



WILD FEMINISMS

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ATLANTA, GA USA | NOV. 5-8

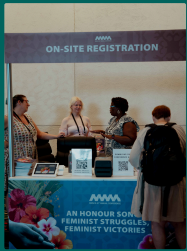


CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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CONFERENCE OVERVIEW



The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) leads the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). Established in 1977, NWSA has, as one of its primary objectives, promoting and supporting the production and circulation of knowledge about women, gender, and sexuality through teaching, learning, research, and service in academia and beyond.

Our Annual Conference regularly draws more than 1,800 attendees and is the only annual meeting in the continental United States of America and its territories that is exclusively dedicated to foregrounding and amplifying feminist scholarship of its size.

The #NWSA2026 annual convening will open on Thursday, November 5th with our core pre-conferences and launch of general session presentations that same afternoon. Our time together concludes in the afternoon of Sunday, November 8th with an array of Special Sessions, gatherings, and tailored experiences designed to pour into our membership.

We invite interested attendees, potential presenters, partners, and comrades to join us in Atlanta, Georgia USA for this multi-day experience and encourage you to join our Association in support of our field in these tenuous times.

ABOUT THE THEME: WILD FEMINISMS

Listening in wild places, we are audience to conversations in a language not our own.

—Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

[E]mbrace the wild instead of trying to tame it into the prevailing narrative.

—Ambika Kamath and Melina Packer, *Feminism in the Wild*

Pen, how could I ever have feared you. You're quite housebroken but it's your wildness I am in love with.

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Speaking in Tongues*

I want your wildness.

—Chrystos, *He Saw*

Wild as in out of place, out of sync, out of order, out of control. Wild as in free, unpossessed, not property. Wild as in mad, as in raving. Wild as in feral, as in wildlife and wilderness. Wild as in our wildest dreams.

Playing with wild's synonyms (e.g. unruly, unknowable, unpredictable, untamed, unbroken) and antonyms (e.g. domesticated, controlled, docile, subdued, trained) reveals the impossibility of a stable singular meaning. What is considered *wild* in feminist praxis depends on context: time, place, sociocultural norms and perspectives. The theme, **Wild Feminisms**, is therefore not an invitation to define or stabilize, but rather to play, to perform, to embody. To consider the ideologies activated when something or someone is designated as wild. To examine its usages, meanings, affects, and effects. To consider how wild—as a word, a concept, a place, a behavior, a time—has been weaponized, exploited, repressed, misused, and undervalued.

There are those of us who come into this world characterized as “wild” because of the color of our skin, the language we speak, our class status, our disability, and/or the religious and cultural practices we perform. Writing about their desire to know the Indigenous lifeways that their Menominee father concealed and thus did not intentionally teach his child, in *He Saw*, Chrystos declares that they *want* the “wildness” he was taught to repress. Openly embodying an anti-colonial, anti-racist, crip, queer feminism is surely a wild way to exist in a white supremacist capitalist cisheteropatriarchal settler society. Wild is risky.

When one declares and then lives this wild way of being—this feminist life (a la Ahmed)—one becomes vulnerable to processes of pathologization, sexualization, infantilization, and criminalization used to subdue, control, and eliminate that wildness. Just as we know that the priorities of, and complicities in, liberal imperial feminism do not move our movement toward liberation, we know that in the face of authoritarianism, making concessions, performing “civility,” and complying in advance will not save us. What if, as Kamath and Packer suggest, we collectively embraced risk as a necessary part of an uncompromising feminist praxis?

Related phrases that refer to uncontrollable behavior, to an untamed excitability—such as to “wild out,” go “buck wild,” or be “wildn” —originate in Black vernacular. The usage, often celebratory, is a kind of linguistic recuperation that resists the anti-Black, ableist, patriarchal ways the term is used by anthropocentric systems of white supremacist capitalism to subordinate and dehumanize people of color, particularly Black and Indigenous people. What kinds of wildness are allowable and under what circumstances? Who/what gets to *become* wild and who/what is imagined as always already *being* wild, as prone to getting wild, as expected to stay wild? In *How to Go Mad Without Losing Your Mind*, Bruce asserts that settler colonial logics subjugate wildness through misogyny, anti-Blackness, and ableism; these binary logics platform the “civil” (white, nondisabled, cismale) over the “wild” (Black, disabled, cisfemale). Through an imperial lens, “wild” beings are positioned as not-human (even when human), not civil, not rational, not worthy, and not equipped to be sovereign over their bodies or lands. But, as Halberstam argues in *Wild Things*, wildness holds a decolonial promise not limited by its colonial disposition, nor by definitions imposed by racial capitalism and settler colonialism. The invitation is to engage the word and all its meanings in as expansive and joyous a way as possible.

Revising a question asked by Chloë Taylor and Kelly Struthers Montford—“What would it mean for feminism to go feral?”—we ask what would it mean for feminism to go wild and to what ends? Wildness invites joy, celebration, and imagination—it brings to mind the refrain of wild abandon, feeling wild and free—even and perhaps most notably while under or fleeing colonial subjugation. Can we do with “wild” what we did with woman, queer, and crip? Can we infuse the term with our desires and commitments so that it feels empowering? So that we feel proud to be wild, feel powerful in our wildness? So we are moved into joy and pride instead of shame? For as Bergman and Montgomery remind us in *Joyful Militancy*, “For joy [in social justice work] to flourish, it needs sharp edges (19).” Wildness as protection.

The maple leaf is soft and pliable in the spring, then becomes dry and brittle in the fall—becoming food for the soil and shelter for the pollinators; dandelion petals turn inward and become wishes in the wind, carrying seeds for the next generation. That is, unless those leaves are raked and stuffed in a refuse bag and the dandelions killed with chemicals—all in service to maintaining an “orderly” lawn. What feminist lessons can we receive from the everyday ways we maintain the hyperlocal ecology of our yard? Indigenous feminist Robin Wall Kimmerer encourages us to sit with the wild, to practice engaging in a language that is not our own.

Not to own them, or profit from them, but to practice being intentional with our relations. The stillness and reverence required for this work can be wildly uncomfortable.

The invitation to go wild may appeal to those who are interested in the assertive, the aggressive, the dangerous, the hard, the militant, the loud, and the fast. But the wild also teaches patience, slowness, softness, pleasure, vulnerability, flexibility, and adaptability. In *Undrowned*, Gumbs shares the many lessons they learned while sitting with her marine mammal kin in a way that encourages both individual and collective (“pod/squad”) practice. By listening and observing how a whale manages its exposure to the ever-changing and deteriorating conditions of its oceanic environment, Gumbs finds lessons in the practice of porousness, flexibility, and openness to “each other and to our own needs” (61).

In the zine, *Take What You Need and Compost the Rest*, Margaret Killjoy presents the idea of rewilding as “the process of turning what is domesticated back into something that is wild” (20); she urges readers “to rewild most everything within ourselves” (21). If rewilding feminism (re)opens a path to praxis, where can it take us? If, like Anzaldúa’s pen in “Speaking in Tongues,” our feminisms are or have been housebroken, how can we fall (back) in love with the wild potential for liberation that likely drew us to feminist work to begin with? What are the effects of feminist domestication by the parameters of a grant, the threat of publish or perish in a tenure system, or the neoliberalization of feminist organizations involved in policy making? How might our collective commitment to an uncompromising practice of wild feminisms, to a feminist ethics of care and reciprocity *no matter the risk*, reanimate feminist imagination? There is medicine in the wild, both literal and figurative.

Our CFP asks us to re/activate the wildness in our feminist embodiments, to learn from the wild around us, to hold and care for it, to bring it close enough that it might reorient our relation to domesticating institutions, the ways we produce and share knowledge, and importantly, how we engage and support one another. May our theme activate a feminist praxis that spreads embodied resistance like wildfire.

In solidarity and struggle,



Jessica N. Pabón, PhD

She/Her/Hers

23rd Association President

PROPOSALS AND SUB-THEMES

We invite proposals that are in alignment with the 2026 conference (sub)themes and invitations offered throughout our formal Call for Proposals.



WILD RELATIONS

Proposals submitted for this sub-theme might address questions inspired by the following: How has a settler colonial lens influenced how we imagine and build our relations? How do we tend to our human and more-than-human kin? How might wild relations dismantle the influence of white supremacist cisheteropatriarchal capitalist settler modes of relating? What are the feminist lessons of Georgia's wild life: the azaleas, the Brown Thrashers, the North Atlantic Right Whale? What new relations and relational webs come into being with attention to the wild?



WILD EMBODIMENTS

Proposals submitted for this sub-theme might address questions similar to the following: What feminist praxes make room for deeper engagement with the wild, the wilderness, and wild life? How might an embrace of wild feminisms enable us to understand our own embodied complexities, our neurodiversities? What kinds of disidentifications with wildness have feminists performed as daily practice, as survival strategy?



REWILDING FEMINISMS

Proposals submitted for this sub-theme might address questions similar to the following: How can we practice wildness and/or engage the wild with integrity and in consideration of privilege? What does embracing wildness look like in our activism, our teaching, our writing, and our service? If we understand contemporary enactments of wild feminisms as manifestations of Black and Indigenous freedom struggles, as praxes, how might we understand wild feminisms in relation to marronage? To fugitivity? What is the relationship of risk to the wild, to being wild, to wild behavior? What does respect for the wild require us to divest from?

PROPOSALS AND SUB-THEMES



WOULDN'T IT BE WILD IF...

Proposals submitted for this sub-theme might address questions similar to the following: What kinds of workshops can we develop that would help us imagine and enact our wildest feminist dreams? How does embracing wildness enable the imagining work so many of us teach and write about, but struggle to embody and practice? How might we share the risk of enacting wild feminisms?



As always, we encourage proposals submitted by independent scholars, artists, activists, and others who may not be affiliated with academic institutions.

HOW WE DEVELOP OUR CONFERENCE PROGRAM



Each year, the Association invites submissions via our official Call for Proposals. The Association President sets the theme and areas of focus (sub-themes) that guide the curation of our conference program. We welcome proposals from activists, administrators, artists, educators, dreamers, practitioners, and feminist trouble makers with a vested interest in *and* commitment to promoting and supporting the production and circulation of knowledge about gender and sexuality through teaching, learning, research, and service in academic and community settings.

As an Association of educators, creatives, disruptors, innovators, dreamers, organizers, and change agents, our commitments include:

- illuminating the ways in which women's studies are vital to education;
- demonstrating the contributions of feminist scholarship that is comparative, global, intersectional and interdisciplinary to understandings of the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences;
- promoting synergistic relationships between scholarship, teaching, and civic engagement in understandings of culture and society;
- recognizing that women's studies is broader than what happens in the classroom through support for and investment in
 - Women's Centers staff as feminist educators
 - Organizers and activists whose work is rooted in feminist principles and values
- attending to the needs and ever-changing reach of our members and the field.

THE PROPOSAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Our annual convening is focused on illuminating the ways in which Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies are vital to education, in and beyond academia, as we navigate the socio-political challenges that define this moment.

THE PROPOSAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Association relies on the expertise of our membership in review of all conference proposal submissions. In enacting our commitments, we work alongside volunteer members, under the leadership of our Governing Council, on our **Proposal Review Committee**.

Reviewers participate in our double-anonymous review of all proposals, and curate sessions that bring together presenters of solo-authored presentations through shared areas of focus as well as alignment with our sub-themes.

Interested in participating on our Proposal Review Committee? Please visit our Membership Opportunities webpage to complete our interest form!

AS A GENTLE REMINDER, THE ASSOCIATION LIMITS PRESENTERS TO TWO (2) PRESENTATION SESSIONS IN ORDER TO: BUILD A BALANCED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, HONOR THE NEED FOR WELLNESS IN WHAT CAN BE A VERY CAPITALIST SPACE OF EXPECTED (CONSTANT) PRODUCTION, AND TO ALLOW FOR MORE DIVERSE PRESENTER PARTICIPATION.

CHOOSING YOUR SESSION FORMAT

The following section provides helpful details and direction focused on how to prepare your submission and select the accurate submission type.



INDIVIDUAL PAPERS AND SCHOLARSHIP

The Association invites scholarship and cultural work developed by individual WGSS-anchored educators and organizers. Please select this submission type if you are interested in presenting on an individually-authored paper or presentation. If selected, you will be grouped alongside other accepted solo-authors based on shared areas of focus to present together.



PANELS

Panels are often considered a standard conference session type; this session format is submitted by **one** person who serves as the point of contact with the Association (receives follow up communications) and often acts as panel moderator or chair for the panel discussion of **three (3)** additional collaborators/colleagues/peers. This submission type allows you to include the specific names and respective titles of papers/topics who will presenting alongside the moderator/chair.



WORKSHOPS & ROUNDTABLES

We welcome proposals that are focused on learning outcomes and engage facets of our membership/community as well as our field. Workshops are rooted in skill-building/exchange, resource sharing, and often hold elements of mentorship. Roundtable-style sessions *do not rely on traditional reading of papers or visual presentation tools*; these sessions foster discussion and ideation with presenters and their audience.

CHOOSING YOUR SESSION FORMAT



SPECIAL FORMAT SESSIONS

Special Sessions is our “umbrella” term for general conference sessions that invite interaction, movement, “non-traditional” conference presentation tools such as instruments/film clips/crafting etc., and multimedia resources. We consider the following sessions “special format” and offer richer details in our fuller breakdown of each proposal option:

- Interactive Sessions
- Organizing Sessions
- Poster Presentations



AUTHORS MEET CRITICS

Authors Meet Critics sessions are limited to, at most, five (5) accepted proposals at our annual convening. These sessions, often referred to as AMCs, follow the format of a “traditional” panel and includes the author of a written work published between a particular time period as well as three invited “critics”, one of whom may serve as a moderator or chair of the discussion. AMCs follow the presentation format of a panel submission.



CONSTITUENCY GROUP SPONSORED SESSIONS

The Association’s array of member-driven Constituency Groups may sponsor a session at our Annual Conference. Interested folks can submit a proposal as one of the following:

- a panel
- a workshop
- a roundtable

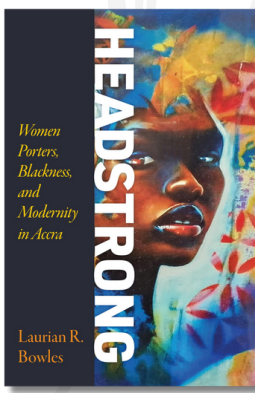
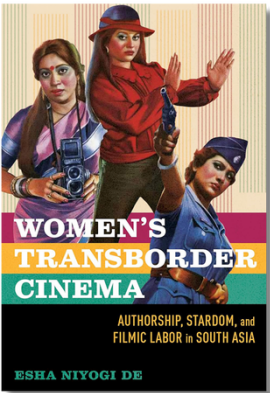
Constituency Groups Chairs may work with their respective group’s members or solicit proposals marked as a Sponsored Session and review them for selection.

PAPERS

Individual Paper proposals are submitted individually (solo authored) and arranged into sessions by the Proposal Review Committee. In paper sessions, authors present 10-12-minute papers followed by audience discussion. A typical structure for a session with four papers allows approximately 5 minutes to introduce the session, 10 minutes for each presenter, and 30 minutes for discussion.



<p>AUTHORS MEET CRITICS (AMC)</p>	<p>Authors Meet Critics sessions are designed to bring authors of recent, cutting-edge books, deemed to be important contributions to the field of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies (WGSS), together with discussants chosen to provide a variety of viewpoints.</p> <p>A maximum of five such sessions may be included in the program and NWSA members are invited to nominate books published between 2024 and 2026. Both single-authored books and edited collections that are the result of collaborative engagement among the contributors will be considered. Only NWSA members may submit nominations, including self-nominations; nominations by presses will not be accepted.</p>
<p>PANELS</p>	<p>Panels provide an opportunity for examining specific problems or topics from a variety of perspectives given that they include 3-4 participants. Panels may present alternative solutions, interpretations, or contrasting points of view on a specified subject or in relation to a common theme. Panel members are expected to prepare papers addressing central questions described in the proposal. <i>The National Women’s Studies Association and the Proposal Review Committee especially encourage complete panel submissions.</i></p>



IN DETAIL | WORKSHOPS AND ROUNDTABLES

WORKSHOPS

Workshops provide an opportunity to exchange information or work on a common problem, project, or shared interest. Workshops are typically experientially oriented, grounded in a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies anchored research agenda, and include brief presentations that allow adequate time for reflective discussion and interaction.

ROUNDTABLES

Roundtables typically include a moderator and 4-6 presenters who make brief, informal remarks about a specific idea or project. They allow for extensive discussion, audience participation, and are often centered on broad topics, works-in-progress, and/or collaborative projects that invite thought partnership. Roundtables are, by design, discussion based and do not rely on traditional oral paper presentations or visual presentation tools.



IN DETAIL | SPECIAL FORMAT SESSIONS

INTERACTIVE SESSION	<p>NWSA's members often create and introduce incredibly interactive and exciting sessions that lean outside the 'standard' academic conference proposal model. We ask that should your session involve movement, sound activities, or what may be considered a 'non-traditional' activity, that you select this category. This designation allows our Proposal Review Committee to meaningfully evaluate the proposed general conference session.</p>
ORGANIZING SESSION	<p>This session format is grounded in our desire to curate spaces of meaningful collaboration and resource sharing among NWSA members/attendees interested in exploring particular issues, questions, as well as interventions that uniquely impact/shape Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). Organizers are encouraged to engage our field's interdisciplinary locations and submit a series of conceptual and/or theoretical questions that attend to the conference theme and/or subthemes; examples include addressing the contours of institutional culture and policy on the state of the field, pedagogical interventions, methodological imperatives, as well as special topics that may be addressed in and outside of formal academia. Organizing Sessions are driven by discussion, rather than structured panel-style presentations; therefore, interested presenters should include a listing of generative discussion prompts in their abstract to further contextualize the focus of the session.</p>
POSTER	<p>Poster proposals present research or analysis on a topic by combining graphics and text on a poster board. We schedule poster sessions together in a gallery-style time block in order to make space for presenters to interact on a one-on-one basis with the attendees viewing the poster. A well-planned poster communicates its message in a visually and textually powerful way, allowing the attendees to grasp the information quickly and accessibly with the author(s).</p> <p><i>We understand that many of our applicants are traveling across the United States of America and across human-made borders; in this context, traveling with a poster board is no easy feat for some. Therefore, we do not impose specific guidelines re: design and poster size, we want you to have as much flexibility as you need.</i></p>

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Different session formats align with different submission requirements. We recommend reviewing the general parameters below and assembling your proposal using our available templates.

ABSTRACTS	Abstracts explain to conference attendees the proposal's topic, foci, and/or goals in a clear/succinct manner in the program. Abstracts may be revised or edited for the program.
PROPOSAL RATIONALES	<p>Proposal rationales and abstracts serve as the basis for evaluation by the Proposal Review Committee and should include some or all of the following, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objective or purpose of the paper, panel, workshop, etc.• Perspective and/or theoretical framework and/or references to relevant texts, research, or on-going debates in women's and gender studies or related fields• Results and/or conclusions and point of view• Relevance to the conference theme or subtheme• Discussion of how the session will be structured
WORKS CITED	Works cited must list the scholarship to which the rationale refers; this is an integral component of the proposal that anchors your work in the field of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Please note the required ten (10) citations.
AUDIO/VISUAL RATIONALE	NWSA often receives far more requests for AV resources than we can provide. In our commitments to expanding our alignment with accessibility, we are working with our conference site to maximize the audio/visual capacities of our meeting spaces. Therefore, we ask that your program submissions include an audiovisual rationale to assist in the logistics planning of developing the conference program. The Access & Inclusion Committee will communicate updated audio-visual information, as we are able, as we coordinate conference planning.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- All proposal rationales **MUST** be explicit about how the proposed work is grounded in specific texts, authors, or research relevant to contemporary Women's, Gender, & Sexuality studies, Queer studies, Ethnic studies, and/or other related fields.
- Abstracts and proposal rationales may not exceed word limits as they will be included in the digital program.
- Incomplete proposals will not be considered.
- All panel proposals must include complete contact information for all presenters; incomplete panels with fewer than three participants will not be considered for review.
- In rare cases, a one-person workshop may be considered, but the proposal should indicate why the presenter is uniquely suited to address the topic independently.
- Remove any identifying information that would compromise NWSA's commitment to an anonymous review process.
- Please note: All General Conference Sessions are 75 minutes long



SUBMISSION TEMPLATES

- In an effort to streamline your submission process, NWSA created templates for each submission type.
- Our templates align directly with the steps within our submission site to assist you in this process!
- We encourage you to use the appropriate template to develop your proposal and relevant materials.
- You can find all templates via our Annual Conference site.



CONFERENCE PRESENTER REQUIREMENTS



All Annual Conference presenters **must have active NWSA individual membership and be registered for the conference by September 4th, 2026.**

ACCEPTED PRESENTERS WHO DO NOT MEET BOTH REQUIREMENTS BY SEPTEMBER 4TH RISK REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM SCHEDULE.

Membership and conference registration are **two separate processes** and **require separate fees**. We recommend updating your individual membership first, then registering for the conference to receive the reduced rate for current members. Your membership must be **active** at the time of the conference (Nov 5th - 8th, 2026).

TO INQUIRE ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS, EMAIL NATIONALOFFICE@NWSA.ORG.

Session organizers are responsible for conveying information about these requirements to fellow presenters and/or prospective session participants.

MEETING LOCATION AND TRAVEL INFORMATION



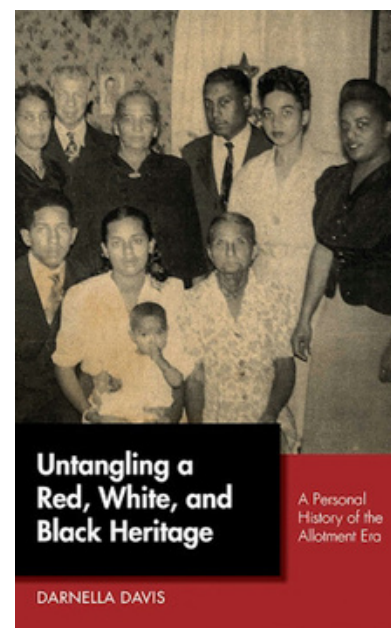
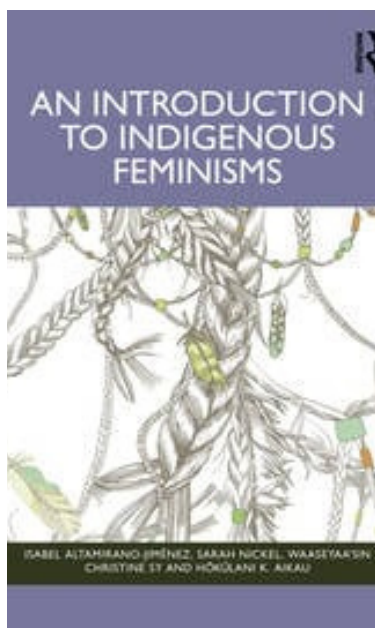
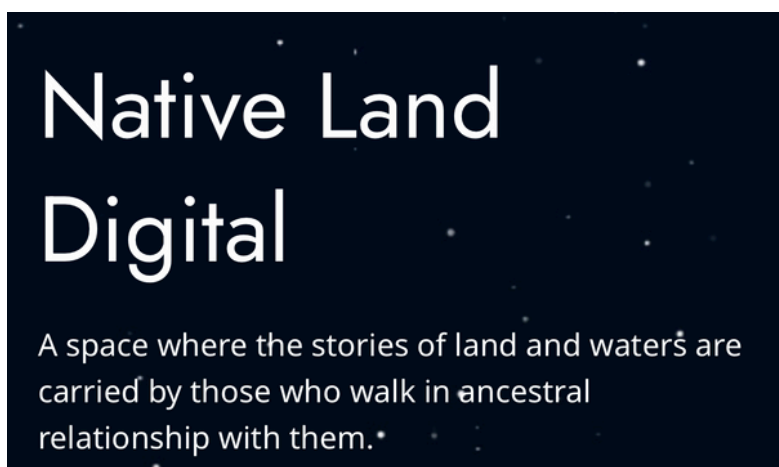
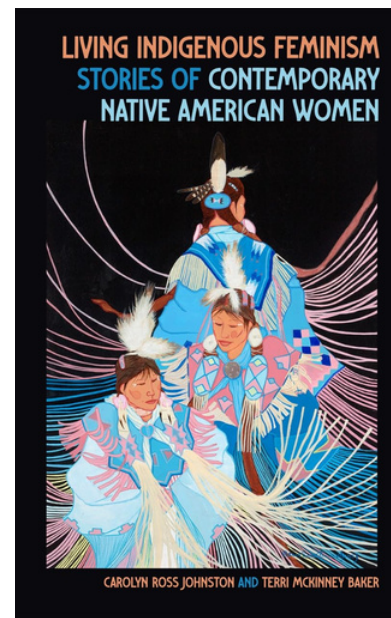
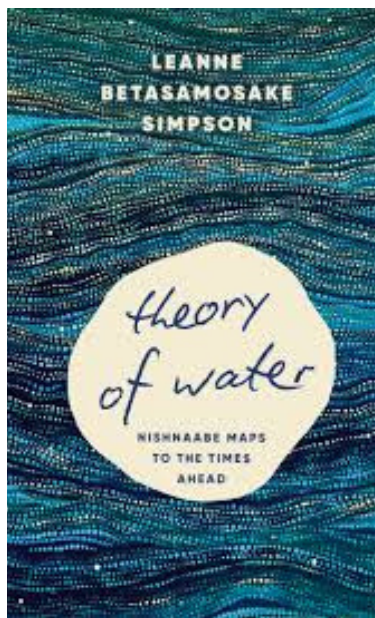
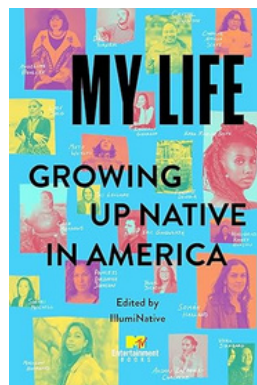
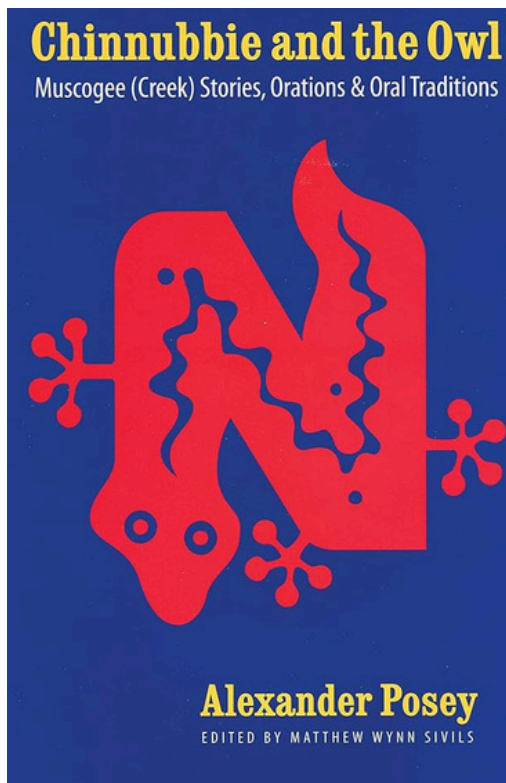
The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) 2026 Annual Conference will convene at the Hilton Atlanta, in Atlanta, Georgia USA from Thursday November 5th – Sunday, November 8th, 2026.

The Hilton Atlanta discounted room block access opens in February via the NWSA Annual Conference page.

FLIGHTS TO ATLANTA ARE ACCESSED VIA HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (ATL)

**HILTON HOTEL ADDRESS:
255 COURTLAND ST NE
ATLANTA, GA 30303**

HONORING THE KNOWLEDGE, LEADERSHIP, AND LAND STEWARDSHIP OF THE MVSKEKE PEOPLES



Hosting our 46th annual convening in Atlanta, Georgia begins with meaningful reflection on how we came to selecting our host city, the layers of settler colonialism, sustained (and reinvigorated) oppression of Indigenous peoples, and amplifying the knowledge as well as leadership of the Mvskoke (Muscogee (Creek)) Nation. *We invite you to explore some of our growing resources on our 'Plan Your trip' page of the NWSA Website to learn more about the Mvskoke, Atlanta, and Indigenous Feminisms.*

HELPFUL NWSA RESOURCES

We invite you to explore more robust details about our 2026 Annual Conference by exploring our online resources below. Should you have any clarifying questions, please reach out to the National Office at NationalOffice@nwsa.org.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE DETAILS MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

- [2026 Annual Conference](#)
- [Conference FAQs](#)
- [Presenter Requirements](#)
- [Accessibility Requests and Resources](#)
- [Annual Pre-Conference Details](#)
- [Proposal Templates](#)
- [Become a Member](#)
- [Membership FAQs](#)
- [Membership Opportunities](#)
- [The NWSA Member Hub](#)
- [Past and Future Conferences Archive](#)



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