



**KIUS Mid-Missouri Undergraduate Conference on Democracy Studies:
Borders and Limitations of Democracy**

Call for Papers

Deadline: November 20, 2026

An ideal democracy is a theoretical model of government rooted in popular sovereignty, where power rests with the people and is exercised through transparent, equitable, and inclusive processes. Yet, global developments increasingly expose friction between these ideals and the various forces that hem them in. Hence, this year's Kinder Institute Undergraduate Society Mid-Missouri Conference on Democracy Studies seeks to thematically interrogate the spaces, procedures, and institutions where democratic governance confronts its structural, conceptual, and physical limits or boundaries.

Rather than viewing democracy as a static set of institutions, this conference invites participants to explore democracy as a contested, dynamic process bounded or constrained by the aforementioned structural, conceptual, and physical borders. We welcome interdisciplinary research into both the internal fragilities of ideal democratic frameworks and the external pressures that test their resilience across distinct dimensions in an increasingly complex world. Students are free to submit independent scholarship or papers produced as part of their regular coursework, so long as the research therein plays into a conversation surrounding the theme of democracy's borders and limitations.

The fourth annual Mid-Missouri Undergraduate Conference on Democratic Studies is sponsored by the Kinder Institute Undergraduate Society at the University of Missouri and will be held in Columbia, MO, on March 20, 2027. Students of any major across the MU campus and state of Missouri are eligible to submit a proposal to present. To do so, send a 250-word abstract along with a short-form c.v. in a single document to the KIUS Chair of Educational Enrichment, Jaysa Hites, at jhc7z@umsystem.edu. Please title both the email subject line and the single application document "[LAST NAME] KIUS CONFERENCE SUBMISSION." For further information or to discuss ideas, contact KIUS President Madelyn Geiler at mrgznc@umsystem.edu. Note that applicants not in residence in Columbia can also apply to have their travel and lodging reimbursed, should their proposal be accepted.