

SSCA 2026: Performance Studies Division Call for Submissions

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The Performance Studies Division invites submissions for competitive selection for the 2026 Southern States Communication Association conference to be held on April 8–12 in Birmingham, AL.

We particularly want to highlight this year's theme: *Comm-AI-nity: Conversations in the Age of Intelligence*. This theme—blending ideas of community and AI—encourages reflection on how communication fosters connection and shared understanding in an era increasingly influenced by AI and invites exploration of the relationship between the two. Performance is uniquely suited to address our complex and dynamic relationship with AI through its emphasis on embodiment, questions of ephemerality, and considerations of materiality. As such, we invite submissions that speak to the possibilities, limitations, and/or ethical concerns surrounding AI.

The division recognizes excellent scholarship with six awards: Top Competitive Paper, Top Competitive Student Paper, Top Competitive Debut Paper, Top Student Performance, the Southern States Outstanding Performance Studies Scholar of the Year, and Outstanding Publication in Performance Studies. Top Competitive Paper, Top Competitive Student Paper, and Top Debut Paper awards are determined via review while Top Student Performance is determined at the conference. Instructions for Scholar of the Year and Outstanding publication are included below.

Southern States Outstanding Performance Studies Scholar of the Year:

This award acknowledges a scholar who has made significant contributions to performance studies and has been a significant contributor to/from the Southern States region via scholarship, service, and/or artistic activity in the 2024–2026 period. Potential recipients may be self-nominated or receive a nomination. Nominees should be a current member of the SSCA Performance Studies Division and submissions should include the nominee's CV and two letters of support written by academic peers. Nomination packets should be sent to the program planner (Alex Davenport) at davenport.a.k@gmail.com.

Outstanding Publication in Performance Studies:

This award is given to an author or co-authors who have made a significant contribution to performance studies field through the publication of an academic article, book, or book chapter. Applicants must be members of the Southern States Communication Association Performance Studies division to be eligible for this award. Submitted works should be published in the Fall of 2023 or later. An electronic copy of the publication and a letter of support should be submitted as part of the nomination. If it is a full book, a representative selection should be submitted. Nomination packets should be sent to the program planner (Alex Davenport) at davenport.a.k@gmail.com.

We are also seeking submissions of full-length performances to be discussed during the **competitive Page-to-Stage panel**. Please submit these to the “Competitive Paper” option and please indicate “PAGE-TO-STAGE SUBMISSION” in your abstract and in the main text. When submitting for Page-to-Stage, please include (at least): (1) a cover letter/abstract that describes why the submission should be considered for page-to-stage and what would be discussed during the panel and (2) supporting materials (e.g. script, script selections, recording, photos, etc).

The division welcomes multiple types of submissions: (1) completed papers; (2) completed performances; (3) thematic panels; and (4) extended abstracts. All submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>.

Competitive Paper/Performance Submissions:

For the paper or performance to be assigned for review, please follow all of the instructions on the convention site. For the purposes of anonymous review, please omit all author-identifying information from the manuscript. All complete papers submitted will be considered for the Division's Top Paper Award. All student performances will be considered for the Top Student Performance Panel. For student papers and performances, indicate "STUDENT" on the first page of the manuscript and indicate "Student Paper" during the submission process. The Division's Top Student Paper will be submitted for consideration for the SSCA Bostrom Young Scholar Award.

Panel or Roundtable Submissions:

Panels and roundtables are submitted through the same process as competitive papers; just be sure to select the appropriate submission type when prompted. The submitter will be able to add other panelists as "authors" after the initial submission. Upload a copy of the panel, listing the description/rationale, panelists, and, if appropriate, panelists' individual topics; upload this at the "Upload Paper" prompt. *If you wish to submit a full-length performance (greater than ~15 minutes), please do so as a panel submission.*

Extended Abstract Submissions:

You may submit an extended abstract for an individual presentation or performance. It is expected that extended abstracts (no more than 500 words) will include references and comparisons to related work, will outline key theories, and will explain the focus and approach that will be presented at the conference. These abstracts should indicate "Extended Abstract" and be submitted to the "paper upload option" portal in XCD.

Submissions must be submitted online no later than 11:59 p.m. PST on **Monday, September 15, 2024**. Go to the submission site by going to the conference website (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>) and clicking the submission link. First time visitors to the site will need to create an account. Return visitors will need to make sure to use the same email address that they used to establish the account. To avoid problems, early submission is strongly advised. Any submission not meeting the above requirements will not be accepted for review. If you have additional questions, please contact the Division Vice-Chair and Planner, Alex Davenport at davenport.a.k@gmail.com.