

Dear Theatre as a Liberal Art (TLA) Focus Group Members,

Greetings to all TLA'ers! I am writing on behalf of Janice Pohl, our Focus Group Representative, and Peter Harrigan, our Conference Planner, to encourage you to brainstorm ideas, seek fellow panelists, and submit proposals for the ATHE Conference 2019. The deadline for proposals is November 1st, 2018, 11:59pm, Central Standard Time. Proposals must be submitted online via the ATHE website. Click here to access the 2019 proposal form: [https://www.athe.org/page/19\\_proposal\\_forms](https://www.athe.org/page/19_proposal_forms)

Please note that the same deadline applies for conference grant requests.

As you begin your session proposals for ATHE 2019, keep in mind that there are two kinds of sessions: those that are submitted solely through the TLA Focus Group and Multidisciplinary sessions which include sponsorship from two or more Focus Groups (e.g. Two-Year College and TLA Focus Groups, or TASC and TLA Focus Groups).

If you plan to submit a Multidisciplinary session, you must contact the Conference Planners from both Focus Groups to coordinate. The presenting group does not have to contain representatives from focus groups but must have the sponsorship of the two groups.

Types of sessions might include:

**Workshops:** Demonstrating practical, hands-on work. Workshops usually have a minimum of three to five presenters. These can be experiential or pedagogical in nature.

**Paper Panels:** A formal panel presenting papers/research exploring the facets of a single topic, with a minimum of three presenters.

**Panel Discussion/Roundtable:** A more informal discussion of a single topic with three to five participants.

I think you will find that other TLA members are experiencing similar challenges and rewards of/from teaching theatre in a liberal arts setting, and are very open to collaboration. Please feel free to contact others through the ATHE website. After you log in, click on memberships, and then click on Focus Groups, and then click on Theatre as a Liberal Art. On the TLA page, you'll see a WRENCH icon next to "Options." If you click on this you'll see options to message or email members, select one and you're on your way!

We hope that you will take time in this busy season to plant fruitful seeds for our time together next summer in Orlando.

Best wishes,

Kathleen Sills, Conference Planner-Elect, [sillsk@merrimack.edu](mailto:sillsk@merrimack.edu)

Peter Harrigan, TLA Conference Planner, [pharrigan@smevt.edu](mailto:pharrigan@smevt.edu)  
Janice Pohl, TLA Focus Group Representative, [janicep@elmhurst.edu](mailto:janicep@elmhurst.edu)

## **2019 ATHE Theatre as a Liberal Art: Call for Proposals**

**Full Panels Due: Nov 1, 2018**

**ATHE 2019 – Orlando, FL – August 7–11, 2019**

### **Scene Changes: Performing, Teaching, and Working through the Transitions**

As the lobby lights flicker, calling ATHE back to a second act in Orlando, it's hard not to think about all that has transpired in that city, in the world, on our stages, and in our classrooms since last we gathered in *The City Beautiful* in 2013. Seemingly accelerated cycles of public violence, political change, creative innovation, and generational expectations have led us to ponder what comes next, and how exactly we've arrived at our present moment. Our return to the resort space of the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress affords us the opportunity to pause and reflect on the constantly changing scenery, to contemplate the forces that have thus far shaped our field and our organization, and to debate possible visions of the future—for our art, our institutions, and our students.

The city of Orlando and the state of Florida have over the years experienced dramatic scene shifts, often presaging national changes. From colonial wars to contested elections, Indian Removal Acts to mass shootings, urban experiments to moon shots—Orlando offers to the visitor a panoramic background of troubled pasts and future visions, prompting us to consider the possibilities and consequences of our scene changes. The city's various theme parks provide their own encapsulated representations of past and future, visions that are themselves constantly changing, both in their built scenic environments and in the ideologies that such scenery materializes.

The 2019 Conference Committee invites you back to Orlando for an exploration of all that the theme of "Scene Changes" suggests. What are the practical challenges of scene changes for playwrights, directors, dramaturgs, designers, actors, stage managers, and stage crews? For whom is a scene change an interlude of quiet contemplation, and for whom is it the busiest moment of the night? What is the history of the scene shift, and how have theatre artists dealt with changes in production methods and audience tastes? How do scene shifts shape audiences' experiences? How will our field respond to the challenges and opportunities represented by recent changes in leadership, and by shifting economies of production? How do we reflect on techniques of theatre education and scholarship in this changing moment? How can we begin to proactively change the scenes of the theatrical climate and structure? Perhaps most importantly, how will we make use of the present moment to redress previous wrongs, preserve what is important, and move forward into the future?

Come to Orlando for a change in scenery, and stay for a creative contemplation of that special moment in between, when we collectively sit in the dark, taking in what we've just seen, and imagining what might come next.

**TLA Focus Group: Topics of Interest generated at the 2018 Conference in Boston**

**(This list is to get you started, please do not feel limited by these topics.)**

- 1) Teaching outside of anthologies – challenge of offering other sources in dramatic lit courses – what supplemental readings do Theatre Historians use to challenge the history? Think about it differently?
- 2) Ongoing sessions that are scaffolded for devising – beginning, intermediate, advanced
- 3) Holocaust Theatre pedagogy
- 4) Theatre after College for folks in a non-professional track – how do we prepare our students to be not only theatre-makers but theatre patrons/ supporters? How do you build your community? Tout those skills that theatre gives you that are unique and marketable – double majors. How do we encourage them in their capstones to make connections to their other majors? Encouraging the skills your students DO have.
- 5) Pedagogy for general technical theatre students – students who want to work in shops, but not be designers? Two-year voc-tech track? Certificate programs? Entertainment tech minor? Connections with Media design/ studies departments, double-majors?
- 6) Looking ahead – future of higher ed – how to prepare our students for the world, how to prepare ourselves for the changes that are coming – Futurist – bring in a consultant – develop plans for the future of theatre and/in education – make a plan, not just “maintain and pray” – where are we going?
- 7) Bring in a consultant to encourage/help us to speak truth to power to our administrations – someone from career education or psychology – get more people from the Arts INTO administration – letting others know how we have been doing active learning all along. Deans who are within ATHE – so much depends on your Provost and their academic background – dealing with administrators who may or may not be familiar with/ on board with our discipline
- 8) Online teaching of theatre courses – what is the research around it? Does it work? Where are we going? How effective are we with teaching experiential areas online or in a hybrid model? How do you put the active learning into that framework?
- 9) “Measuring” the success of our programs? How do we contend with metrics?
- 10) Connections to Health Professions – collaborating with those departments? Who is doing this and how?

**Please send questions to Kathleen Sills ([sillsk@merrimack.edu](mailto:sillsk@merrimack.edu)), Peter Harrigan ([pharrigan@smevt.edu](mailto:pharrigan@smevt.edu)), and/or Janice Pohl ([janicep@elmhurst.edu](mailto:janicep@elmhurst.edu)). The formal deadline for submission of full panels/sessions on the ATHE site is Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. The same deadline applies for conference grant requests.**

