

Medical Rhetoric CCCC 2024 Roundtable CFP: Writing Abundance in Rhetorics of Health and Medicine

As CCCC celebrates 75 years in 2024, conference chair Dr. Jennifer Sano-Franchini [frames the conference theme](#) as a way of taking stock: of where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed. Rhetoric of Health and Medicine (RHM) has grown significantly since Judy Segal described it as a “subfield” in 2005 (p. 312). Likewise, the CCCC Medical Rhetoric Standing Group (MRSG) has come a long way since it began as a Special Interest Group or SIG in about 1995 (Heifferon, n.d.). In concluding a brief history of medical rhetoric, Barbara Heifferon argued that “we, like the chameleon, ... [can] change and morph as needed ... to work well and fit in where we are” (n.d., para. 8). Indeed, RHM has seen significant growth and change in the last three decades from theories to methodologies to sites of study as it has embraced methodological messiness and interdisciplinarity and flourished. Even in just the last three years— influenced by the ongoing COVID pandemic and increasingly pressing problems around systemic oppression, reproductive rights, and health justice in the U.S.—a number of critical conversations have emerged within RHM around what we do and who we are.

Dr. Sano-Franchini describes CCCC 2024’s theme, Writing Abundance, as a way of both understanding and reassessing ourselves and our work, and importantly, of “imagining more just futures in rhetoric, composition, and writing studies.” Foregrounding the Kānaka Maoli ontology of planetary abundance, Sano-Franchini urges us to take on a mindset of humility and responsibility, of learning, and to come to marginalized rhetorical traditions “not to know or understand, but to re-frame and re-think what we thought we knew, to feel out the limits of our own knowing.” The idea of Writing Abundance dovetails with [broader current conversations in RHM](#) about diversity and justice and what space we inhabit as a field/discipline/subdiscipline/area of inquiry. There are many ways to think of Writing Abundance in connection with RHM; for example, through critical engagement with RHM’s history and contemporary landscape, coalitional work with marginalized communities, antiracist citational practices, attending to indigenous and global/international perspectives, and/or carrying out justice-oriented work from theory-building to practice. There is always more progress to be made. Thus, **this roundtable seeks proposals for presentations that will engage with reassessing, re-framing, and rethinking RHM as an abundant field of inquiry.**

Roundtable Objective and Sponsored Panel Details

This CFP is for a standing group-sponsored panel at CCCC 2024; successful proposals are included as speakers on a panel proposal that MRSG submits to CCCC. Importantly, while CCCC has a [No Multiple Speaking Roles](#) policy, participation on a sponsored panel does not count toward this rule.

The objective of the roundtable is to foster interactive discussions between and around these issues and among presenters and the audience. To this end, **we invite proposals for modified ignite (5-minute) presentations** where participants provide an overview of their research, teaching, or administrative/professional work discussed in the framework

of RHM and writing abundance. Each presenter will be asked to conclude with a question or questions they will pose to the audience to foster discussion.

Prospective Topics

Individuals are invited to submit proposals for short (5-minute) presentations that will focus on themes and topics inspired by the CCCC 2024 CFP such as:

- **Valuing nonwhite scholarships:** RHM has been critiqued for its whiteness and its Western focus in various times and places. How might the abundant knowledges of global, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and other multiply marginalized communities bring nuance to our understandings of RHM without engaging in cooptation or appropriation? How might such perspectives challenge how we understand rhetoric, health, and medicine? How will we take the time to learn about the contexts from which such ideas have emerged, and how will we share what we've learned while foregrounding the BIPOC, Indigenous, and international thinkers and writers who have inspired us?
- **Disrupting assumed pedagogies:** We often teach a wide range of courses from RHM to health communication to writing for the health professions and more. How can writing abundance encourage us to teach in ways that do not reinforce capitalist and settler colonial logics, including the prioritization of job preparation as the primary or most important purpose of postsecondary education? How can a rhetorical approach to health and medicine intersect with, inform, and enrich health provider pedagogies?
- **Centering marginalized experiences with technology:** How might the abundant knowledges of BIPOC and other multiply marginalized communities bring nuance to our understandings of technologies for writing and healthcare? How might such perspectives challenge how we understand technology, who is technological, and how we might relate to technologies from personal healthcare devices to medical imaging machines to emerging AI/AR/VR tools?
- **Rethinking scholarship norms:** How do current writing, research, and publication norms in RHM reinforce settler colonial and capitalist logics, and how might we interrogate and rethink those practices? How can writing abundance trouble narrow conceptions of expertise and ways of knowing?
- **Taking action toward justice:** How can writing abundance support restorative and justice-oriented projects and practices in RHM? How can RHM scholars increase inclusiveness in research design, build coalitions to connect with marginalized communities, and acknowledge and resist biases in our work?
- **Shaping RHM's future:** The theme of writing abundance draws attention to reflecting on who we are and what we do, both past, present, and future. Ongoing definitional conversations in RHM focus on its relationship to disciplines like health communication, medical humanities, etc.; how can writing abundance help us approach these questions in new and different ways?

Submissions

Please submit **250-word maximum proposals** to stambler@umn.edu by **Monday, April 17, 2023**. The MRSG is committed to ensuring a range of voices and perspectives are

represented on the panel; we welcome and support submissions from early career, multiply marginalized or underrepresented (MMU), and graduate student scholars, and first-time presenters. Submissions from co-authors considered. Your questions are welcome! Contact Mollie Stambler at stambler@umn.edu.

In your proposal, note the following:

- The topic/focus of your proposed presentation
- How you will address the theme of “Writing Abundance in Rhetorics of Health and Medicine” in your presentation
- The final question(s) you will use to engage the audience in a conversation at the end of the presentation

Proposal decisions will be made by May 1, 2023.

References:

Heifferon, Barbara. (n.d.). History of medical rhetoric in technical communication. *Rhetoricians of Health and Medicine* [website].
<http://medicalrhetoric.com/about-2/history/>

Segal, Judy Z. (2005) Interdisciplinarity and bibliography in rhetoric of health and medicine. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 14(3), 311-318