

An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

University of Cincinnati - Friday, February 6th, 2026

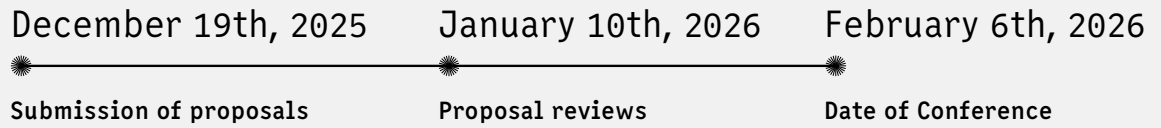
Among its political and technological predicaments, America's 2020s have been a time of steady upheaval, crisis, and change. As we continue to wrestle our way through the agendas, regimes, and big-data systems of this historical moment as teachers, students, and researchers, we recall the utopian thinking of More and Marx, which reminds us "to keep from being blinded by what seems normal – to help us see that what is natural is constructed, not inevitable" (Elbow, p. 83). In the same spirit, then, we hope to meddle with the rhetorics of political and technological inevitability that define our daily lives. We ask presenters to share questions and ideas that entertain movement toward, rather than away from, the utopian visions that we often disregard as unwieldy, futile, or childish. What if we could decouple machine learning from AI companies? What if we had a robust theory for fundamentally rethinking our flawed U.S.-centric version of writing research? In allowing ourselves to think about and envision utopias, we make visible the threats we face, the workarounds we create, and the bonds that give us reason to hold together.

We welcome proposals that "honor the utopian impulse" (p. 98) – that is, at the brink of change, those that ask, "how things *should* be" (p. 83) in your field. What preferable future(s) do you want for your field, and what do the possibilities and difficulties of that direction look like? This could mean a wide variety of things, but we offer the following inquiries as suggestions and starting points for your thinking:

- **Empirical research (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method):**
What research models can we use to help build, shape, or sustain a utopian vision? How can such models be used by others?
- **Theory-building:**
How is utopia framed, imagined, or composed in your discipline? How do we continue to use, revise, or ignore it today?
- **Personal narrative and autoethnographic inquiry:**
How does the utopian impulse help us question or counter grand narratives, if it does at all? In what ways does such work help us grapple with contingent, material, historical, and local perspectives?
- **Reflections in pedagogical practice:**
What can the utopian impulse tell us about our teaching, assessment, or classroom design?
- **Reimagining data literacy:**
As we navigate pressures to use AI and big-data systems (their transparency, methodologies, literacies, applications, and assessments), how might we imagine and know utopia?

Call for Proposals

Projected Timeline



Submission Details

Please submit individual proposals (up to 250 words) or panel proposals (up to 500 words). For panels, number each speaker and include the title of each presentation. We welcome presentations or workshops in an interactive style (e.g., classroom demonstrations, PechaKucha, poster sessions, fishbowl). Sessions will last 1 hour and 15 minutes, with an average presentation time of 15 minutes.

Submit proposals to UCGradConference2026@gmail.com by Friday, December 19, 2025.