



*The Noonday*, Winslow Homer, Art Institute of Chicago

The **2026 NEXUS Interdisciplinary Conference** invites current graduate students to submit abstracts for this year's conference at The University of Tennessee - Knoxville on **April 17-18, 2026**.

*Practice and Performance.*

These two words carry with them kindred connotations of shallowness. Mere practice suggests preparation without follow-through, while mere performance conjures presentation without substance. But at the same time, bebop architect Thelonious Monk once said, at a recording engineer's demand for more rehearsal upon hearing the group's performance in the studio, that "you rehearse every time you play your instrument." How do we distinguish between preparation and action? In a world increasingly oversaturated with "content" often beholden to corporate interests rather than cultural touchstones, it is necessary to grapple with what it is that we practice and perform and *why*. Such grappling is the collective intellectual act NEXUS 2026 will facilitate: interdisciplinarity is the best way through this seemingly impenetrable fog of difference.

*Paper proposals are invited from a variety of disciplines within the humanities engaged with but not limited to:*

- Close reading as performance / practice
- Culture in relation to practice and performance
- The legacy of the "performative turn" in the humanities
- Forms of preparation: rehearsal / practice / prefiguration
- Debates distinguishing theory and practice
- Artistic practice
- Political praxis
- Reflections on pedagogy
- Performance studies roughly thirty years after its establishment
- Performance as a rhetorical act
- Writing and composition studies

Our goal is to create an atmosphere that is welcoming to academics and creatives. We encourage group submissions. In addition to a keynote speaker and a variety of panels, we plan on offering open-mic space and asynchronous video submissions to be displayed to attendees. There is no registration fee.

Please send abstracts of approximately 200-300 words as an attached PDF or Word document to:

[nexus.conference.utk@gmail.com](mailto:nexus.conference.utk@gmail.com) by **January 31, 2026**. Please note if your abstract is for an **in-person** or **asynchronous** submission.