



2026 Annual
Conference
SPHS/ICNAP

August 3-5, 2026

University of
Konstanz,
Germany

Phenomenology and Social Critique

The Society for Phenomenology and
the Human Sciences (SPHS)

in conjunction with

The Interdisciplinary Coalition of North
America Phenomenologists (ICNAP)

Please submit
proposals to:
phenokonstanz@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions:
February, 15th 2026

Call for Papers “Phenomenology and Social Critique”

This conference invites interdisciplinary researchers to engage with questions of phenomenology and social critique. Critique has been an integral facet of phenomenological research since Husserl's initial definition of phenomenology in *Ideas I*. Critique has had diverse meanings and expressions throughout the history of phenomenology, so we welcome a pluralistic approach to the questions of “social critique”. In our times of polycrisis, phenomenology offers tools not only for understanding how “social pathologies” operate at the level of the lifeworld, but also for amplifying the lived realities of those whose voices are, too often, intentionally silenced. Importantly, the conference theme can refer to how phenomenology is always already engaged in the task of social critique (even if it may be an imperfect engagement), or to how social critiques from outside of the phenomenological tradition can lead us to do phenomenology differently. These questions need not be either comprehensive or mutually exclusive; social critique and phenomenology in this context are necessarily polysemic.

Content of Submissions

We welcome submissions that apply a phenomenological ethos to investigations within the human and social sciences. Priority will be given to submissions that engage with the conference theme. Consideration will also be given to submissions on any topic within the human and social sciences that includes a substantive relation to phenomenology, including phenomenology in dialogue with fields like existentialism, hermeneutics, critical theory, ethnography, ethnomethodology, semiotics, poststructuralism, post-colonial studies, Indigenous Studies, gender theory, and beyond. Submissions need not be situated within any one discipline; we welcome a cross-disciplinary pluralism, and researchers engaging with phenomenology and social critique within fields such as psychology, sociology, theology, anthropology, philosophy, communication studies, visual arts, musicology, ecology, and beyond, are encouraged to submit.

Recognizing the wide spectrum of questions encompassed by the theme of “phenomenology and social critique”, we invite explorations inclusive of (though not limited to) these questions:

- How is phenomenological social critique possible?
- In what ways has social critique motivated new forms of phenomenological inquiry?

- When can phenomenology motivate new forms of social critique?
- Where can phenomenological analysis be fruitful for the diagnosis of ‘social pathologies’ in contemporary societies?
- How might phenomenological accounts of affectivity, embodiment, intersubjectivity, and lifeworld help investigate social realities like alienation and marginalization?
- In what ways, if any, can the explorations of phenomenology provide normative criteria for guiding social criticism?
- Where can the 1st person perspective traditionally valued by phenomenology relate to the 3rd person perspective traditionally used by critical social theories?
- How can the methodological contributions of phenomenology in general and phenomenological social science in particular enhance empirically informed social critique?

Forms of Submissions

Presentations may take the form of individual papers, panels, or workshops. To be considered, all presentation proposals must include presenters' names, paper titles, and full contact information, including email addresses, affiliations, and abstracts. For individual papers, please submit an extended abstract of no more than 500 words. For panels, please submit a proposal of less than 1500 words, including individual abstracts, titles, and contact information for each presenter. For workshops, please submit a full abstract of less than 500 words with a list of all participants and their contact information. Individual paper presentations will be 20 minutes in length; panels and workshops will be 90 minutes in length. Submissions should be sent electronically as a MS Word document or a PDF file.

Authors whose submissions are provisionally accepted must become members of SPHS and ICNAP (dues will apply to both organizations this year) before acceptance is confirmed. Scholars at any stage of their intellectual journey, including graduate and undergraduate students, are encouraged to submit proposals.

Please submit proposals to phenokonstanz@gmail.com. Membership and registration information can be found at <http://www.sphs.info> and <https://icnap.org>. Local organizers: Jochen Dreher, Alexis Gros; Social Science Archive Konstanz.