

Intellectual Historians' Toolkits: Methods Theories Practices



"Woman Gazing into a Pond," Photograph, Frank Feiker
(1910–1950), Cassville, WI. Credit: Wisc. Hist. Society

Annual Meeting
Nov. 12-14, 2026
University of
Wisconsin-Madison
Pyle Center

S-USIH

Society for U.S. Intellectual History

2026 Program Committee

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Francis Russo, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Caroline Winterer, Stanford University

Conference Program

Glory Liu (*co-chair*)

Francis Russo (*co-chair*)



About the Conference

The 2026 S-USIH Annual Conference gathers on the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison around the theme “Intellectual Historians’ Toolkits: Methods, Theories, Practices.”

Today’s best examples of intellectual history are defined by their diversity, innovation, and rigor — diversity in the subjects, sources, and methods employed; innovation in making audible hitherto silent or neglected voices; and rigor in the quality and breadth of scholarship. A previous era of sharp distinctions has given way to variety and interdisciplinarity.

With advancement come new questions: What are the shared features and practices of our work? What sources do intellectual historians use, and what questions do they bring to them? The year 2026, the Semiquincentennial of the United States, offers a symbolic opportunity to assess and renew a shared sense of purpose for the field. This conference turns intellectual history on itself, examining it both as a method and as a subject of inquiry.

Above: A classic map of the University of Wisconsin campus from 1951. The Pyle Center, where the SUSIH conference will be headquartered, was not yet built but is located on Lake Mendota’s coast immediately east of the right edge of this map. Courtesy: UW Digital Archives.

Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, November 12

- 3:00 PM** Registration Opens
- 4:30 – 6:00 PM** Panel Session 1 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 6:00 – 7:00 PM** Opening Reception
- 7:00 – 9:00 PM** Keynote Address & Dinner

Friday, November 13

- 8:30 – 10:00 AM** Panel Session 2 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 10:15 – 11:45 AM** Panel Session 3 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 11:45 – 1:15 PM** “Learning” Lunch
- 1:15 – 2:45 PM** Panel Session 4 (*6 concurrent panels*)
- 3:00 – 4:30 PM** Panel Session 5 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 4:45 – 6:15 PM** Plenary
- 6:15 – 7:00 PM** Plenary Reception

Saturday, November 14

- 8:30 – 10:00 AM** Panel Session 6 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 10:15 – 11:45 AM** Panel Session 7 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 11:45 – 1:15 PM** President’s Lunch
- 1:15 – 2:45 PM** Panel Session 8 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 3:00 – 4:30 PM** Panel Session 9 (*5 concurrent panels*)
- 4:45 – 6:00 PM** Closing Reception

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

3:00 PM — REGISTRATION OPENS

Panel Session 1 • 4:30 – 6:00 PM

1.1: The Problem of Slavery in Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: James Sweet, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Pablo Gómez, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Kathleen M. Brown, University of Pennsylvania
John Harpham, University of Oklahoma
David Waldstreicher, CUNY Graduate Center

1.2: Mid-20th Century Upper Midwestern Agrarian Progressivism and the World: The Beginnings and the Persistent Legacies of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Land Tenure Center • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Patrick Iber, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Zhe Yu Lee, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Mario de Prospo, University of Pavia
Carolina Hormaza, University of Bielefeld
Steven Lawry, Independent Scholar

1.3: AI: An Intellectual History, or A History of Intelligence • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Yuji Xu, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Devin Kennedy, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Jeffrey R. Yost, University of Minnesota
Ekaterina Babintseva, Carnegie Mellon University

1.4: Conceptual History as Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Lawrence Glickman, Cornell University
Madeleine Baker, Harvard University
Katlyn Marie Carter, University of Notre Dame
Casey Eilbert, Johns Hopkins University
Sam Klug, Loyola University Maryland

1.5: Rooted Ideas: Plants, Knowledge, and Interdisciplinary Routes to Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Steve Paulson, Wonder Cabinet
Liz Birkhauser, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Christine Driscoll, Independent Scholar/Podcaster
Gregory Higby, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Lucas Richert, University of Wisconsin–Madison

6:00 – 7:00 PM — OPENING RECEPTION

7:00 – 9:00 PM — KEYNOTE ADDRESS & DINNER

Johann Neem, Western Washington University

Panel Session 2 • 8:30 – 10:00 AM

2.1: Author Meets Critics: The Making and Breaking of the American Constitution: A Thousand-Year History • *Author Meets Critics*

Room: TBD

Chair: Francis Russo, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Claire Arcenas, University of Montana

Francois Furstenberg, Johns Hopkins University

Richard John, Columbia University

Seokju Oh, Columbia University

Mark Peterson, Yale University — *Author/Respondent*

2.2: Biography, Group Biography, and Memoir as Tools in Intellectual History • *Roundtable*

Room: TBD

Chair: Ronnie Grinberg, University of Oklahoma

Leilah Danielson, Northern Arizona University

Kathryn McGarr, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Daniel B. Schwartz, George Washington University

Katy Hull, University of Amsterdam

2.3: Chicana/o Intellectual Histories and Historiographies • *Roundtable*

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Carlos K. Blanton, University of Texas at Austin

Citlali Sosa-Riddell, CSU-San Marcos

Aaron E. Sánchez, Texas Tech University

2.4: Intellectual History & History of Education: Exploring Intersections of Intellectual Development, Experience, and Educational Theory • *Paper Panel*

Room: TBD

Chair: Walter Stern, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Joseph Cochran, Purdue University Northwest

“William James and His Talks to Teachers”

Matthew Farrelly, University of Wisconsin–Madison

“Intellectual History and Phenomenology of Education in situ”

Allie Morris, University of Wisconsin–Madison

“Girls as Intellectual Actors”

2.5: Gamesome Stuff: A Methodology for the Intellectual History of Political Economy • *Paper Panel*

Room: TBD

Chair: Arielle Xena Alterwaite, Institute for Advanced Study

Darrin McMahon, Dartmouth College

“Quaker Whalers, Enlightenment, and the Dark Matter of Illumination”

Felix Lüttge, German Historical Institute London

"Ordinary Circumstances of Alarm: Ship Surgeons and the Natural History of Whales"

Jose Monge, University of California, Los Angeles

"Maritime Labor, Candles, and the Architecture of the Enlightenment"

Panel Session 3 • 10:15 – 11:45 AM

3.1: Why Study U.S. Empire? • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Andrew Hartman, Illinois State University

Andrew Hartman, Illinois State University

Penny Von Eschen, University of Virginia

Alvita Akiboh, Yale University

Paul Kramer, Vanderbilt University

3.2: "Impossible" Ways of Knowing: Approaches to Myth, Anomalous Experiences, and Uncredentialed Understanding • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Brigitta van Rheinberg, Princeton University Press

Christopher White, Vassar College

Greg Eghigian, Penn State University

Karin Vélez, Macalester College

3.3: Useful Mirrors: U.S.-Brazilian Intellectual Exchanges in the Twentieth Century • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Richard Cándida-Smith, University of California, Berkeley

Arthur Schott Lopes, University of Chicago

"The Praxis of Supremacy: Ruy Barbosa on US Jurisprudence"

Waldemar Oliveira, New York University

"American Intellectuals and the Consolidation of Afro-Brazilian Identity"

Juliana Torres, Columbia University

"Black and White Brazilians in the American Sociological Imagination, 1930-1942"

3.4: Intellectual History and Literary Theory since 1970 • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair & Comment: Martin Woessner, City College of New York

Jeffrey J. Williams, Carnegie Mellon University

"Is the History of Theory a Cliché?"

Gregory Jones-Katz, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

"Unsung Still: 'Intellectual History' at The School of Criticism and Theory, 1974–1991"

Catherine A. Evans, Carnegie Mellon University

"Anthologizing Feminist Theory"

Noah Bendzsa, McGill University

"Instituting Critical Theory: The Marxist Literary Group and the Institute on Culture and Society"

3.5: American-style Cosmopolitanism • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Emily Conroy-Krutz, Michigan State University

Fred Beuttler, University of Chicago

"The Autobiography of a Civilization": World Literature in the Thought of Richard Green Moulton, 1890s–1920s

Nan Enstad, University of Wisconsin–Madison

"Merle Curti's Cosmopolitan Historical Imagination"

Matt Hedstrom, University of Virginia

"One World" in the Classroom: UNESCO and the Politics of American Education

Tim Lacy, Loyola University Chicago

"Great Books Cosmopolitanism: The Failed United Nations University–Britannica Partnership"

11:45 – 1:15 PM — "LEARNING" LUNCH — AI Tools and Demos • Roundtable

Panel Session 4 • 1:15 – 2:45 PM

4.1: AI Angst in Historical Context • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Angus Burgin, Johns Hopkins University

Apoline Taillandier, Newnham College

Jo Guldi, Emory University

Jacob Bruggeman, Johns Hopkins University

Lee Vinsel, Virginia Tech

4.2: What Counts?: Alternate Sources and Spaces as Sites of Intellectual History • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Nicole Hemmer, Vanderbilt University

Brendan Culhane, SUNY Brockport

"Hidden in Plain Sight: Socialist Education and Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Rochester, NY"

Kasper Grotle Rasmussen, University of Southern Denmark

"Conspiracy Theories, SoMe Posts, and Podcasts: Non-Traditional Contributions to Intellectual History"

Abigail Modaff, University of Houston

"Readers as Thinkers: Book Clubs as Intellectual History"

4.3: We Take Religion Seriously—Now What? • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Molly Worthen, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

Laurence Florio-Roberts, University of Iowa

"Religious Freedom Alert: Constructing Religion, Pluralism, and Antistatistism in Unificationist Media"

Susanna De Stradis, Mississippi State University

"Pulling the Curtain on Doctrinal Arguments: Vatican Sources for an Intellectual History of Catholicism"

Austin Clements, University of Notre Dame

"The Curious Case of British Israelism: or, How to Write Intellectual, Religious, and Political History without Intellectuals, Religions, or Politics"

4.4: Lessons about the History of Ideas from Indigenous Teaching and Learning • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Matt Villeneuve, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Adrea Lawrence, University of Montana
Bayley Marquez, University of Maryland
Julie Reed, University of Tulsa

4.5: Tenses of Intellectual History • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Joel Isaac, University of Chicago
Claire Rydell Arcenas, University of Montana
“Context as Problem and Possibility in Intellectual History Today”
James T. Kloppenberg, Harvard University
“Pragmatic Hermeneutics”
David L. Marshall, University of Pittsburgh
“Writing Intellectual History into and Beyond the Present”

4.6: Universities and Their Publics • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD
Hillary Green, Davidson College
Lauren Lassabe Shepherd, Independent Scholar
Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, University of Georgia
Katherine Rye Jewell, Fitchburg State University
Benjamin Alpers, University of Oklahoma

Panel Session 5 • 3:00 – 4:30 PM

5.1: “Windowless Room of the Current Event”: History and/in the “Now” • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD
Molly Worthen, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
Michael Kazin, Georgetown University
Carlos Lozada, *New York Times*
Geoff Kabaservice, Niskanen Center

5.2: Author Meets Critics: Religion in the Land that Became America • Author Meets Critics

Room: TBD

Chair: Emily Conroy-Krutz, Michigan State University
Jennifer Graber, University of Texas–Austin
Benjamin Wright, University of Texas–Dallas
Matthew Hedstrom, University of Virginia
Daniel Vaca, Brown University
Thomas Tweed, University of Notre Dame — *Author/Respondent*

5.3: Expertise from Below: American Farmers and the Demand for Democratic Research Institutions • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Andrew Jewett, Johns Hopkins University

Logan Istre, Louisiana State University

“Popular Education, Our Peculiar Institution: Northern Farmers and the Struggle for Land-Grant Universities, 1850-1870”

Harry DeVoe, University of Montana

“The Education of Isaac Newton: Knowledge and Democracy in the Early Years of the USDA”

Ibanca Anand, Johns Hopkins University

“Agricultural Economics and the Grand Reversing of the Civic Republican Script”

5.4: Matter and Materialism in American Intellectual History • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Caroline Winterer, Stanford University

Juliana DeVaan, Columbia University

“Towards a Materialist Cultural History”

Max Hancock, University of Chicago

“Is the History of Thought the History of Language?”

Alec Israeli, University of Chicago

“Mind, Matter, and Capitalism: Suggestions from Antebellum Thought”

5.5: The Sower and the Seer: Perspectives on the Intellectual History of the American Midwest •

Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Jon Lauck, *Middle West Review*/University of South Dakota

Katherine Jellison, Ohio University

Anna Hajdik, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater

Caitlin Cieslik-Miskimen, University of Idaho

Aharon Zorea, University of Wisconsin–Platteville

Adam Ochonicky, University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh

4:45 – 6:15 PM — PLENARY

6:15 – 7:00 PM — PLENARY RECEPTION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Panel Session 6 • 8:30 – 10:00 AM

6.1: Thinking on Native Ground: Methodological Toolkits for Indigenous Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Kiara Vigil, Amherst College
Wyatt Reynolds, Columbia University
Constance Owl, University of Georgia
Zoë Packel, College of William & Mary

6.2: Approaches to the Cultural History of Ideas, or Translating the Avant-Garde • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD
Juliana DeVaan, Columbia University
Michael Gallope, University of Minnesota
Daniel Spaulding, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Daniel Belgrad, University of South Florida

6.3: Daniel Walker Howe and American Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Sam Gee, University of Chicago
Joshua A. Lynn, Eastern Kentucky University
Leslie Butler, Dartmouth College
Mark Power Smith, University of Florida
Peter Wirzbicki, Princeton University

6.4: How to Time Travel • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Sara Georgini, Massachusetts Historical Society
Emily Conroy-Krutz, Michigan State University
Thomas Lecaue, Grand View University
Sarah Payne, University of Colorado, Boulder

6.5: Disciplinary Iconoclasts: Professional Outsiders and the Norms of Scholarship • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Thomas Broman, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Nick Hoffman, University of Pennsylvania
“*The Institutional Lynn Margulis?*”
Benjamin Serby, Adelphi University
“*The Social Thought of Dennie Briggs: Therapeutic Community as Cultural Reconstruction*”
Rivka Maizlish, Southern Poverty Law Center
“*Harry Smith: The Anthropologist as Artist, the Artist as Anthropologist*”
Brad Baranowski, Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law
“*Preserving Fruitful Ambiguities: Richard McKeon’s Pluralism and the American Constitutional Conversation*”

Panel Session 7 • 10:15 – 11:45 AM

7.1: Time as a Category in the History of Ideas • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Anne Strainchamps, Wonder Cabinet

Caroline Winterer, Stanford University

Daniel Immerwahr, Northwestern University

Bill Rankin, Yale University

7.2: The Shifting Humanities in the Twentieth Century • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Paul Austin, Boston University

Paul Murphy, Grand Valley State University

“Early Twentieth-Century Intellectuals, American Civilization, and Intellectual History”

Brittney Edmonds, University of Wisconsin–Madison

“The Black Satirical Tradition and the Respectability of Black Literary Studies”

Chloe Hawkey, Harvard University

“American Studies, Ethnic Studies, and the Problem of their Relation”

7.3: Crafting Intellectual History, Crafting Selves • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: David Steigerwald, Ohio State University

Ellen Cox, Transylvania University

“Forced Reckonings: Autobiography and Intellectual History in Crisis”

Christopher Arnold, Syracuse University

“Twentieth-Century Critical Romanticism as an Aesthetics of Existence: Biographical Microhistory as a Method of Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History”

Jacob Walters, Stetson University

“The Promise of Sociology and the Premise of the Self: C. Wright Mills and Historical Being”

7.4: Sound, Silence, Space, and Stereotypes: Writing the Intellectual History of Early American Religion • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Charles L. Cohen, University of Wisconsin–Madison, *emeritus*

Jane Calvert, John Dickinson Writings Project

“Reading Silence and Other Sources for Quaker Intellectual History”

Chase Castle, Library of Congress

“Resonant Textures: Sound and Religious Thought in Early America”

Chernoh Sesay, Jr., DePaul University

“Beyond the Nation: Prince Hall and Freemasonry’s Theology of Black History”

Grant Stanton, University of Massachusetts–Boston

“Patterns of a Prejudice: Anti-Catholicism and the Nature of Villainy in Revolutionary America”

Comment: Mark Peterson, Yale University

7.5: Academic Freedom: Is the Modern American University the Place to Pursue Ideas? • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Adam R. Nelson, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Emily J. Levine, Stanford University
Michael Bernard-Donals, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Henry Reichman, California State University–East Bay
Katherine Jewell, Fitchburg State University

11:45 – 1:15 PM — PRESIDENT’S LUNCH

Panel Session 8 • 1:15 – 2:45 PM

8.1: Historicism, Relativism, and Atrocity and the Role/Responsibility of the Intellectual Historian • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Panel member
Ibanca Anand, Johns Hopkins University
Mark Greif, Stanford University
James Kloppenberg, Harvard University
Chloe Hawkey, Harvard University
Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Christopher M. Tinson, Saint Louis University

8.2: How to Travel: Transnational and International Approaches to American Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Glory Liu, Georgetown University
Augusto Espiritu, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Soham Patel, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Amy Alemu, Howard University
Yuichiro Onishi, University of Minnesota–Twin Cities

8.3: Intellectual History and Political History: Perspectives on a Relationship • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Kathryn McGarr, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Kathryn Cramer Brownell, Purdue University
Andrew Hartman, Illinois State University
Whitney McIntosh, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Doug Rossinow, Metro State University

8.4: Christian Political Ideology in the 20th Century • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair & Comment: Molly Worthen, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Andrea L. Turpin, Baylor University
“Votes for Fundamentalists: Conservative Protestant Arguments for Woman Suffrage”

Daniel K. Williams, Ashland University

"Catholic and Protestant Disagreements over Human Rights in the Postwar Era"

Joshua Sander, University of Alabama

"Biblical Inerrancy and the Genesis of the Southern Baptist Shift to Church-State Accommodationism"

8.5: Four Approaches to Postwar Conservatism • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Michelle Nickerson, Loyola University Chicago

Britain Hopkins, Bilkent University

"Converging Intellectual Histories of Student Loan Debt, 1950–1980"

Zachary Stevenson, Loyola University Chicago

"The Perils of Fusionism: The Heritage Foundation, The Rockford Institute, and the Radicalization of Conservatism in the 1990s"

Henry E. James, University College London

"Beyond Broken Windows: The Merits of a Text-Based Approach to James Q. Wilson's Assault"

James C. Meadows, University of Wisconsin–Madison

"Toward an Intellectual History of Reverse Racism"

Panel Session 9 • 3:00 – 4:30 PM

9.1: Thinking About Political Economy: Marx, Hegel, and the Methods of Intellectual History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

James Livingston, Rutgers University

Vanessa Wills, George Washington University

Comments:

Loren Goldman, University of Pennsylvania

Alec Israeli, University of Chicago

9.2: Metamodernism in US Intellectual History • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: Audrey Wu Clark, United States Naval Academy

Greg Dember, Independent Scholar

"Say Hello to Metamodernism!"

Guy Emerson Mount, Wake Forest University

"How to Periodize (Post) [Meta] Modernism? Black History, Black Culture, and the Antiracism of Master Narratives"

Audrey Wu Clark, United States Naval Academy

"Asian American Metamodernism"

9.3: Borrowing Frameworks: New Approaches to Familiar Subjects • Paper Panel

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Nicole Solis, Liberty University

"Tracing the Paths of Freedom: James Madison and the Genealogy of Inward Liberty"

Jamie DeVol, Independent Scholar and Artist

"Transcendentalism's Moment in American Architecture"

Cara Cilano, Michigan State University
"Nothing Came of It: The Generative Potential of Archival Dead Ends"

9.4: On Sam Tanenhaus, William F. Buckley, Jr., Biographies, and History • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: Katy Hull, University of Amsterdam

Tim Lacy, Loyola University Chicago

Michelle Nickerson, Loyola University Chicago

David Austin Walsh, University of Virginia

9.5: The Civility-Industrial Complex and the Right's Long March through the Universities • Roundtable

Room: TBD

Chair: TBD

Nicole Hemmer, Vanderbilt University

Lauren Lassabe Shepherd, Independent Scholar

David Armiak, Center for Media and Democracy

Bethany Moreton, Dartmouth College

4:45 – 6:00 PM — CLOSING RECEPTION

Notes

This program is a working draft generated from the committee's provisional schedule and the accepted-proposal records. Please note that the program may be modified as needed. However, any changes to particular panels or timeslots will be made only after consultation with the panelists concerned. Room assignments are marked "TBD" throughout and the venue name and address are placeholders pending confirmation.

Individual paper titles have been drafted from the submitted proposals and should be verified against the originals. Panels that submitted a single shared abstract (rather than separate paper titles), roundtables, and author-meets-critics sessions list participants without individual titles. Two schedule slots remain open ("TBD") and the plenary program is still to be announced.

Per S-USIH policy, individuals may appear on the program no more than twice, and in two distinct capacities.