Bay Area"

Shivani Modha
San Francisco State University

3D Examinations of Motherhood After the Apocalypse: **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS** Motherhood, Relationality, and Futurity in Indigenous Works

"Will I be a Good Mother?": Motherhood in Indigenous Films" **Noelle Buffo**
University of Oklahoma

"Cutting to the Quick: Relationality, Weaponry, and
Masculinity in *Blood Quantum*" **Jacob Quintin**
University of Oklahoma

"Our Bodies Have Always Remembered": Representations of
Futurity and Motherhood in the Midst of Apocalypse" **Corrina Richards**
University of Oklahoma

3E Growing Up Latinx: Youth, Language, and Cultural **TOASTS & TRIBUTES B** Identity

"Reading to Rewrite America: Latinx Children's Picture Books
in the 21st Century" **Cecelia Alfonso-Stokes**
University of Wisconsin-Madison

"The Music They Can't Bring to School: Latino Boys'
Coming-of-Age Under Whitestream Schools" **Saul Barrera**
University of Texas at Austin

"¡Se habla español!: Spanish and Spanglish on American TV" **Sobeira Latorre**
Southern Connecticut State University

"Childhood Innocence and Passing, Or How Young Puerto
Ricans Acculturate into the Dominant Culture" **Max Molchan**
Loyola Marymount University

12:45–2:00 PM – *Boxed lunch provided*

SESSION 4

2:00–3:15 PM

4A Contemporary African American Fiction: Form, **RAINMAKER** Satire, and Black Aliveness

"The Syncopations of Racial Performance: Tyehimba Jess's
Olio and Percival Everett's *James*" **Trenton Hickman**
Brigham Young University

"States of Blurred Betweenness: Form and Black Aliveness in
Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* and *Dream Count*" **Kabelo Sandile Motsoeneng**
University of Michigan

4B

Nightmare Futures: Latinx Gothic, Horror, and Speculative Fiction

GOLD STANDARD

"Dead-in-Law: Necropolitics and Latinx Horror at the U.S.-Mexico Border"

Luis Alberto Cortes
Texas A&M University-Kingsville

"La Siguanaba's Haunting Online Presence and the Potential for Speculative Cuentos"

Joseline González-Ajanel
Texas A&M University

"Guerrilla Narrative of 22nd Century Death-Worlds: Voice, Language, and Resistance to Necropolitics in *Lunar Braceros* 2125-2148"

Mia Clapp
University of California-Riverside

"This Apparatus Must Be Unearthed': Wastelanding as Reification of Modernity's Abjections"

Pilar Aurelio Munoz
University of Colorado Boulder

4C

On Stage and Screen: Asian American Performance, Media, and the Body

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"A Strong, White Man: Asian American Masculinity and Fantasies of Whiteness in *Love is Blind*"

Anwasha Kundu
Centre College

"Disco and Grape Vines Tell the Story of America: Filipino-American Musical Theatre"

Janah Esplana Balane
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

"Dancing to the Beat of the Other': Queer Rhythms of Race and Relationality in R. Zamora Linmark's *Rolling the R's*"

Cassandra Olsen
University of Toronto

4D

Land, Language, and Resistance: Indigenous Poetry and Visual Art

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"Temporalities of American Indian Boarding School Poetry"

Kate Louthain
Rice University

"Gemstones and Geologic Bodies of Resistance in Natalie Diaz's *Postcolonial Love Poem*"

Alexander Lalama
Bradley University

"Timeless Truths: Indigenous Art and the Unravelling of Western Narratives"

Victoria Pelky
Carleton University

4E **Climate, Ecology, and Speculative Form Across Traditions** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

"Living in Story: Postcritique and Climate Change in Amitav Ghosh's <i>Gun Island</i> "	Dale Pattison Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
"Once Upon A Future: Stories, Climate, and Futurity in Israel"	Keren Omry University of Haifa
"Race, Ecology, and Non-Native Species in Contemporary Appalachian Fiction"	Elijah Hook Southern Methodist University

SESSION 5 3:30-4:45 PM

5A **Baldwin, Baraka, and African American Cultural Theory** **GOLD STANDARD**

"James Baldwin's Nested Courtroom Dramas and Anti-Sentimental Love"	Daniel Valella University of Michigan
"Something Queer Here: Princes, Powers and Heteronormativity Abroad in Baldwin's 'Princes and Powers'"	Vallaire Wallace Southwestern University
"'Where you from?/Not where I'm from, we all Indigenous': Blackness and the Letter"	Devon Epiphany Clifton University of Nevada, Las Vegas
"Between Assertion and Vulnerability: Doubleness and Black Masculinity in Amiri Baraka's <i>Black Magic</i> "	Hyeyeon Song Texas A&M University

5B

Voice, Language, and Latinx Women's Narrative

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

Chair: Leigh Johnson, Middle Tennessee State University

"Reclaiming La Llorona: The Wailing Woman's Narrative in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*"

Kristina Bringman
University of Texas at El Paso

"Write This Down': Storytelling Against the Grain in Angie Cruz's *How Not to Drown in a Glass of Water*"

Belkis González
LaGuardia Community College, City University of NY

"Guavas & Glasses of Water: Expressing Nepantla through Gringas Dominicanas in Dominican American Novels"

Christianna Anneke Snyder
Texas A&M University

"The Radical Intimacy of Natalie Diaz's Translingual Poetics"

Camila Wise Robles
Vanderbilt University

5C

Unknowing Unbounded: Asian/American Femininities at the Edge

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"Raunching Disgust: Asian American Women's Humor, Irony, and Excess"

Zoe Dorado
Pomona College

"Anarchic Erotics: The 'Residual Geopolitics' of Diasporic Asian Indigeneity in K-Ming Chang's *Bestiary*"

Rui Liu
New York University

"Edging Aesthetics: Transfeminine Filipina Undocumented Images and Imaginations"

stef torralba
Grinnell College

"Tender Flesh: Theorizing the Hybrid Embodied Poetics of the Asian American Queer Femme in Franny Choi's *Soft Science*"

Reese Yau
New York University

5D

At the Crossroads: Indigenous Visibility, Archive, and Solidarity

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS

"From Vanishing to Becoming: Understanding Matika Wilbur against Edward S. Curtis in the Age of Erasure"

Isabel Quintana Wulf
Salisbury University

"Animal Fuel: John Rollin Ridge's Exploration of Cyclical Energy and Horses as Power in Post-Mexico California"

Anthony Gomez III
University of Oklahoma

"This Bridge Called The Dress: Embodied Solidarity in Marine Gutierrez's *Indigenous Woman*"

Sohee Kim
Texas A&M University

5E

Beyond the Degree: What Stories Do We Tell Ourselves? [PROFESSIONALIZATION PANEL]

RAINMAKER

Chair: Karina Diaz, Northern Illinois University

SESSION 6

5:00–6:15 PM

6A

African American Women's Writing, Body, and Futurity

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"This is How We Listen to Black Women: A Black Feminist Praxis for Activist Scholarship"

Nicole Carr

Texas A&M University–San Antonio

"Calling from Multiple Elsewhens': Spiral Time, Ancestor–Descendant Poetics, and Black Feminist Futurity in Alexis Pauline Gumbs's Triptych"

Hilary MezaGuerra

University of Illinois

"Between Universe and Me: Language, Monument, and Reclaiming Spatial Memory"

Song Namgung

Auburn University

6B

Queer Latinx Embodiment: Body, Desire, and Performance

RAINMAKER

"On the Other Side of Normal': Home, the Queer Chicano Body, and the Specter of AIDS in Gil Cuadros' *City of God*"

Subraj Singh

University of Missouri

"Storytelling through Bodily Inscription: An Intersectional Analysis of Sánchez's *Lessons in Expulsion: Poems*"

Morgan Hunter

University of Southern Florida

"The Failure of Normative Identity in Justin Torres's *We the Animals*"

Joe Larios

Hollins University

6C

Displacement, Incarceration, and Asian American Spatial Memory

GOLD STANDARD

"Bureaucracy, Banality, Atrocity: Mine Okubo's Graphic Memoir of Japanese American Internment Camps"

Adam Nemmers
Lamar University

"Wither the Asian/American Prisoner?, or, Chan is Missing (in Prison)"

Shea Hennum
Texas Christian University

"Unsettling the Grounds of Euro-Indigenous Contact: Givenness, Forgetfulness, and Canadian Prairie Literature"

Katherine Thorsteinson
St. Thomas University

"Surviving Through Soil: Intermedia Materialities of Displacement, Dispersal, and Asian American Settlement"

Sabnam Ghosh
Washington University in St. Louis

6D

Approaches to Violence, Death, Memory, and the Body in Recent Literature and Visual Media about the Central American Experience

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"Specters and Speculative Necrowriting in Narratives about Youth Migrants"

Mauricio Espinoza
University of Cincinnati

"Ink, Flesh, and the Animal Frame: Optimistic Death in Marlén Viñayo's *Imperdonable* (2020)"

Roy G. Guzmán-Chuderski
Normandale Community College

"Visualizing Genocide in Pablo Leon's *Silenced Voices and Remember Us*"

Regina Marie Mills
University of Michigan

6E

Diaspora, Displacement, and the Immigrant Narrative

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS

"Coming to Terms with Race and Place in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for African American and Vietnamese American New Orleanians"

Janet Graham
University of Nebraska at Kearney

"Uprooting"

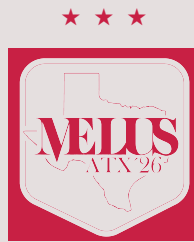
Raluca Simion
University of Texas at Dallas

"'In Another Life': Parallelism in the Queer and Immigrant Struggles"

Najeeba Shahim
Southern Methodist University

6:15–7:00 PM – *Break, On Your Own*

7:00–9:00 PM – Opening Reception [Pre-Function Hotel ZaZa 7th Floor]



DAY THREE

Friday

May 1, 2026

7:30 AM – Registration Opens [Open through 5:00 PM]

SESSION 7

8:30–9:45 AM

7A

WOCC Roundtable: "Genre-blurring as Feminist Practice and Methodology" [SPECIAL SESSION – WOMEN OF COLOR

RAINMAKER

CAUCUS]

Chairs: Leah Milne, University of Indianapolis & Kimberly Mack, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

"Defining the Latina Campus Novel: The Stories We Are Allowed To T/Sell"

Karina Diaz
Northern Illinois University

"From Roots to Reality: Identity Formation, Critical Self-Reflection, and Integrative Praxis in Black Women's Writing"

Aileen Fonsworth
Texas Southern University

"Epistolary Care, Fugitive Language, and Feminist Genre-Blurring in Black and Asian Diasporic Writing"

Juyoun Jang
Trinity University

7B

Desiring Publics: Intimate Storytelling in Popular Asian American and Black Queer Media

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"'You're My Best View': U.S.-Philippines Relations and the Ideal Assimilable Body in TLC's *90 Day Fiance*"

Rose Padilla
University of Texas at Austin

"Intimacies without Touch: Reimagining Queer Black Intimacies in Barry Jenkins's *Moonlight*"

Sriyanka Basak
University of Texas at Austin

"The Future of Asian American Literature: Cataloging Works by Asian American Authors"

Justine Trinh
Washington State University

7C **Diaspora, Adaptation, and Form in Ethnic American Literature** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES A**

"Adaptive Diasporas: Movement, Survival, and Perpetual Foreignness in Min Jin Lee's *Pachinko* and Its Adaptation"

So Koo
Northeastern University

"Plasticity Without Promise: Neoliberal Co-optation and Material Excess in Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*"

Takayuki Iwami
Texas A&M University

"Phenomenology of Race: Thermal and Affective Weather in Nella Larsen's *Passing*"

Eugene Pae
SUNY Albany

"The Sound of Terror: 9/11's Aural Distrust"

Nazia Manzoor
North South University

7D **Controversy, Technology, and the Multiethnic Classroom** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

"Teaching Controversial Topics: Pedagogical Strategies of Resistance in Precarious Times"

Andrew Spencer
Dallas College, El Centro

"Teaching AI Literacy: Create-Your-Own 'Bechdel Test'"

Monica Barbay
University of Texas at San Antonio

"The Queer, Mad, and Decolonial (Un)World Making of the Multiethnic Literary Classroom through Philippine DnD: The Islands of Sina Una"

Stephen Beardsley
Bucknell University

MELUS MEMBERSHIP MEETING [All members encouraged to attend] · 10:00 AM–11:00 AM

SESSION 8 11:15 AM–12:30 PM

8A **Music, Sound, and African American Formal Experiment** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES A**

"'The Tone of Their Voices Made Flesh': Billie Holiday's Transformational Resignification in Leon Forrest's *There Is a Tree More Ancient Than Eden*" **Helen Ganiy**
Rutgers University, New Brunswick

"Kiese Laymon's *Long Division* and the Sonic Life of Storytelling" **Christine L. Montgomery**
California State University, Sacramento

"Chimerical Art Across Media: Disruptions from *Mumbo Jumbo* to Contemporary Hip-Hop Sampling" **Jared Taylor**
University of Colorado Boulder

"Searching for June Jordan's Caribbean, at the Limits of Ekphrasis" **Christos Kalli**
University of Pennsylvania

8B **Asian American Graphic, Visual, and Contemporary Narrative** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES B**

"The Monkey King and Asian American Identity in *American Born Chinese*" **Ya-hui Irenna Chang**
Tunghai University

"Justice in Panels: Graphic Storytelling and Activist World Building in *Monstress*" **Jianfeng He**
University of Washington

"But the Book Revealed Nothing: Rhizomatic Literacies and the Dystopian Present in Celeste Ng's *Our Missing Hearts*" **Paula Weinman**
Towson University

"Beyond the Silence: Asian American Storytelling as a Lens on Issues of Mental Health and Trauma" **Shannon I-Hsien Lee**
Georgia State University

8C **Chat with the Editor — MELUS Journal** **[SPECIAL SESSION]** **GOLD STANDARD**

Conversation with Gary Totten, Editor of MELUS

8D **U.S.-Latin Cultural Studies: Multimedia Dreams, Virtual Realities, and Ghosts across Borders** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

Chair: *jo reyes, Texas Tech University* · Respondent: *Scott L. Baugh, Texas Tech University*

"Experience La Frontera in *Carne y Arena* (2017): Immersive Journalism on the Border" **Mitchell Junious**
Texas Tech University

"Hollywood Romance, Parallel Narratives, and Aesthetic Dreamstates from *Carefree* (1938) to *Lisbela e o Prisioneiro* (2003)" **Rebecca dos Santos Freire**
Texas Tech University

"Bringing American Gothic and Brazilian Folklore to Trauma Interventions in Netflix's *Invisible City* (2021–2023)" **Julia Giacomet Thomazoni**
Texas Tech University

8E **Blackness, Latinidad, and the Archive: Continuities and Resistance Across Three Centuries** **RAINMAKER**

Chair: *Annette Rodriguez, University of Texas at Austin*

"Archiving BodyMinds: Black Latina Worldmaking and Embodied Narrative" **Keturah Nichols**
University of Texas at Austin

"Racial Encounters: Multiethnic Narratives and the Ethics of Digital Recovery" **Miriam Santana**
University of Texas at Austin

"Yo Blaxiteo: Black, Mexican, and Afromexicanx Encounters in the 20th–21st Centuries" **Alex Voisine**
University of Texas at Austin

"The Auction Block as Metonymic Presence: History, Storytelling, and Place in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*" **Maxine L. Montgomery**
Florida State University

12:45–2:30 PM – *Keynote Address I · Awards Luncheon: Cathy Park Hong*

SESSION 9 3:15–4:30 PM

9A

African American Horror, Speculative Fiction, and the Moving Image

GOLD STANDARD

"No More Ku Kluxes': P. Djèlí Clark, Niki Herd, and Black Horror Responses to *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)"

Jennessa Hester
Texas Tech University

"'Take me in your arms tonight': Race, Sexuality, and Religion in Ryan Coogler's *Sinners*"

Rachal Burton & Ashley D Clemons
California State Polytechnic University

"Life Under Wandering Shadows: Black Living as World-Breaking/Making in Ryan Coogler's *Sinners*"

Jada Grisson
University of Notre Dame

"Paying the Rent in Octavia Butler's 'Bloodchild' and Barry Jenkins's *Remigration*"

Kendall Dinniene
Southern Methodist University

9B

Performance, Archive, and Sport: Latinx Cultural History

RAINMAKER

"Teatro Sin Fronteras: Theatre for the Borderland (and Beyond)"

Demian Chavez Galvan
University of Texas at Austin

"'Just' Agitation: Immoral Revolutionaries in Viva Villa!"

Savannah Payne
Texas A&M University

"Storying Spaces: Narrating Two Texas Heritage Trails"

Velvet Nelson & Pamela Rader
Sam Houston State University & Georgian Court University

9C

Form, Voice, and Verse

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

"Border-Crossing Plants in Arthur Sze's Poetry"

Weishun Lu
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
Daytona Beach

"Cross-Racial Solidarity and the Politics of Storytelling in Celeste Ng's *Our Missing Hearts*"

Seon-Myung Yoo
Blinn College, Bryan

"Complexity and Accessibility in the Emerging Genre of the Verse Novel"

Laura T. Smith
Stevenson University

"Coming Out-side: Queerness and Friendship in Jillian and Mariko Tamaki's *Roaming*"

Marie Drews
Luther College

9D **Disruption and Transformation: Signifying Resistance in Latinx Cultural Politics** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES B**

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Disrupting Celebration: Cultural Resilience During the 2025 ICE Raids"</p> | <p>Daniel Bonitz
University of California, Los Angeles</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"The Problem with Queers: Aristotle, Dante, Mosquita, Mari, and Me"</p> | <p>Richard T. Rodríguez
University of California, Riverside</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Out of this World-Making in <i>Lowriders in Space</i>"</p> | <p>Ariana Ruíz
University of California, San Diego</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Echoes of Erasure: Racial Haunting and Afro-Latine Resistance in Vincent Tirado's <i>Burn Down, Rise Up</i>"</p> | <p>Dolores Alcaide Ramirez
University of Washington, Tacoma</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

9E **Multiethnic Popular Culture, Animation, and Adaptation** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

Chair: Rachel M. Hartnett, College of Coastal Georgia

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"'It's the Truth, It's Actual, Everything Is Satisfactual': Splash Mountain, Tiana's Bayou Adventure, and the Complicated Process of Multiethnic Adaptation"</p> | <p>Rachel M. Hartnett & Kathryn J. McClain
College of Coastal Georgia & Colorado Mesa University</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Ralph Bakshi and the Background Texture of Multiethnic Communities"</p> | <p>Kimberly Jenerette
Texas Tech University</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Karen Tei Yamashita's Magical Realism in the Globalized Border Crossing in <i>Tropic of Orange</i> (1997)"</p> | <p>Lingyan Yang
Indiana University of Pennsylvania</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>"Afro-Asian Racial Gatekeeping in Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Blackface and Yellowface Minstrelsy"</p> | <p>Min Peng
Southern Methodist University</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|

SESSION 10 4:45–6:00 PM

10A

African American Literature, Media, and the Public Humanities

TOASTS & TRIBUTES B

"Finding and Founding: Mapping the Black Digital and Public Humanities in Precarious Times"

Mollie Godfrey
James Madison University

"Teching Up Space: Black Digital Storytelling Past, Present, and Future"

Chy'Na Nellon
University of Arkansas

"Tarantino's Indiewood Blaxploitation as De-Structured Rehearsals of Alternative Programming"

Scott L. Baugh
Texas Tech University

10B

In Latinx Fashion: Aesthetics, Embodiment, and Building Belonging in Visual and Material Cultures

GOLD STANDARD

"Barbie Fashions: Latina Aesthetics and Affordances of Storytelling in Doll Style"

Paloma Aguirre
University of Texas at Austin

"Reps, Revolutions, and Radical Futures: The Politics of T-Shirts at Lift ATX"

Rene Arteaga
University of Texas at Austin

"Las Punk y Goth Super(hyphen)heroes: Identity and Aesthetics in the Hyphenverse"

Samantha Ceballos
University of Texas at Austin

"Futurity in Fashion: Reading Selena Quintanilla's Self-Designs as Resistance"

Andrea Escalante
University of Texas at Austin

10C

Storytelling, Settings, Sounds, and Scholarly Intermissions

RAINMAKER

"Prologue, *Comanche Girl on the Moon*, part I"

Dustin Tahmahkera
University of Oklahoma

"Lynn Riggs' 'Cuckoo!': Family, Place, Performance"

James H. Cox
University of Texas at Austin

"Material Memories: Earrings and the Guatemalan Genocide Trial"

Regina Marie Mills
University of Michigan

"Nobody Said We Were Aztecs"

Domino Renee Perez
University of Texas at Austin

"Prologue, *Comanche Girl on the Moon*, part II"

Dustin Tahmahkera
University of Oklahoma

10D **Borders, Memory, and Latinx Narrative Form** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES A**

"Living Palimpsest: Transnational Violence and Racialized Securitization in Héctor Tobar's *The Tattooed Soldier*"

Isaiah W. Charley
University of Nevada, Reno

"The Paper Border: Plascencia's Metafiction and the Novel's Survival"

Myles Jeffrey
University of Texas at Austin

"Mapping Memories: Documenting Border Culture in the RGV"

Imelda Mendoza
University of Texas at San Antonio

"Rolando Hinojosa and Klail City Death Trip: Transcending Literary and Linguistic Borders"

Magda Rodriguez
Texas A&M University

10E **Leveraging Masculinity and Ethnicity in an Age of Political Division** **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

Chris Meade

Elwood Watson

SESSION 11 6:15–7:30 PM

11A **Afrofuturism, Africanfuturism, and Speculative African Diasporic Imagination** **TOASTS & TRIBUTES B**

"Roland Barthes's 'The Death of the Author,' Yoruba Oral Traditions, African Diaspora, and Africanfuturism in Ishmael Reed's *Japanese by Spring* and Nnedi Okorafor's *Death of the Author*"

Nurudeen Lawal & Pierre-Damien Muvyokure
Osun State University & University of Northern Iowa

"Nnedi Okorafor's *Binti*: A Rewriting of Codes for Female Identity, Body and Power"

Atithi Lyall
Southern Methodist University

"It's an Old Song, It's a Sad Tale, It's a Tragedy': Project 2025 and Prophecy in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Talents* and Anais Mitchell's *Hadestown*"

Katie Martelle
University of Michigan

"Live Suturing: Wake Work, Life after Death, and Victor LaValle's *Destroyer*"

Clara Jimenez
University of Pennsylvania

11B Chicano/a Aesthetics, Sound, and Consciousness **DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS**

"Cartographies of Sound in Poetry and Music"

Dominique Vargas

"Ruin and Refuge: Reimagining Central American Los Angeles in *The Tattooed Soldier*"

Guadalupe Escobar
University of Nevada, Reno

"Healing Wounds, Raising Consciousness: Young Adult Latine/x Literature in College Classrooms"

Sonia Del Hierro
Southwestern University

11C The Routledge Handbook of Latinx Visions: Mapping 'Fictive Kin' across Afrofuturism, Caribbean Futurisms, and Borderlands Futurisms **GOLD STANDARD** **[PERFORMED PANEL]**

Moderator: Cathryn Merla-Watson, UTRGV

Marisela Barrera

Karen Muñoz Christian

Jarrel De Matas

Matthew David Goodwin

Belinda Wallace

Cathryn Merla-Watson

Dolores Alcaide Ramirez

Taryne Jade Taylor

11D Reading Popular Culture Fandoms

RAINMAKER

"From Fan to Fiction (Writer) of Korean Web Novels"

Ewan Cox
Southern Methodist University

"Latinx Pokémon Fandoms"

Regina Marie Mills
University of Michigan

"Hello Kitty and Café Trucks or Latines Love Hello Kitty"

Domino Renee Perez
University of Texas at Austin

"Conjuring the ChicaGoth: Backstitch Bruja and the Fashion of Chicane/x Horror Fandom"

Katlin Marisol Sweeney-Romero
University of California, Davis

11E Telling Tejana Stories: A Roundtable Discussion on ¡Somos Tejanas!: Chicana Identity and Culture in Texas [ROUNDTABLE]

TOASTS & TRIBUTES A

Moderator: Jody A Marín, Texas A&M Kingsville

Norma E. Cantú

Jody A Marín

Maria Luisa Ornelas-June

Patricia Zamora

Alicia Reyes-Barriéntez

Liliana Valenzuela



DAY FOUR

Saturday

May 2, 2026

7:00–8:30 AM – MELUS Officers Meeting · W Austin [Closed session]

8:00 AM – Registration Opens at W Austin [Open through 12:00 PM]

SESSION 12

8:00–9:15 AM

12A

Transgressive Tethering: Black Femininity in Toni Morrison's *Sula* and *Beloved*

STUDIO 3

"This Is Not a Story to Pass On': Black Maternal Storytelling and Survival in *Sula* and *Beloved*"

Kayla Frye
Auburn University

"Loneliness that Roams': The Theoretical Dialectic of *Beloved* and *Us*"

Stephen Margavio
Auburn University

"A Strange Mothering: (Dis)Respectful Mothering in the Post-Emancipation"

Theron Wilkerson
Auburn University

12B

Reflections on the Chicano Border Tradition: Arturo Islas

SOCIAL

"Preparing Feasts for the Living and the Dead in *The Rain God*"

Elizabeth Martinez
University of Texas at Austin

"Concluding Remarks on Arturo Islas's *The Rain God*"

Julie Minich
University of Texas at Austin

"Between Preservation and Privacy: Reading Arturo Islas's Fiction Writing and Personal Archive"

Miriam Santana
University of Texas at Austin

12C Memory, Diaspora, and Ethnic Survival

STUDIO 1

"Nowhere at Home: Alexander Berkman in Exile"

James Bliss
Tulane University

"Unsettling Zionist Temporality: Reviving Traditional Jewish Folklore as Radical Diasporism"

Rebecca Gross
University of California, Santa Cruz

"Her Second Act: Yente Serdatsky's Late Memoiristic Writing and the Long Arc of Yiddish Storytelling"

Dalia Wolfson
Harvard University"Memory and Survival: Cross-Media Testimony and Postmemory in *Forgotten Fire*"**Juliet Beglaryan**
California State University, Los Angeles**12E** Archives, Community, and Place-Based Storytelling in the Classroom

STUDIO 2

"(Re)Making Seattle: Using Digital and Community Archives to Illustrate Place-Stories"

Hilary Hawley
Seattle University

"Narratives of Im/migration: A Multidisciplinary Course on Genealogy and Literature"

Susan McGrade
Indiana Tech

"Storytelling and Sustenance: Centering Marginalized Voices to Create Social Change"

Jane Hseu
Dominican University"Active Heaviness as Fugitive Pedagogy: Transnational Pedagogies of Care and Survival in Kiese Laymon's *Heavy* and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*"**Juyoun Jang**
Trinity University**SESSION 13**

9:30–10:45 AM

13A **The Honeyfish Present: Fieldnotes on Contemporary Black Poetry** [SPECIAL SESSION – WOMEN OF COLOR] **STUDIO 2**

CAUCUS]

Chair: *Samantha Pinto, University of Texas at Austin*

Katy Didden

Sequoia Maner

Leah Milne

Emily Ruth Rutter

13C **Counterstories, Zines, and Comics: Multimodal Storytelling as Resistance** **STUDIO 3**

Marilyn Garcia

Viridiana Gomez

Yvonne T. Samuels

13D **Erasure, Institutions, and Writing as Resistance** **THE LOFT**

"Feminist Rhetoric in Contemporary Arab American Novels"

Nancy El Gendy
James Madison University

"The Politics of Erasure: Censorship, Cultural Memory, and Writing as Resistance"

Angela D. Jackson-Brown
Indiana University

"'This is a severance of another kind': Revisions and Reckonings in Omar El Akkad's and Ta-Nehisi Coates's Reportage on Gaza and the Institutions of Liberal Humanism"

Rachel Ann Walsh
Bowling Green State University

13E Speculation on the Margins

SOCIAL

"The Flying Africans: Fugitivity and Resistance in Black Comics"

Joanna Davis-McElligatt
University of North Texas

"A Vague Move of Solidarity': Ordinary Speculation and Black Literary Labours"

Matthew Molinaro
University of Toronto

"Domestic Denial and Queer Speculation: N.K. Jemisin's *The City We Became*"

Jay Shelat
Ursinus College

"The Voyage at the End of the World: Mark Thomas Gibson's Comics/Art and Black Counter-Speculation"

Emmy Waldman
University of Miami

SESSION 14

11:00 AM–12:15 PM

14A African American Fiction, Carceral Systems, and Black Survival

STUDIO 2

"Time, (Re)emergence, and Black Male Death in Baldwin's 'Going to Meet the Man'"

Jimmy Worthy
University of Massachusetts

"Challenging Boundaries and Identity: Storytelling and Naming in Daniel Black's *Perfect Peace*"

Antiwan Walker
Georgia Gwinnett College

"See(d) the Future: Kindred in 3 Mediums"

Njoki Mwangi
The Ohio State University

"'But the Angles I Chart Abide by Different Sight': Racecraft and Corporeal Estrangement in Aracelis Girmay's *The Black Maria*"

Dennis López
California State University, Long Beach

14B

Race, Ecology, and Environmental Writing

STUDIO 3

"The Garden Plot: Black Women Writers and the Eco-Narratives of Cultivation"

Brandy Underwood
California State University, Northridge

"Scaling Fermentation and Pleasure: C Pam Zhang's *Land of Milk and Honey* and Climate Change"

Yen Loh
Denison University

"The Divide, the Re-return and the Silence: A Transnational Enigma in *The God of Small Things*"

Pooja Mohanty
Kent State University

"Just Legends and Aesthetic Tales: Approaching a 'Civilized' State Through Sui Sin Far's and Zitkala-Sa's Representations of Nature"

Camille M. Sammeth
The University of Texas at Austin

14C

Storytelling Against the Current: Literature and Political Crisis

SOCIAL

"We Need Poetry Right Now"

Nissa Parmar
St. Olaf University

"The Evolution of Multiethnic Working-Class Aesthetics: Dispossession, Wagelessness, and Racial Capitalism in Late 1960s US Movement Literature"

Robert Mendoza
California Lutheran University

"The Narrator's Memory and the Protagonist's Tale: An Analysis of Chang-Rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea*"

Amy Bernick
Northern Illinois University

14D

From Kitchens to Cameras: Intersections of Food, Image, and Italian American Self-Making [PERFORMED

STUDIO 1

PANEL]

Chair: Fred Gardaphé, Queens College/CUNY and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

"Feasting on Grief: Queer Materiality, Foodways, and Italian American Cultural Theory in Lanzilotto's Works"

Ryan Calabretta-Sajder
University of Arkansas

"Snapshots of Transition: Visual Narratives and Self-Fashioning in Italian American Communities"

Abel Fenwick
University of Arkansas

"Tastes of Transition: Food, Identity, and Generational Change in *Big Night* and *Dinner Rush*"

Federico Tiberini
University of Arkansas

12:30–1:30 PM – Lunch (Grab & Go provided) · W Austin · Great Room ABC

12:30–1:30 PM – Presidential Address: Christopher González

Permissibility in Precarious Times: A Presidential Address. Christopher González delivers the 2026 MELUS Presidential Address on the stakes of multi-ethnic literary scholarship in a precarious moment for the field. Drawing on his work in narrative permissibility—the institutional, generic, and cultural forces that regulate which stories reach readers, in which forms, and on whose terms—the address considers what MELUS owes its members, its discipline, and the next generation of scholars when ethnic studies faces legislative attack, humanities programs contract, and the question of authorship migrates from seminar rooms to statehouses. The session closes with a conversation with members.

SESSION 15

1:45–3:00 PM

15A Queer and Feminist Latinx Narratives

STUDIO 1

"Borderlands Shakespeare, Audiotopias, and Queer Liberation" **Adrianna Santos**
Texas A&M University–San Antonio

"Defiant Flesh: Erasure, White Supremacy, and Transnational Feminist Resistance in Xochitl Gonzalez's *Anita de Monte Laughs Last*" **Sandra Jacobo**
Pennsylvania State University

"God Loves Whores: Sexuality and Spirituality within Latin American Diaspora" **Melissa Espinoza**
New Mexico State University

"Excavating Erasure: The Sacred Sites of Chimayó and Acoma Pueblo in Ana Castillo's *So Far From God*" **Rebecca Garay**
New Mexico State University

15B Feeling Otherwise: Teaching Sympathy and Positionality Across Margins in Texas Institutions

STUDIO 2

"Embodied Empathy: Re-Positioning the Reader Through Creative Re-Readings of Coetzee and Woolf" **Minjung Ha**
Texas A&M University

"Practicing Ethical Globality: Translating Empire from Lin Changyi's 'Shooting the Eagle' to R.F. Kuang's *Babel*" **Jungah Kim**
Sam Houston State University

"Embracing Alterity: Rethinking Otherness and Ethics of Relationality through Contemporary American Speculative Fiction" **Heejo Park**
Texas Christian University

15C

Translingual Futures: Queer Italian Diasporic Narratives in Language and Laughter

STUDIO 3

Chair: Ryan Calabretta-Sajder, University of Arkansas

"Ms. Fits and the Future of Italian American Humor"

Fred L. Gardaphé

Queens College/CUNY and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

"Diasporic Memory and Queer Inheritance: Trauma, Identity, and Code-Switching in Italian"

Alan Gravano

Rocky Mountain University

"Language of the Soul: Linguistic Plurality in Queer Italian American Writing"

Scott Kapuscinski

New York University

SESSION 16

3:15–4:30 PM

16A

Race, Representation, and Cultural Politics

STUDIO 2

"Champion and Cousin: Muhammad Ali as Icon and Myth in Bernard Clay's *English Lit*"

David Anderson

University of Louisville

"Beyond the Page: Remix Pedagogy, AI, and Afro-Asian Sonic Storytelling in Precarious Times"

Min Ji Kang

Denison University

"I Have Never [...] 'Progressed' that Far": Luther Standing Bear and the Limits of (Progressive) Mobility"

Cristina Stanciu

Virginia Commonwealth University

"Revisiting *The Chair*: Identity Capitalism and Its Discontents"

Emily Ruth Rutter

Montclair State University

16B Languages and Voices across National-Cultural Borders

STUDIO 3

Co-chairs: Julia Giacomet Thomazoni & Mitchell Junious, Texas Tech University · Respondent: Scott L. Baugh, Texas Tech University

"Traffic (2000), Heteroglossia, and Social Relations across Borders"

Carlos Diaz
Texas Tech University

"Hasta Me Duele La ...' Translingualism de Jessi in *Emilia Perez* (2024)"

jo reyes
Texas Tech University

"Listening to Natural Voices in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (1988)"

Maddie Richards
Texas Tech University

16C The Routledge Handbook of Latinx Visions: Constellating Latinx Speculative Aesthetics [PREFORMED

STUDIO 1

PANEL]

Moderator: Matthew David Goodwin, University of New Mexico

Matthew David Goodwin

Cathryn Merla-Watson

Ben Olguín

Lysa Rivera

Taryne Jade Taylor

4:45–5:45 PM – Keynote Address II: Hanya Yanagihara

6:15–7:00 PM – Break · W Austin

7:00 PM–Late – Closing Night Reception with Live Music by Rico-ico · W Austin [Specific room TBD] Rico-ico is a border-crossing trio with Chevo Cruz on guitar/vocals, Lydia CdeBaca-Cruz on bass guitar/back-up vocals, and Rick Cruz on drums. Their reggae-cumbia fusion sound lives at the crossroads of story and song, face and heart, body and mind. Connect on Instagram @rico_ico_musica, Facebook (Rico ico), and YouTube @ricoicomusica.





REFERENCE

Index of Presenters

Listed alphabetically by surname.

A

Paloma Aguirre · Fri 10B
Cecelia Alfonso-Stokes · Thu 3E

David Anderson · Sat 16A
Rene Arteaga · Fri 10B
Edward Avila · Thu 1B

B

Janah Esplana Balane · Thu 4C
Monica Barbay · Fri 7D
Ally Barber · Thu 2D
Marisela Barrera · Fri 11C
Saul Barrera · Thu 3E
Sriyanka Basak · Fri 7B
Scott L. Baugh · Fri 10A
Stephen Beardsley · Fri 7D
Juliet Beglaryan · Sat 12C
Rosita Beidaghi · Thu 1E
Amy Bernick · Sat 14C
James Bliss · Sat 12C
Daniel Bonitz · Fri 9D
R.J. Boutelle · Thu 1A
Kristina Bringman · Thu 5B
Noelle Buffo · Thu 3D
Rachal Burton · Fri 9A
J.J. Butts · Thu 2E

C

Ryan Calabretta-Sajder · Sat 14D
Norma E. Cantú · Fri 11E
Nicole Carr · Thu 6A
Samantha Ceballos · Fri 10B
Ya-hui Irenna Chang · Fri 8B
Isaiah W. Charley · Fri 10D
Janet Eunjin Cho · Thu 2C

Atithi Lyall · Fri 11A

Dennis López · Sat 14A

M

Sequoia Maner · Sat 13A
Nazia Manzoor · Fri 7C
Stephen Margavio · Sat 12A
Katie Martelle · Fri 11A

Elizabeth Martinez · Sat 12B
Lilia Martinez · Thu 1E
Jody A Marín · Fri 11E
Jarrel De Matas · Fri 11C
Kathryn J. McClain · Fri 9E
Susan McGrade · Sat 12E
Chris Meade · Thu 1B, Fri 10E
Imelda Mendoza · Fri 10D
Robert Mendoza · Sat 14C
Cathryn Merla-Watson · Fri 11C, Sat 16C
Hilary MezaGuerra · Thu 6A
Regina Marie Mills · Thu 6D, Fri 10C, Fri 11D
Leah Milne · Sat 13A
Julie Minich · Sat 12B
Shivani Modha · Thu 3C
Pooja Mohanty · Sat 14B
Max Molchan · Thu 3E
Matthew Molinaro · Sat 13E
Christine L. Montgomery · Fri 8A

Maxine L. Montgomery · Fri 8E
Kabelo Sandile Motsoeneng · Thu 4A
Pilar Aurelio Munoz · Thu 4B
Erin Murrh-Mandrill · Thu 3B
Pierre-Damien Muvyokure · Fri 11A
Njoki Mwangi · Sat 14A

N

Karen Muñoz Christian · Fri 11C
 Mia Clapp · Thu 4B
 Ashley D Clemons · Fri 9A
 Devon Epiphany Clifton · Thu 5A
 Kevin Concannon · Thu 2B
 Luis Alberto Cortes · Thu 4B
 Ewan Cox · Fri 11D
 James H. Cox · Fri 10C

D

Joanna Davis-McElligatt · Sat 13E
 Riley Davoren · Thu 2B
 Carlos Diaz · Sat 16B
 Karina Diaz · Fri 7A
 Katy Didden · Sat 13A

 Kendall Dinniene · Fri 9A
 Zoe Dorado · Thu 5C
 Marie Drews · Fri 9C

E

Andrea Escalante · Fri 10B
 Guadalupe Escobar · Fri 11B
 Mauricio Espinoza · Thu 6D
 Melissa Espinoza · Sat 15A
 Jens Evers · Thu 2A

F

Michele Fazio · Thu 2E

 Abel Fenwick · Sat 14D
 Aileen Fonsworth · Fri 7A

 Elena Foulis · Thu 3B
 Rebecca dos Santos Freire · Fri 8D
 Kayla Frye · Sat 12A

G

Demian Chavez Galvan · Fri 9B
 Helen Ganiy · Fri 8A
 Rebecca Garay · Sat 15A
 Marilyn Garcia · Sat 13C
 Fred L. Gardaphé · Sat 15C
 Nancy El Gendy · Sat 13D
 Neda Ghayour · Thu 1C
 Sabnam Ghosh · Thu 6C
 Swati Gilotra · Thu 3C

Song Namgung · Thu 6A
 Chy'Na Nellon · Fri 10A
 Velvet Nelson · Fri 9B
 Adam Nemmers · Thu 6C
 Brian Nguyen · Thu 1C
 Keturah Nichols · Fri 8E
 Rachel Northrop · Thu 1A
 Eric Norton · Thu 1A

O

Ben Olguín · Sat 16C
 Cassandra Olsen · Thu 4C
 Keren Omry · Thu 4E
 Maria Luisa Ornelas-June · Fri 11E

P

Rose Padilla · Fri 7B
 Eugene Pae · Fri 7C
 Heejoo Park · Sat 15B
 Hyeona Park · Thu 2C

 Nissa Parmar · Sat 14C
 Dale Pattison · Thu 4E
 Savannah Payne · Fri 9B
 Victoria Pelky · Thu 4D
 Min Peng · Fri 9E
 Domino Renee Perez · Fri 10C, Fri 11D

Q

Jacob Quintin · Thu 3D

R

Pamela Rader · Fri 9B
 Dolores Alcaide Ramirez · Fri 9D, Fri 11C
 Ana Ramírez · Thu 1C
 jo reyes · Sat 16B

 Alicia Reyes-Barriénte, · Fri 11E
 Corrina Richards · Thu 3D
 Maddie Richards · Sat 16B
 Diana Noreen Rivera · Thu 1B
 Lysa Rivera · Sat 16C
 Camila Wise Robles · Thu 5B
 Magda Rodriguez · Fri 10D
 Richard T. Rodríguez · Fri 9D
 Emily Ruth Rutter · Sat 13A, Sat 16A

Mollie Godfrey · Fri 10A
 Anthony Gomez III · Thu 5D

Viridiana Gomez · Sat 13C
 Belkis González · Thu 5B
 Joseline González-Ajanel · Thu 4B
 Matthew David Goodwin · Fri 11C, Sat 16C
 Janet Graham · Thu 6E
 Alan Gravano · Sat 15C
 Jada Grisson · Fri 9A
 Rebecca Gross · Sat 12C
 Roy G. Guzmán-Chuderski · Thu 6D

H

Minjung Ha · Sat 15B
 Taliah Hanna · Thu 2E
 Rachel M. Hartnett · Fri 9E
 Hilary Hawley · Sat 12E
 Jianfeng He · Fri 8B
 Shea Hennem · Thu 6C
 Paulina Hernández-Trejo · Thu 2D
 Jennessa Hester · Fri 9A
 Trenton Hickman · Thu 4A
 Sonia Del Hierro · Fri 11B
 Christian Holt · Thu 2B
 Elijah Hook · Thu 4E

Abigail Horne · Thu 1A
 Jane Hseu · Sat 12E
 Morgan Hunter · Thu 6B

I

Takayuki Iwami · Fri 7C

J

Angela D. Jackson-Brown · Sat 13D
 Sandra Jacobo · Sat 15A
 Juyoun Jang · Fri 7A, Sat 12E
 Myles Jeffrey · Fri 10D
 Kimberly Jenerette · Fri 9E

Clara Jimenez · Fri 11A
 Leigh Johnson · Thu 3B
 Ash Johnston · Thu 2A

Mitchell Junious · Fri 8D

K

Ariana Ruíz · Fri 9D

S

Alexandra Rodriguez Sabogal · Thu 3B
 Camille M. Sammeth · Sat 14B
 Yvonne T. Samuels · Sat 13C
 Miriam Santana · Fri 8E, Sat 12B
 Adrianna Santos · Sat 15A
 Parama Sarkar · Thu 3C
 Mason Schwenneker · Thu 2E
 Najeeba Shahim · Thu 6E
 Jay Shelat · Sat 13E
 Raluca Simion · Thu 6E

Subraj Singh · Thu 6B
 Karen Siu · Thu 1C
 Laura T. Smith · Fri 9C
 Christianna Anneke Snyder · Thu 5B
 Hyeeyeon Song · Thu 5A
 Yun Song · Thu 1E
 Andrew Spencer · Fri 7D
 Cristina Stanciu · Sat 16A
 Kristin Stowell · Thu 2E
 Tsukasa Sugiura · Thu 2B
 Katlin Marisol Sweeney-Romero · Fri 11D

T

Dustin Tahmahkera · Fri 10C
 David Taylor · Thu 2E
 Jared Taylor · Fri 8A
 Taryne Jade Taylor · Fri 11C, Sat 16C

Julia Giacomet Thomazoni · Fri 8D
 Katherine Thorsteinson · Thu 6C

Federico Tiberini · Sat 14D
 stef torralba · Thu 5C
 Justine Trinh · Fri 7B
 Agnieszka Tuszynska · Thu 2E

U

Brandy Underwood · Sat 14B
 Suzanne Uzzilia · Thu 3B

V

Daniel Valella · Thu 5A
 Liliana Valenzuela · Fri 11E

Christos Kalli · Fri 8A
 Min Ji Kang · Sat 16A
 Scott Kapuscinski · Sat 15C

Marissa Kessenich · Thu 2A
 Jungah Kim · Sat 15B
 Sohee Kim · Thu 5D
 Nishtha Kishore · Thu 3C
 So Koo · Fri 7C
 Anwasha Kundu · Thu 4C

L

Maddie Lacy · Thu 2D
 Alexander Lalama · Thu 4D
 Joe Larios · Thu 6B
 Lesley Larkin · Thu 2A
 Sobeira Latorre · Thu 3E
 Nurudeen Lawal · Fri 11A

Shannon I-Hsien Lee · Fri 8B
 Rui Liu · Thu 5C
 Yen Loh · Sat 14B
 Kate Louthain · Thu 4D

Weishun Lu · Fri 9C

Dominique Vargas · Fri 11B
 Alex Voisine · Fri 8E

W

Emmy Waldman · Sat 13E
 Antiwan Walker · Sat 14A
 Belinda Wallace · Fri 11C
 Vallaire Wallace · Thu 5A
 Rachel Ann Walsh · Sat 13D
 Siting Wang · Thu 1E
 Elwood Watson · Fri 10E

Paula Weinman · Fri 8B
 Theron Wilkerson · Sat 12A
 Dalia Wolfson · Sat 12C
 Jimmy Worthy · Sat 14A
 Isabel Quintana Wulf · Thu 5D

Y

Lingyan Yang · Fri 9E
 Reese Yau · Thu 5C
 Seon-Myung Yoo · Fri 9C

Z

Patricia Zamora · Fri 11E

WITH GRATITUDE

Sponsors & Exhibitors

MELUS 2026 is made possible by the generous support of the following sponsors and host institutions. We extend our deepest thanks for their commitment to multi-ethnic literary scholarship.

Lead Sponsors

Recognized for their foundational support of MELUS 2026.

SMU English Department

Latinx Pop Lab at UT Austin

Major Sponsors

For substantial support of conference operations, programming, and travel.

Narrative Now at SMU English

Project Poëtica at SMU English

The Southwest Review

Exhibitors & Book Fair

First Light will be on site for both keynote book signings, with copies of Cathy Park Hong's and Hanya Yanagihara's work available for purchase.

First Light

First Light is a lovingly operated, independent book shop in Austin, Texas. It's the bookstore, coffee shop, wine bar, cafe you didn't know you couldn't live without. Tucked in the historic Hyde Park neighborhood in an old post office, we opened our doors in August 2023 and are open seven days a week. See you at the shop.

University of Texas Press

Special Thanks

For contributions that shape the texture of MELUS 2026 beyond the program itself.

Conference T-Shirts: Chris Escobar & Graveface Records

SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

Officers & Committees

The work of MELUS is sustained by the volunteer labor of scholars across our membership – those who serve on the Executive Council, who review hundreds of conference proposals each year, who select award recipients, and who coordinate the local logistics of bringing us together. We are grateful to all of them.

Executive Council (2024–2027)

PRESIDENT	Christopher González, Southern Methodist University
VP & PROGRAM CHAIR	Sherry Johnson, Grand Valley State University
SECRETARY	Marc DiPaolo, Moraine Valley Community College
TREASURER	Anastasia Lin, University of North Georgia
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR	I-Hsien Lee, Georgia State University
PROJECT CHAIR	Brandy Underwood, California State University, Northridge
WOCC CHAIR	Leah Milne, University of Indianapolis
GRAD STUDENT REP	Karina Diaz, Northern Illinois University

Conference Organizing Committee

MELUS 2026 would not be possible without the volunteer labor and care of our Conference Organizing Committee. Their generosity of time, energy, and expertise sustains this Society and brings this annual gathering into being. We are deeply grateful.

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

Christopher González

Ally Barber

Elijah Hook

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Frederick Luis Aldama

Paloma Aguirre

Rene Arteaga

Sam Ceballos

Andrea Escalante

CONFERENCE DESIGN

Logo: José Luis Martínez

Art: Miguel Ángel Hernández

MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.

The journal of record for the field, published quarterly by Oxford University Press in partnership with the Society.

Editor: Gary Totten, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Founded: 1973 (society) · 1974 (journal)

Founding Editor: Katharine Newman

Editors Emeriti: Martha Cutter · Joe T. Skerrett, Jr. · Veronica Makowsky

Annual Awards

MELUS recognizes outstanding scholarship in multi-ethnic American literary studies through several annual awards, including the Katherine Newman Essay Prize (for the best essay published in *MELUS*), the MELUS Book Award (for outstanding monographs), and graduate student awards. This year's recipients will be announced at the Friday Awards Luncheon.

LOGISTICS

Venues & Hotels

Hotel ZaZa Austin Wed–Fri

Hosts all conference programming Wednesday through Friday, including registration, sessions, the Friday keynote and Awards Luncheon, the Opening Reception, and conference meals. Located in downtown Austin's Warehouse District, Hotel ZaZa is a boutique property near the heart of the Sixth Street and Second Street entertainment corridors.

Address: 400 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 542-9292

Website: hotelzaza.com/austin

Address: 200 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 542-3600

Website: marriott.com/en-us/hotels/auswh-w-austin

Walking directions from Hotel ZaZa to W Austin: Exit Hotel ZaZa onto Lavaca Street. Turn left (south). Continue two blocks past 4th Street and 3rd Street. The W Austin is on your right at the corner of 2nd and Lavaca, in the Block 21 development.

For attendees with mobility considerations or anyone who prefers not to walk, both hotels are easily reached by rideshare (Uber, Lyft) or taxi. Ride times between the two venues are typically under five minutes; fares should be minimal. Both venues have accessible entrances and meet ADA requirements.

Conference Floor Plans

Detailed floor plans for both venues will be posted here closer to the conference and distributed in printed handouts at registration.

Hotel ZaZa key locations: Pre-Function area (registration Wed–Fri, book fair, receptions); main meeting rooms (sessions); Group Therapy Restaurant & Bar on the 7th floor (Wednesday open mic and reception, evening gatherings).

W Austin key locations: Saturday registration; main session rooms; keynote venue; closing-night reception space.

Registration

Registration opens at the following times. Note that the registration desk relocates to the W Austin on Saturday.

- Thursday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM at Hotel ZaZa
- Friday: 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM at Hotel ZaZa
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM at W Austin

WHILE YOU'RE HERE

Austin Essentials

Getting to the Conference Venues

From Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS): Both Hotel ZaZa and the W Austin are approximately 9 miles from the airport, a 15–25 minute ride depending on traffic. Rideshare (Uber, Lyft) and traditional taxis are available curbside at the airport. Estimated rideshare cost: \$25–40.

Between Hotel ZaZa and the W Austin: The two venues are approximately two blocks apart, an easy five-minute walk. Most attendees will move between them on foot during the conference, especially Friday evening into Saturday morning.

From the University of Texas at Austin: Both hotels are roughly a 10-minute drive or 20–25 minute walk from the UT campus.

Getting Around the City

Downtown Austin is walkable, and most restaurants, bookstores, and venues attendees might want to visit are within a 10–15 minute drive of the conference hotels. Rideshare and taxi services are reliable. The CapMetro bus system provides public transit; CapMetroRail offers commuter rail service from downtown to several outlying neighborhoods.

A Few Spots Worth a Visit

If you find yourself with an open afternoon or evening, here are a handful of places that have shaped Austin's literary and cultural life and that conference attendees often find rewarding.

For book lovers: BookPeople (603 N. Lamar) is Austin's flagship independent bookstore — three floors, broad inventory, frequent author events. The Harry Ransom Center at UT Austin houses some of the most extraordinary literary archives in the world (David Foster Wallace, Gabriel García Márquez, the Watergate papers, an original Gutenberg Bible) and is free to the public.

Museums and galleries: The Blanton Museum of Art at UT Austin holds Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin* (a permanent stone-and-stained-glass building you walk inside) along with strong collections of Latin American and modern American art. The Contemporary Austin at Laguna Gloria offers outdoor sculpture along Lake Austin.

Outdoor Austin: Zilker Park stretches along Lady Bird Lake; Barton Springs Pool, fed by underground springs, stays a constant 68–70°F year-round and is an Austin essential. The hike-and-bike trail around Lady Bird Lake is a flat, scenic ten miles. The Texas State Capitol grounds are free and

walkable.

Tex-Mex and food: Matt's El Rancho (South Lamar) for old-school Tex-Mex and the legendary Bob Armstrong dip; Joe's Bakery (East Austin) for migas and pan dulce; Veracruz All Natural for migas tacos; Franklin Barbecue (East Austin) if you can survive the line. South Congress Avenue has a dense cluster of restaurants and bars within walking distance of one another.

Coffee: Houndstooth, Caffé Medici, Cuvée Coffee, Greater Goods. Most have multiple locations.

Music: The Continental Club (South Congress) for honky-tonk and Austin tradition; the Moody Theater at the W Austin (where *Austin City Limits* tapes); Stubb's BBQ for outdoor concerts; Antone's downtown for blues. The bats fly out from under the Congress Avenue Bridge at dusk most evenings – the largest urban bat colony in North America, free to watch.

Weather

Late April / early May in Austin typically brings warm, sunny days (highs in the upper 70s to mid-80s°F / 25–30°C) and mild evenings. Light layers are recommended; rain is possible but generally brief.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Code of Conduct

MELUS is committed to providing a welcoming, safe, and harassment-free conference experience for all participants regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, national origin, body size, or career stage.

Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. This includes – but is not limited to – verbal comments related to identity, deliberate intimidation, stalking, unwanted photography or recording, sustained disruption of sessions, and unwelcome physical contact or sexual attention.

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Conference organizers may take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender or expulsion from the conference without refund.

If you experience or witness harassment, please contact a member of the conference organizing committee, on-site staff at the registration desk, or email the MELUS Executive Council. Reports will be handled with discretion.

Reporting and Support

If you experience or witness behavior that violates this code, you have several options for reporting and support:

- On-site: Speak to a member of the conference organizing committee, the local site committee, or staff at the registration desk. We will receive your concern with care and confidentiality.
- By email: Contact the MELUS Executive Council directly through melus.org.
- For urgent safety concerns: Hotel security at Hotel ZaZa or W Austin is available 24 hours a day.

Reports will be treated with appropriate discretion. Where investigation is warranted, MELUS will follow procedures that respect the privacy and dignity of those involved.