

Association for Institutional Thought

2021 Meeting, Cyberspace

Call for Papers

The 42st Annual Meeting of the Association for Institutional Thought is scheduled to take place April 12-25 2021, online in conjunction with the 63rd Annual Western Social Science Association Conference.

The conference will be virtual, but we intend to work hard to create space to interact with one another.

Conference Theme

“Reality: The Value of Institutional Empiricism”

The Association for Institutional Thought (AFIT) invites you to submit papers and/or propose full sessions that examine the ways in which experience and observation informs our understanding of the economy and policy recommendations. The kernels of this year’s theme were planted at the AFEE meetings before everything changed. It is inspired by James Swaney who, along with Paulette Olson, introduced me to institutional thought. Jim used to point out in department meetings that institutionalism is based on inductive reasoning and that this is vastly superior to neoclassical economics, which is based on deductive reasoning built on false assumptions. It is also inspired by the observation that mainstream economists do not believe econometrics results when it contradicts their pre-conceived notions (consider the research on minimum wage increases).

Nevertheless, over the course of the year, the importance of thinking grounded in *reality* has taken on new significance as more things that used to be matters of science have become politicized. Economics has always been politicized. Economic data has always been subject to political manipulation. So, I think we have something useful to say about 2020 when *reality* and the efforts to distort it have become an overarching motif.

Possible expressions of this theme:

- Explorations into the institutionalist tradition on the nature of reality.
- Explorations of the experiences of 2020 (covid, climate change, threats to democratic institutions, whatever happens in November) and how that has shaped/is shaping your thinking
- Explorations of the history of data manipulation and lying with statistics.

- Explorations of institutionalist methods of observation and the ways they contribute to understanding, myth busting, and sane policy proposals.
 - Consider forming panels that provide a short explanation of a particular method and then some papers that use it.
- Explorations of the disconnect between experience and the principles of other schools of thought within economics and how that led you to institutional thought.

Naturally, we welcome papers that do not fall into these areas as well.

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 **January 29, 2021** at the following link:

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

Check back to that link for further information about registration. The cost will be something between \$210 - \$230, but we hope there will be discounted rates available to students and retirees. Think of this less as the price of entry and more as a donation to the preservation of the institution that is the WSSA through difficult times.

Proposals for complete panels and roundtables to be held through Zoom or similar platform are strongly encouraged. Send me an e-mail if you have a webinar proposal or if you have submitted only a paper, but want to be part of a panel. I will consider whether individual paper proposals can be organized into panel webinars according to theme or whether individual papers presentations make more sense.

We also encourage panels and webinars with a solid theme that could be recorded and used as a teaching resource.

Submitters of **Single papers** (upload of .doc, .docx, and .pdf files) or **Recorded presentations** or **Recorded roundtables or workshops** (upload of .mp4, .ppt, or .pptx) will need to provide the following to WSSA:

- Name, institutional affiliation, and email address of each presenter
- Paper or Roundtable title
- Abstract, not to exceed 250 words (For panels a Title and abstract for each paper will be required.
- Keywords

The deadline to upload recorded sessions and document-only papers will be **March 22, 2021**.

Submitters for **Zoom presentations** or **roundtables** should submit the panel on WSSA's site as above AND send the following e-mail to Barbara.Hopkins@wright.edu:

- Time zone of presenters and when available during April 12-25
- Do you plan on using your own or your institution's Zoom or other platform, or do you need that provided?
- Name, institutional affiliation, and email address of each presenter
- Title
- Abstract

Current membership in AFIT is required for presenting a paper. For more information about AFIT, to renew membership, and so on, visit <https://institutionalthought.org>

For general queries regarding the conference, contact the conference organizer and Vice President of AFIT, Barbara.hopkins@wright.edu .