

Association for Institutional Thought

2022 Meeting, Denver, Colorado

Call for Papers

The 43rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Institutional Thought is scheduled to take place on March 30-April 2, at the Hilton Denver City Center in Denver, Colorado, USA, in conjunction with the 64th Annual Western Social Science Association Conference.

Conference Theme

“Institutional Changes Amid Multiple Crises”

The Association for Institutional Thought (AFIT) invites you to submit papers and/or propose full session panels that analyze and prescribe institutional changes to address the ongoing crises. Specifically, we encourage papers and sessions that investigate (1) how the complex social, political, cultural and economic institutions have contributed to the multiple crises we live in, namely, the Covid Pandemic, climate change and social inequality and injustice; and (2) how progressive and radical institutional changes are needed to address these crises.

Ceremonially encapsulated behaviors and institutions have contributed to the multiple crises we live in. Predatory instincts, pecuniary interest, hierarchical powers, disenfranchised governance structures, cognitive inability, and path dependency have led to the destruction of the ecosystem, the inadequacy of social provisioning, and the manipulative and exploitative practices by the powerful and privileged. To solve or mitigate these crises, we need public and academic discourse on institutional changes that would help inspire and shape policies, collective actions and individual behaviors. Institutional economics remains relevant and significant in providing in-depth and holistic analyses of the causes and processes of these crises, and in prescribing institutional changes.

To start, institutionalists must debunk the ceremonial indoctrinations, including the efficiency and equity tradeoff, infinite growth, convergences, unemployment-inflation trade off, maximizing shareholder values, neoliberalism and TINA (There Is No Alternative), government financing constraints, modern eugenics, gender-blind budgeting, and so on. Instead, institutional theory provides a wealth of sensible and pragmatic concepts and frameworks that would inform our understanding of human nature and behaviors, and institutions. Conceptions such as coevolutionary sustainability; unconscious habituation; ceremonialism-instrumentalism dichotomy; life processes; social provisioning; institutional changes; inheritance and adaptation, path dependency and cumulative causation; minimum and maximum dislocations; “resources are not; they become”, should play an instrumental role in guiding public course and actions.

Examples of possible topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. What institutional theories could be employed to improve our understanding of some of the most important institutions, such as money, monetary and fiscal system, governments, corporations, households, civil groups, and other social organizations?
2. How have past and existing institutions contributed to the pandemic; restricted and unequal access to vaccines; unequal impacts of the pandemic across regions, races, genders, and sectors; inadequate social safety net; climate change and recurring “natural” disasters; loss of biodiversity; racial inequality and injustice; government inactions to economic fallout (delays in passing spending bills, the debt ceiling debacle, etc.); uneven global recoveries, etc.
3. What institutional changes are needed to fix these multiple crises? How can these institutional changes effectuate a transformation in individual behaviors, collective actions and socio-economic systems?
4. What are the forces and agents to initiate and undertake institutional changes? What are the impacts and adjustments of institutional changes? What are the guiding principles of institutional changes?
5. How may institutional theory provide viable analytical, theoretical and policy alternatives to the mainstream economics?
6. How Crises may inform the development of institutional economics? How not to “miss a crisis”?

AFIT values pluralism and interdisciplinarity, and papers/sessions from non-economists as well as those connecting institutional economics to other heterodox traditions are encouraged. We also encourage sessions reviewing and discussing recently published books, especially those written by AFIT members.

As an organization with a student-development and pedagogical emphasis we encourage papers and panels in the area of economics pedagogy. Likewise, students, both graduate and undergraduate, are welcome to submit paper and panel proposals; and AFIT (along with the Association for Evolutionary Economics) will be sponsoring a prize for outstanding student papers.

Submission of Abstracts

The deadline for submission of abstracts is **December 10, 2021** at the following link:

<https://www.conftool.pro/wssa2022/>

Submitters of individual papers will need to provide the following:

- Name, institutional affiliation, and email address of each presenter
- Paper title
- Abstract, not to exceed 250 words

Submitters of complete panels and roundtables will need to provide the following:

- Name, institutional affiliation, and email address of moderator/panel organizer
- Title of the session

- Name, institutional affiliation, and email address of each presenter
- Title and abstract (250 word maximum) for each paper, or short description of roundtable topic

Proposals for complete sessions are strongly encouraged, but the conference organizer will construct sessions from individual paper proposals according to theme. Traditionally, AFIT sessions do not include discussants, as we find a more general discussion with the audience preferable. However, proposed panels that designate discussants will be accepted.

Conference Registration

<https://www.wssaweb.com/conference-registration.html>

The regular registration rate prior to **November 14** is \$170, rising to \$210 before March 15 then to \$285 for on-site registration. Discounted rates are available to students, retirees, and non-participating guests.

Hotel information

<https://www.wssaweb.com/conference-hotel-and-city-information.html>

For general queries regarding the conference, contact the conference organizer and Vice President of AFIT, Yan Liang, at liangy@willamette.edu