

Southern States Communication Association
97th Annual Convention | “Curiosity”
April 7-11, 2026 | Mobile, AL

Philosophy and Ethics of Communication Interest Group
Vice Chair & Program Planner: Jodeyah Mills, jjm23a@acu.edu

The **Philosophy and Ethics of Communication** Interest Group invites paper and panel proposals for competitive selection. We especially welcome work engaging this year’s convention theme, “Curiosity.” We invite scholars to explore curiosity not merely as a desire for information, but as a communicative force that shapes the ways humans encounter difference, pursue understanding, negotiate uncertainty, and imagine ethical futures together. In an age marked by accelerating technologies, fragmented publics, and contested truths, what kinds of curiosity deepen human connection rather than reduce others to objects of consumption, data, or spectacle? How might curiosity function as a philosophical orientation, ethical virtue, civic practice, or even a mode of resistance within organizations, institutions, interpersonal relationships, media environments, and public culture? Submissions may critically examine the promises and dangers of curiosity while considering the conditions under which inquiry becomes transformative, responsible, and genuinely humane.

Our division encompasses a range of scholarship, from the analysis of philosophical writings about fundamental communication concepts to arguments concerning what makes communication an ethical practice. We are a division dedicated to promoting quality investigation into worldviews, paradigms, values, and standards of our discipline. All perspectives and methodological approaches surrounding those topics are appropriate for the Philosophy and Ethics of Communication Interest Group.

Possible submission ideas:

- Curiosity as an ethical virtue in communication
- The ethics of asking questions
- Curiosity, power, and vulnerability in dialogue
- AI and the engineering of curiosity
- Curiosity versus surveillance in digital culture
- Curiosity and democratic discourse
- Curiosity, misinformation, and conspiracy rhetoric
- Childlike wonder and communication
- Curiosity in friendship, intimacy, and confession
- Curiosity and empathy in interpersonal relationships
- Curiosity in pedagogy and the classroom
- Religious and philosophical understandings of curiosity
- Curiosity, boredom, and distraction in media culture
- Curiosity and community formation
- Wonder, awe, and human connection
- The limits of curiosity: are some questions unethical?

The division invites two types of submissions: (1) competitive papers and (2) panel proposals. All papers must be no longer than 25 pages (excluding references) and include an abstract no longer than 200 words. All completed papers will compete for the interest group’s top paper

award. Student papers should be clearly marked “Undergraduate Student” or “Graduate Student.”

Competitive Paper Submissions: All paper submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>.

Competitive papers are completed research projects dealing with a substantive hermeneutic, methodological, or theoretical contribution. Submissions will consist of 1) the paper with all identifying information removed, 2) a separate cover page with the paper title, author(s) names, institutional affiliation(s), contact information, and an abstract of no more than 200 words.

Anonymous Review: All competitive papers submitted should follow standard procedures for removing any information that identifies the author and/or the institution within the paper and within any document metadata. Divisions and interest groups reserve the right to reject any papers not following these standards.

Student Papers: All papers submitted will be considered for the Division’s Top Paper Award. For student papers, 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. In order for a submission to be considered a *student paper* and to be eligible for student awards or recognition, all authors of the paper must be students at the time the paper is submitted. A paper co-authored by a student and a faculty member, for instance, will not be classified as a *student paper*.

Debut Papers: A “debut paper” is one submitted by an author or authors who are presenting at SSCA for the first time.

Panel Submissions: All submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>.

Panel proposals are for a slate of papers focused on a central topic or theme. This type of session typically has between 3-5 presentations. Submissions must include 1) a panel title, 2) an overall panel rationale (no more than 200 words) and 3) the following information about EACH presentation on the panel: a) the presentation title, b) the presentation author(s), with their institutional affiliation(s) and contact information, and c) the presentation abstract (no more than 200 words per abstract). All of this should be compiled in a single document and submitted in the “paper upload option” on the XCD platform.

A best practice for all divisions is to submit panel proposals with diverse participants comprised of individuals representing different institutions, and where possible and relevant, potential new members.

Round Table Submissions: All submissions must be electronically submitted to the SSCA convention site at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>.

Round table proposals bring together a group of scholars to discuss a topic or theme. This type of session typically has between 4-7 presentations. Submissions must include 1) a session title, 2) an overall session rationale (no more than 200 words), 3) a list of participants’ names with their institutional affiliations and contact information. All of this should be compiled in a single document and submitted in the “paper upload option” on the XCD platform.

A best practice for all divisions is to submit round table proposals with diverse participants comprised of individuals representing different institutions, and where possible and relevant, potential new members.

Pertinent to All Submissions

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to **ALL** divisions and interest groups is **Monday, September 15th** no later than **11:59 pm** (PST). Go to the paper submission site by way of the conference website (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/ssca/member>) and click 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 technical 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 Interest Group Vice-Chair and Planner, **Jodeyah Mills**, jjm23a@acu.edu.

Audio-Visual Support: Audio-visual equipment should be requested **ONLY** if it is essential to a presentation. Most submissions do not require A/V equipment and there will be limited availability during the conference. Your judiciousness is appreciated in considering whether a request is appropriate for your presentation. Due to prohibitive cost, A/V requests will be considered but may not be met. The final program will indicate which sessions have A/V capability. An alternative may be a shareable QR code that audience members can access from their own personal devices.

Submission Protocol: Submissions to SSCA must be original research that has not been published or presented at another regional, national, or international conference. Also, the same paper or panel should not be submitted to more than one division. Divisions and interest groups reserve the right to reject any submissions not following these standards.