

CFP: Alta Argumentation Conference 2025
July 31-August 03
Snowbird in Alta, Utah
Theme: Arguing Democracy

The organizers of the 22nd National Communication Association/American Forensic Association Summer Conference on Argumentation invite completed papers, panel proposals, and paper abstracts for inclusion in its Conference from July 31- August 3, 2025, at the Snowbird Conference Center in Alta, Utah. The theme of the conference is **Arguing Democracy**.

Thirty-five years ago, as the Cold War came to an end, many celebrated the victory of democracy. The international liberal order was optimistically proclaimed as the structural precondition for peace and prosperity. A new round of globalization would ensue with the movement of capital, supply chains, people, ideas, and technology intermingling to create new places and spaces of interaction. Yet, all was not well. Voices from both the left and right challenged the claims supporting global trading regimes and the uneven movement of people, manufacturing, and capital across territorial borders. Moreover, the success of an Al Qaeda terror attack in the United States on 11 September 2001, motivated President George W Bush to launch a “Global War on Terror” generating new regimes of electronic surveillance, Black ops sites, the militarization of local police forces, and the hardening of territorial borders. In contrast to the optimism at the end of the Cold War, the COVID-19 pandemic would generate deep pessimism about the health of democracy. Freedom House reports that “global freedom declined for the 18th consecutive year in 2023.” After January 6, 2021, the conceit of American exceptionalism no longer can appeal to the “peaceful transition of power.” Throughout the world new forms of “illiberal democracy” have been declared to limit and circumscribe democratic struggles. Moreover, the emergence of “civilizational states” challenges the globalization of democratic norms and human rights.

The 2025 theme asks its participants to imagine how people and other agents argue democracy. How do people argue for or against democracy? If democracy is an essentially contested concept, how does the contestation over democracy affect the border between argument and its outside (or other)? What might the study of argument tell us about the past, present and future of democracy? What are the properties of democratic argument? What does democratic argument exclude and/or demand for its inclusion? What is the relationship between democratic argument and “democratic violence” (Honderich, 1973)? What is normal or abnormal about democratic argument? What virtues, norms, pedagogies, and/or structures promote or impede democratic argument? Does democratic argument promote freedom and equality? Is the democratic imagination of argumentation always liberal? What is illiberal argument? Where is argument in the imagination of “radical democracy”? What argumentative differences/similarities exist within and between “cultures of democracy” (Taylor, 2007). What is the scale and scope of democratic argumentation (interpersonally, organizationally, nationally, globally). What differences do the platforms/media/computation of communication make for the potential of democratic argument? What is the democratic future for argumentation; conversely, what is the argumentative future of democracy?

Potential submitters are encouraged to speak to the study of argumentation in its specificity as a product, process, and/or procedure. Naturally, some preference will be given to submissions that address the general theme. However, quality work using any methodology, on any aspect of argumentation, will be welcome, as it always has been. Furthermore, the Alta conference encourages submissions about intercollegiate debate and forensics in all its formats.

The Keynote address will be presented by Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, Northwestern University, Executive Director of the Center for Transcultural Studies and the Director of the Center for Global Culture and Communication at Northwestern. He is the co-author (with Craig Calhoun and Charles Taylor) of *Degenerations of Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2022).

Details for Submission

We invite completed papers, panel proposals, and paper abstracts written from any of the available methodological approaches to argumentation.

- Completed papers: Papers should not be longer than 3,000 words, excluding notes and references or no longer than 3,200 words, including notes and references.
- Panel proposals: Panel proposals should provide a title, names and addresses (including e-mail) of participants, an abstract of each paper, and a brief explanation of the importance of the panel (500 words or less). Given that the tradition at Alta is active member-presenter engagement, if respondents are included, then their role should be explained. Panel proposals with participants from multiple institutions are preferred.
- Paper abstracts: Extended abstracts of paper proposals (500 words or more) should be substantial enough to indicate the scope, direction, approach, and merit of proposed papers. Assessment will be based on the evaluators' understandings of the projected paper as presented in the abstract.
- Audio-Visual: Please indicate AV needs that you may require should your submission be accepted.

Submissions will be due February 17, 2025. They will be evaluated by peer reviewers. For accepted proposals, full papers will be due on July 10, 2025, and these papers will again be peer reviewed, but for publication. In the early years of the Alta conference, virtually all presented papers were published in the proceedings, but this is no longer the case. For the last several conferences, we have published a volume of selected papers instead of proceedings.

Eventual papers should be in a file format conveniently readable and editable in Microsoft Word. The American Psychological Association's style manual should be used by everyone. Some of you may not realize that when Google Scholar gives an "APA citation," it is never correct. For relatively unusual sources (e.g., blogs, films, photos, or songs) you may have to search a bit to find out how these are to be cited in APA.

Instructions for Submitting

Submit your abstract, paper, or proposal to Ronald Walter Greene as an email attachment. Please use the conference email address: <ALTA2025@umn.edu> Please name your file in the following way: LastName, FirstInitial -PaperTitle-Date. For example, perhaps we will receive Marx, K.-ASpecterIsHaunting-2-15-2025.docx.

Graduate Student Submission

Financial assistance is available on a competitive basis for papers solely written by graduate students. Please indicate to me if you qualify for consideration. We have sometimes been able to provide some support for international scholars as well. Moreover, there is an award for the best graduate student paper.

Alta has always been a very open-minded intellectual community, welcoming to many theoretical and methodological approaches. We very much hope you will join us.