Shenandoah University
Young Scholars Literary Symposium

Call for Proposals: *Beyond* Epic!

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2027: 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST
(followed by film event 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. EST)
Location: Winchester, Virginia and on Zoom
Host: Shenandoah University English Department

The SU Young Scholars Literary Symposium is a one-day academic humanities and creative expression conference held on SU's Winchester campus and online. This event brings together outstanding undergraduate and graduate students to share their work on our annual theme.

***Beyond* Epic!**: From ancient sagas to modern fantasy, the quest for heroic adventure has inspired our imaginations. In times of crisis, who will take up the challenge of defending civilization? How do we define ourselves and our enemies? What monsters threaten us, what gods support us, and what can a normal human being do when the forces of great odysseys swirl around us? Has the age of the epic disappeared into the mists of time, or do future adventures await us? We seek academic papers and creative projects that address all aspects of the epic–and beyond!

Suggested topics for investigation and creative inspiration include *but are not limited to*:

- Epic texts, textuality, and intertextuality
- Heroism and the epic journey
- Epic monsters, villains, and antagonists
- Politics and economies of epic
- Other kinds of epic (e.g., epic fantasy, epic failure)
- Epic as history, history as epic
- Epic modes (music, film, games, etc.)
- Race and ethnicity in epic stories
- Health, trauma, and survival in epic
- Violence and non-violence in epic
- Epics, escapism, and realism
- LGBTQ+ in epic tales
- Laughter and comic relief in epics
- Adaptations, receptions, and legacies
- Epic anticipation
- Gendering and gendered epic
- Nature in epic storytelling

Sessions will be organized in 1-hour blocks with 45 to 50 minutes of presentations and 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Panels may blend academic and creative approaches. We seek proposals for individual 10- to 15-minute presentations, preset panels, or academic posters for the on-site gallery.

Each conference participant may submit only one abstract for academic presentation (in any format) and only one for creative expression (for a maximum of 2 abstracts). Special panels or creative, including multimodal, approaches (literary, musical, visual, dramatic, etc.) are welcome. Contact ysls@su.edu for more information.

To propose a presentation, panel, or poster, submit an abstract of approximately 150-250 words to the YSLS Proposal Submission Form. Undergraduate students should also provide the name and contact information for a sponsoring faculty advisor.

Submit abstracts and proposals by December 14, 2026. Accepted presenters will be required to register in advance. YSLS will begin notifying acceptances starting in December to provide time for registering and for poster presenters to print their work.

Please visit the Young Scholars Literary Symposium website for more information.