

**SFAM Conference 2026
Borders and Contact Zones**

Thursday October 22, 2026

8:30 am-12:15 pm

Registration

Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026

9:00-10:00 am

Welcome Continental Breakfast

Greeting from Executive Director and Special Guests

Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026

10:30 am to noon

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 1: BORDER GEOGRAPHIES

Crow He

UC Davis

Homage to the Square: Speculative Cartography and the Tabletop Game

Thomas Yount

Clean Earth Future

Polycentric Borderlands: Cooperative Worldbuilding and the Dissolution of Governance Boundaries in Climate Cooldown

Jeri Zulli

Fashion Institute of Technology

Transgressing Borders in *The City & the City*

SESSION 2: THE BIOPOLITICS OF SPECIES

Dawon Han

Korea University

Captive Companionship: Translation, Sacrifice, and the Limits of Companion Species in *Project Hail Mary*

Anna Temel

University of Warsaw

The Biopolitics of Multispecies Coexistence in *Mass Effect*

Daesan Yun
Korea University
Speculative Cinema and the Technopolitics of Extraterrestrial Contact: A Triadic Reading of Contact, Arrival, and *Project Hail Mary*

SESSION 3: DECOLONIAL POLITICS

Kelsey Chen
Stanford University
There is No Shore: A Politics of the Abyss in Spacefaring Narratives of Le Guin, Delany, and Lem

Sayeong Kim
UC Riverside
Invisible Labor at Sea: Asian Maritime Workers and Automated Capitalism in Ray Nayler's *The Mountain in the Sea*

Haerin Shin
Korea University
Stolen Metamorphoses: Techno-Feminist Reappropriation and Its Foreclosure in Hollywood Remediations of Asian Speculative Fiction

Thursday October 22, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Thursday October 22, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 4: BORDERLINE VIOLENCE: CARCERAL FUTURISM, MONSTROUS KINSHIP, AND (UN)MAKING TIME IN SPECULATIVE FICTION

Ripley Baker
UC Santa Barbara
Fear and Found Family in Exile: Body Horror and Monstrosity as Queer Kinship in Trans+ Horror Fiction

ksenia fir
UC Santa Cruz
Policing Constructs: Weaponized Disability, Subjecthood, and Violence Work of SF Cyborg Cops

Lizzy Hatch
UC Santa Cruz
Time Loops: Prison Abolition, Crip Time, and Narrative Border (Un)Making

SESSION 5: KINSHIP, QUEER POSSIBILITY AND THE UTOPIAN

Lesley R. Gouger

CSU Long Beach

Alternative Family Structures: Examining the Intersections of Family, Sustainability, and Technology in Science-Fiction and Speculative Fiction Media

Ryan Lerrick

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Creating Possibility in the City of Refuge: Queer Desire and Community Building in Emet North's *In Universes*

Matthew Snyder

UC Riverside

The Half-Prophecies of *Everything for Everyone* and Its Borderless World of Communes

SESSION 6: THE BORDERS OF PERSONHOOD

Stephen Dougherty

University of Agder

Persons, Corporations, Group Minds, and Replicants: The Science Fiction of the Fourteenth Amendment

Remy Sumida-Tate

University of Washington, Seattle

"Cell-Penetrating Compounds": Semi-impermeable Borders and Blurring Race in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*

Gregory T. Carter

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

"The Council Said No": Unauthorized Crossings in Star Wars: *The Acolyte*

Thursday October 22, 2026

2:30-3:00 pm

BREAK

Thursday October 22, 2026

3:00-4:30 pm

Creative Industries Panel TBD

Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026

8:00 am-12:15 pm

Registration

Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026

8:00-8:30 am

Continental Breakfast

Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026

8:30-10 am

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 7: TIME AND HISTORY

Todd Chapman

University of Colorado Boulder

The Ghost-Seam: Interrogating Language-Mediated Class Borders in Alan Moore's *Jerusalem*

Christopher Allen Walker

Colby College

Stasis: Cryonics as a Technology of Hope

Jiaqi Wang

Korea University

No Eternal Heroes: Historical Temporality and Survival Ethics in Liu Cixin's *Death's End*

SESSION 8: GENRE AND TEMPORALITY

John Bruni

Grand Valley State University

"Sailing on the Edges of Time": SF and Cybernetics in the Work of Brian Eno

Eonho Jeon

Korea University

Letters Beyond Longitudes: Singular Emblems and the Crossing of Borders in Ken Liu's 'The Paper Menagerie' and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2

SESSION 9: REALITY AND OTHER WORLDS

Zachary Horton

University of Pittsburgh

The Mind/Body Problem in 1950s AI Speculation

Juliette Andre
University of Colorado Boulder
Crossing into the metaverse: how to 'tell computers and humans apart' in Alain Damasio's "C@ptch@"

Jewon Lee
Korea University
Reskinning the Orient: Refractive Orientalism in Online Game Worlds

Friday October 23, 2026

10:00-10:30 am

Coffee Break

Friday October 23, 2026

10:30 am to noon

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 10: PANEL DISCUSSION: INFRASTRUCTURING DIASPORIC MEDIA ARTS WITH GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

Chantal Eyong
USC

Andrea Kim
USC

Faye Zhang
USC

SESSION 11: NEW METAPHORS FOR AI (II)

Stina Attebery and Marshall Piros
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Archiving Science Fiction Metaphors in AI Discourse

Owen Leonard
UC Santa Barbara
Space: Optimization Landscapes, AI, and the Accumulation of Capital

David Shipko
Vanderbilt University
Machina Ex Deo: The History of the "Artificial Intelligence" Signifier

SESSION 12: CREATIVE SESSION TBD #1

Friday October 23, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Friday October 23, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 13: LABOR ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE

Yoonsuh Jung
Korea University
Bordering the Multiverse: Aespa's 'MY' and the Speculative Worldbuilding of K-pop

Mihaela Mihailova
San Francisco State University
Digital Maximalism as a Contact Zone: Spectacle and Myth in *Nezha* and *Nezha 2*

Ida Yoshinaga
Georgia Tech
White Female/Queer Screen Labor in *The Comeback*: Multi-Hyphenates in the Age of the Algorithmic Auteur

SESSION 14: THEORIZING FANTASY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Briana Best
Indiana University, Bloomington
In Defense of Escapism

Timothy Murphy
Oklahoma State University
Episte(magic)ology: Magic as Articulation, Episteme, and Metaphysics in Fantasy

Benjamin J. Robertson
University of Colorado Boulder
"Put these foolish ambitions to rest": Allegorithm and Story in *Elden Ring*

SESSION 15: BORDERS OF THE HUMAN

Steven Shaviro
Wayne State University
Blurred Bounaries: M.A. Foster's *Ler* Novels

Jagoda Tyczyńska
University of Warsaw
You Are What You Eat: Vampirism and the Crisis of Native Identity in Stephen Graham Jones' *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter*

Hyerim Jung

Korea University

Relational Names, Borderland Bodies: Plant-Human Hybridity and the Limits of Species Bordering in Baek Heena's *Yeoni* and *The Willow Lord*

Friday October 23, 2026

2:30-3:00 pm

BREAK

Friday October 23, 2026

3:00-4:30 pm

Plenary Event: Kalindi Vora keynote

Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026

8:00 am-12:15 pm

Registration

Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026

8:00-8:30 am

Continental Breakfast

Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026

8:30-10 am

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 16: CREATIVE SESSION TBD #2

SESSION 17: NEW METAPHORS FOR AI (II)

Joshua Pearson

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

“Once more into the breach, rebellious hero...”: How SF’s Reflexive Individualism
Misdiagnoses the Real Risks of AI

David M. Higgins

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Worldwide

Subaltern: Artificial Intelligence and Speculative Victimhood

Rachel Anderson

Grand Valley State University

Age of Faith: Saints’ Relics and Algorithmic Opacity

SESSION 18: THE NECROPOLITICS OF SPECIES

Kexin Han

Korea University

Classification, Exclusion, and the Moral Unmaking of the Human: Toward a Posthuman Gaze in *Mickey 17*

Spencer Lanctin

Korea University

The Default and the Displaced: Border-Making in Pixar's *Hoppers*

Morgan Llewellyn

University of Colorado Boulder

Saturday October 24, 2026

10:00-10:30 am

Coffee Break

Saturday October 24, 2026

10:30 am to noon

Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 19: DESTABILIZING GENRE CATEGORIES

Lisa Swanstrom

University of Utah

FLUBBERS: Synthetic Substances in War, in Space, and in the Kitchen

Cole McMullen

University of Washington

“Extreme and Improbable”: Persuasion and Financial SF in the Citrini Report

Francis Quina

University of Pittsburgh

Across the Blind Eternities: Borders, Genres, and the Magic The Gathering Multiverse

SESSION 20: POSTHUMAN MEDIA

Merry Lynn Byrd

Virginia State University

Bunker Sci-Fi and the Bounds of Purity in Two Current Television Series: *Fallout* and *Paradise*

Nari Yang

Korea University

Who Plays Whom? Singularity, Cruel Optimism, and *Black Mirror*'s “Plaything”

Soonmi Jung

Korea University

Witches at the Threshold: Park Hoon-jung's *The Witch* (2018) and the Cartography of Border Crossing in the Wake of #MeToo Korea

SESSION 21: STAR WARS ROUNDTABLE

Joshua Pearson

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Patrick Sharp
CSU Los Angeles

Sharon Sharp
CSU Dominguez Hills

Mihaela Mihailova
San Francisco State University

Gregory T. Carter
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Saturday October 24, 2026
Noon to 1 pm
Lunch, Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
1-2:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

SESSION 22: PANEL DISCUSSION: MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE AND SUBJECTIVE HISTORY GETTING UNREAL IN POST-TRUTH AMERICA

David Agranoff
Independent Scholar

Jonathan Lethem
Pomona College

Howard A. Rodman
Independent Scholar

Haerin Shin
Korea University

SESSION 23: RYLEND GRANT CREATIVE INDUSTRIES PANEL

SESSION 24: EXPERIMENTAL ZONES AND BELONGING

Johann Pibert
University of Bonn, Free University of Berlin
From Film to Theater Psychology: The Zone as a Liminal State in Tarkovsky's *Stalker* and Didenko's *Wishing Machine*

Amanda Rivera

Korea University
Bordering the Human: from Bare Life to the Posthuman in Peake and VanderMeer

Mikael D. Sebag
Laguna College of Art + Design
“It’s Not About You”: Interdimensional Borderwork and Ethical Re-Enchantment in *Doctor Strange*

Saturday October 24, 2026
2:30-3:00 pm
BREAK

Saturday October 24, 2026
3:00-5:00 pm
Plenary Event: Screening of *Assembly*
Discussion Panel: James Tobias, Allison de Fren, Courtney Baker
Studio Ballroom

Saturday October 24, 2026
5:00-7:00 pm
Closing Reception
Studio Ballroom
