

AWP CONFERENCE & BOOKFAIR EVENT OUTLINE GUIDE

WHAT IS AN EVENT OUTLINE?

An event outline is a document that provides information about your AWP event to attendees. An event outline can include any written remarks you and your presenters have prepared, reading material you plan to share, or a list of moderator questions. This document can be uploaded only by the organizer or the moderator.

WHY DO WE NEED AN EVENT OUTLINE?

Event outlines encourage event participants to start preparing for their event well in advance, which improves the overall quality of the event. Additionally, these copies are essential for holding an accessible event. Consider members of your audience who have disabilities and may wish or need to follow along to a written text. It is also helpful for ASL and CART interpreters to see event information beforehand.

HOW SHOULD I FORMAT MY EVENT OUTLINE?

Event outlines should be in 14–16-point black font on a white background and should be saved as a PDF. An event outline template and event outline example are included at the end of this guide.

WHERE DO I UPLOAD MY EVENT OUTLINE?

The event organizer or moderator can upload the event outline in the [My Events](#) page of their AWP account by scrolling to the “Upload Your Event Outline” section, clicking the green “Edit” button, and selecting the event outline file with the “Choose File” button. Once the file has been uploaded, click the green “Save” button to make the outline available to attendees.

I HAVE OTHER DOCUMENTS I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO ATTENDEES. CAN I UPLOAD THOSE AS WELL?

Yes! Event organizers and moderators can upload up to three optional supplemental documents on the [My Events](#) page of their AWP account. Supplemental documents can include more information on the topic being discussed, resource or reading lists, promotional material, and any other materials you’d like to share with your attendees.

WHERE CAN ATTENDEES FIND MY EVENT OUTLINE AND SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS?

The event outline and any supplemental documents you choose to share will be available for attendees to download from the online schedule when it goes live in the fall.

I’VE MADE CHANGES TO THE EVENT OUTLINE I ALREADY UPLOADED. CAN I UPLOAD THE NEW VERSION?

Yes! The event organizer or moderator can upload an updated version of the event outline at any time as your plans come into better focus closer to the event.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTING MY EVENT OUTLINES?

- If your event is held in-person at the conference, you are responsible for providing copies of your event outline onsite. At least five accessibility copies of your event outline are required for all in-person events. If you are providing supplemental documents, please be sure to have at least five accessible copies that are in 14–16-point black font on white paper without any color or graphics.
- If your event is held virtually, your event outline and supplemental documents will be available for all attendees to download from the online schedule.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO DISTRIBUTE MY COPYRIGHT MATERIAL?

- If you do not wish to give away your copyright material, you do not need to include it in the outline that is uploaded to the online schedule.
- If your event will be held in-person, you should bring at least five paper copies of any copyright reading material that you plan to share that can be distributed to those who need it for accessibility purposes. Those copies can then be collected at the end of the event.
- If your event will be held virtually, any material you read will be captioned, and attendees will be able to request your permission to view your event transcript for accessibility purposes.

AWP EVENT OUTLINE SUGGESTED TEMPLATE

This outline is only suggested—there are many ways to create an event outline successfully. Feel free to rearrange as you see fit or see one of the examples provided in this guide.

- 1) event title
- 2) event description
- 3) event category
- 4) event organizer
- 5) event moderator
- 6) event participants and short biographies

IN-PERSON EVENTS, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR EVENT:

Welcome to [title of event]. A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let the moderator of the panel, (identify moderator), know, and a printed copy will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing scented products.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

OPENING MODERATOR REMARKS AND HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduce and identify all speakers in the order in which they are sitting.

PARTICIPANT OPENING REMARKS, INITIAL THOUGHTS, OR READINGS

- These can be in a paragraph, a bulleted list of items the speakers would like to cover during the event, or a copy of whatever he, she, or they plan to read.
- If you are concerned about distributing copyrighted material at an in-person event, please make sure to gather the reading material back at the end of the event and let those using an outline know that you will need the materials back at the end of your event. You might also consider printing separate copies to attach to this overall event outline so you may just collect that portion back from the attendee using the outline.

MODERATOR QUESTIONS

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

RESPONSES OF EACH PARTICIPANT TO MODERATOR QUESTIONS

We understand this portion of the event may be more spontaneous than what can be planned for in a written document. That's okay—it's the nature of a live event. Each presenter should still be able to provide a brief written response or bulleted list of thoughts in response to planned questions.

If the conversation veers off in an interesting, on-topic, and productive way, that's okay, too! The point of creating this document isn't to hamstring you into delivering a completely rehearsed discussion or reading but to provide as much information as possible to those wanting or needing to follow along to a written text.

Q&A SESSION

In-person events: at the end of the event, there will be time for a 10–15-minute Q&A session. Please pass the wireless microphone to the person posing the question or repeat all questions into one of the wired microphones.

AWP 2018 EVENT OUTLINE EXAMPLE

EVENT TITLE: Sum of the Parts: Creating Cohesion from Fragmented Narratives

Event Description: Nonfiction writers rely on memory, our own and others', yet memory is inherently fragmented and made more so by experiences like trauma and illness. Incorporating secondary source material can enhance but complicate the narrative. Five writers who have encountered issues of memory and fragmentation personally and in working with under-represented populations discuss challenges and strategies for bridging—or embracing—these gaps and tying together disparate pieces to create a cohesive narrative.

EVENT CATEGORY: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Event Organizer & Moderator

Lauren Kay Johnson: Lauren Kay Johnson is a former Air Force public affairs officer and Afghanistan veteran. She holds an MFA in creative nonfiction writing from Emerson College. Her forthcoming memoir chronicles her coming-of-age against the backdrop of war through her mother's Army career and her own service.

Event Participants

Heather Bryant: Heather Bryant has published short fiction and nonfiction in the *Massachusetts Review*, the *Southeast Review*, *CURA*, and in anthologies. A winner of the Southeast Review Narrative Nonfiction Contest, she was Emerging Writer-in-Residence at Randolph College and teaches at Pace University.

Judith Hannan: Judith Hannan is an essayist and the author of *The Write Prescription* and *Motherhood Exaggerated*. She leads workshops for those affected by illness and for high-risk populations. She mentors cancer patients and is a recipient of a 2015 Humanism in Medicine award from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation.

Sonya Lea: Sonya Lea's memoir was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and has been praised in *O* magazine, *People*, and the BBC. Her essays have appeared in *Salon*, the *Southern Review*, *Guernica*, *Ms.*, and more. She lives in Seattle and the Canadian Rockies and teaches writing to trauma survivors.

Suzanne Paola Antonetta: Susanne Paola Antonetta's most recent book is *Curious Atoms* from Essay Press. Awards include a New York Times Notable Book, an American Book Award, a Library Journal Best Science book, a Pushcart prize, and others. She coauthored nonfiction text *Tell It Slant* and is editor of the *Bellingham Review*.

Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements

Good afternoon, and welcome to "Sum of the Parts: Creating Cohesion from Fractured Narratives."

Before we get started, a couple of administrative notes: Matt Komatsu is not able to join us because his wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl last week. Huge congratulations to them. We are delighted to be joined by someone whose facial hair is not quite as impressive, but whose bio and perspective certainly are: Judith Hannan. You can read her bio and all the presenter bios on the AWP website.

And lastly, I'm listed in your program as Lauren Kay *Halloran*, but I shall henceforth be known as Lauren Kay *Johnson*—I'm recently divorced, and I'm taking back my name, even though it's boring, because it's mine!

Thank you all for being here. We know you have a lot of panel and bookfair options and many of you are jet-lagged and sleep deprived, and we really appreciate you spending the next seventy-five minutes with us. I hope you're as excited—and maybe even as baffled—by this topic as I am. This panel came about for purely selfish reasons. I was working on my memoir about my time in the military and also attempting to weave in aspects of my mother's military service in Desert Storm and my family's military history and put everything in a greater historical/cultural context while also contextualizing the weirdness and foreignness that is the military and rural Afghanistan and include excerpts from official military documents and news articles and emails and letters sent and received by myself and my mother. And I found it all very difficult and overwhelming. How could I take these disparate elements—that were all related and were all important to my story, but varied, sometimes drastically, in content, chronology and tone—and smush them together into something that resembled a coherent narrative? Plus there was that pesky issue of memory, which I reaffirmed again and again throughout the writing and researching process to be a rather unreliable narrator. I fumbled my way through and learned a few tricks along the way, but I'm thrilled today to be surrounded by these fantastic women, who have all encountered issues of fragmentation in their own work and in the work of students, and who have navigated, conquered and embraced it in a variety of artful ways: Judith Hannan, Sonya Lea, Heather Bryant, and Susanne Paola Antonetta. To get us started, if you could each introduce yourselves and give a brief overview of your personal experience with fragmented narratives.

Participant Initial Remarks:

Heather Bryant:

I'll talk about how fugitive pieces often hold a clue to the cohesion in shorter works, such as essays. For example, in an essay I wrote about a visit with my father in Florida, I included a sidenote about red tide. When I got feedback, some said to take out that piece because the scientific language stood out and didn't fit with the whole. Instead, I made it the governing structure of the essay—interspersing these scientific facts with the story—and that's when the whole came together.

In my current project, I'm working on a memoir, *When She Was David*, about my search for my father's early identity before he transitioned and became a woman. I have these very early memories, and some are on the cusp—in between or during the transition. I wrote one scene in which we went to see Ursula Le Guin together at the Planetarium in San Francisco. I couldn't remember if it was before or during

the transition, so I imagined the scene. Later, I found the program with the date on it. What I'd imagined was wrong—I'd imagined my father as David, not Robyn—but the imagined scene was richer than the one that followed “just the facts.” I merged the two.

Judith Hannan:

I will talk about how the things we don't remember say something about who we are and what is important. I noticed this when I wrote *Motherhood Exaggerated* and left my husband out of much of the story. I knew I had to put him in but had to admit that I didn't always remember him in a scene even when I knew he was there. I could have manufactured plausible scenarios and dialogue, but the reader would have been fooled in to thinking my husband and I were more of a pair than we were. It is important to see how memory lapses can enhance your story. Observing how little I had paid attention to my husband's experience gave my ultimate transformation as a wife and mother greater depth.

Sonya Lea:

Since I was reconstructing my relationship narrative after my husband lost his memory, identity, and connection to language expression, we devised methods that helped us reconstruct our story, and to help me understand his perceptions of his life events. These included each of us writing while remaining physically apart, using kinesthetic experiences to enhance his recall (walking, touch, music, food), and using marijuana to facilitate his access to long-term memories. I also took a deep dive in my memoir into investigating the nature of memory and identity, eventually making contact with memory researchers at USC and others. These are aspects that I work with in most of my students, who have PTS, brain injury, and suffer losses and institutional betrayal.

If there was a surprise for me, it was how my memory was biased in favor of cultural expectations, and I had to throw these off to write a vulnerable and clear story. In other words, writing was excavation, mostly past the desire to be seen in a way that's validating for caregivers, and that discovery allowed me to become more subversive.

Suzanne Paola Antonetta:

I've been writing a lot lately about the shock treatment I got as a young teenager. I have written about it before, but I've never gone at it from the angle of memory—how shock, much more in use and more powerful at the time, destroyed memory, and that was considered a “curative” factor by many doctors. One doctor even wrote that it was a good thing because with the patient's memory wiped out, clinicians could fill it with any memories they wanted the patient to have. It's an incredibly weird sense of the therapeutic.

I also might take a few minutes to address the fragmented experiences of those I work with at a juvenile detention facility, how I work to bring them through this process of recovery, and also honoring what you don't remember, the reality of a fragmented life. Since two of us work with at-risk populations, that could be interesting.

Moderator Questions

- 1) Patricia Hampl describes “personal history, logged in memory,” as “a sort of slide projector flashing images on the wall of the mind.” Lidia Yuknavitch likens memory to “retinal flashes.” In the words of Mary Karr: “For all of memory’s power to yank us back into an overwhelming past, it can also fail big time—both short term (the lost vehicle in a parking lot, the name at the tip of your tongue) and long term (we made out in high school?).” The women here have written about receiving electric shock treatment, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, debilitating illness, incarceration, and other traumas that impact the integrity of memory, as well as how it is shaped by cultural expectations. But even without these outside influences, in memory’s purest form (if that exists), is there such thing as an authentic linear narrative arc?
- 2) And a follow-up: Can memory—or lapses in memory—be more important than the facts of what actually happened?
- 3) In nonfiction, there’s a push and pull between “truth” and engaging narrative. I think we’d all agree that writing would often be easier if we could make things up—for the sake of narrative arc or narrative flow. What role does imagination play in your work? How do you resist the impulse to fill in the gaps and make it neat? Is there ever a situation where it’s okay to make things up?
- 4) You have all incorporated disparate elements into your writing—scientific facts, research and reportage, official documents such as legal or medical records, secondary sources, your own memory and imagination. What strategies have you found to help weave these elements together into a cohesive narrative? What leads you to favor one element over another?

