

Call for Papers: Undergraduate Communication & English Conference (UCEC)

Conference Theme: **Play**

Deadline for proposals: March 13 2026

University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Friday, April 24, 2026

The English and Communication Studies departments at the University of St. Thomas will host a **free** interdisciplinary undergraduate conference on Friday, April 24, 2026. While papers addressing any aspect of literature, performance, theater, professional writing, creative writing, language use, teaching, and communication studies will be considered, we particularly welcome proposals for papers exploring the conference topic “Play.”

Play is essential to human creativity and communication. Play is key to cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical growth; to developing and sustaining imagination; to relationship-building; to personal and collective problem-solving and innovation. The aim of this conference is to explore this theme in an interdisciplinary way, engaging with a wide variety of texts, approaches, traditions, innovations, performances, points of view, and communication contexts, past and present.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ **Literature, Film & Digital Media:** analyses of novels, film, short stories, graphic novels, prose poetry, digital storytelling, and other narrative genres, past and present.
- ❖ **Communication Studies:** studies of rhetoric as well as interpersonal, intercultural, family, health, sport, and other forms of communication.
- ❖ **Theater & Performance:** analyses of play and play-making in theater and improv and in theater pedagogy, as well as in social and cultural contexts, past and present.
- ❖ **Creative Writing & Performance:** performances of original poetry, prose, monologues or scenes, and short theatrical works.
- ❖ **Professional Writing:** studies or examples of the role of play in technical, business, and workplace writing contexts.
- ❖ **Teaching:** studies and demonstrations of the role of play in the classroom and in teacher education.

We encourage proposals for original creative work; analyses of literature, media, film, and other texts; and research in communication studies. We welcome proposals for individual papers; original readings or performances; whole panels (three presenters); roundtables (four or more presenters); and interactive workshops and installations.

For consideration, please submit 100-word bio and a 400-word abstract for individual papers, panels, posters, roundtables, installations, or workshops. For original works of creative writing or performance, please submit a 100-word bio and a 2- to 10-page writing sample; 2-10 poems; or a 3-5 minute video of your work. Please also let us know your technology, accessibility, or other presentation/participation needs. Presenters will be responsible for their own parking, hotel, and travel arrangements. Email your submission to commenglconf@stthomas.edu by **March 13, 2026**. Submissions will be reviewed by a faculty committee and students will be notified by late March if their submission has been accepted for the conference.