



**2026 KIUS Mid-Missouri Undergraduate Conference on Democracy Studies:
Democracy, Innovation, and Technology**

Call for Conference Papers/Abstracts

Deadline: Friday, November 21, 2025

The start of the industrial revolution in the 1760s ushered in an unprecedented age in human history when technology began developing faster than ever before. So fast, in fact, that there was less than a century between the first heavier than air flight and the first human being on the moon. Things that had looked largely the same for thousands of years—transportation, communication—were now becoming mechanized and technologized to the point of being unrecognizable.

During this period of seismic advancement, modern democracy was also starting to come into its own. With these parallel trajectories in mind, we aim to use the 2026 Kinder Institute Undergraduate Society Conference to analyze the overlapping themes of “Democracy, Innovation, and Technology.” By examining democracy through the prism of innovation and technology, we hope to draw out how these phenomena have changed with each other—and *changed each other*—over time and glean some wisdom about what the future may hold.

We are looking for papers that examine any of the conference’s three key themes and are particularly interested in submissions whose subject matter resides at the intersection of democracy and innovation and/or technology. We also encourage students already writing about topics relevant to this conference to propose a panel of three papers (each authored separately) that are in thematic conversation with one another.

The 2026 Mid-Missouri Undergraduate Conference on Democracy Studies is sponsored by the Kinder Institute Undergraduate Society at the University of Missouri and will be held in Columbia, MO, on Saturday, March 14, 2026. To apply, send a 250-word abstract detailing your proposed conference paper along with a short-form c.v. in a single document to KIUS President and Conference Chair, Lucy Washburn, lmw9yh@umsystem.edu, and Chair of Educational Enrichment, Harry Armstrong, htagp4@umsystem.edu, by November 21, 2025. Authors whose abstracts are selected to be part of conference programming will be notified by the end of the Fall 2025 semester and will be required to submit their full paper to the conference chairs by January 30, 2026. When submitting materials, please title both the email subject line and the application document with the abstract “[YOUR LAST NAME] KIUS CONFERENCE SUBMISSION.” For further information, or to discuss ideas, contact the chairs at the email addresses provided above. Out-of-town presenters can apply to have costs related to travel and lodging covered by the Kinder Institute.