

## CFP 2026 Spring Symposium CFP

### Moving the Unmoved: Rhetorical Imaginations as Engines for Change

The University of Pittsburgh's Rhetoric Society of America chapter invites submissions for presentations at the annual symposium taking place on Friday, March 27, 2026, at the university's campus. To accommodate those who are unable to make it to Pittsburgh, we will also hold space for a select number of online participants.

This year, we welcome proposals that engage with notions of imagination, particularly as that imagination relates to world-making or constructing alternative realities in spaces where change and progress feel impeded. Ira Shor, in "What Is Critical Literacy," writes, "[T]hough language is fateful in teaching us what kind of people to become and what kind of society to make, discourse is not destiny. We can redefine ourselves and remake society, if we choose, through alternative rhetoric and dissident projects" (2). Although rhetorical scholarship invites the destabilization of some of our most fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the way the world is and should be, it also opens the door to construct entirely new ways of thinking, knowing, and being, that contain within them vast liberatory potential.

The current political climate challenges our notions of imagination and world-building. On one hand, facts and truth have seemingly been uprooted by relativism and interpretation in the age of "fake news," but on the other hand, dominant political discourses have become increasingly entrenched in radicalism, leaving little room for nuance or dissent. It is in this paradox that rhetoric offers a space to expand our understanding of truth, knowledge, ethics, and lived experience. Projects in this symposium may critically examine the role of rhetoric in forging new ways to imagine the self and the world, with the goal of shattering static dogmas and encouraging a world of contingency, ephemerality, invention, and motion.

We encourage the interdisciplinary work of both graduate and undergraduate scholars across institutions who are engaging with diverse research methods and modalities, including but not limited to:

- experiential knowledge and personal narrative
- archival studies
- autoethnography
- creative nonfiction, poetry
- embodied rhetorics and positionality
- political or cultural rhetorics

Please submit proposals of ~250 words by Saturday, February 28, 2026 via the [Google Form linked here](#). Decisions will be sent out on a rolling basis. If you have any questions, please reach out via email to the chapter's co-presidents, Megan Simmermeyer ([MES590@pitt.edu](mailto:MES590@pitt.edu)) and Arie Likhtman ([ABL114@pitt.edu](mailto:ABL114@pitt.edu)).