

# RE-VISIONING THE FUTURE: MODERNITY BETWEEN UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA

An Interdisciplinary Conference

May 21-23, 2009



**8th Annual Conference**  
*International Social Theory Consortium (ISTC)*  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

## Call for Papers

Since the 1980s, social theorists have become increasingly reluctant to relate constructively to the future of western societies, modern democracy, and human civilization. Both in the social sciences and the humanities, postmodernist critics highlighted the affinity between utopianism and forms of totalitarianism. As a consequence, social theorists refrained from recognizing as part of their unique responsibility efforts to refine existing and to delineate new perspectives on the future. Social Theorists began to pay focused attention to problematic patterns of thought that need to be overcome, in order to reduce the odds that the kind of socially, politically and economically induced catastrophes that influenced the direction of historical change during the twentieth century will recur—both directly and indirectly, positively and negatively. Yet whether we appreciate it or not, in the context of globalization, the imminence of change has pushed itself aggressively to the forefront of social-theoretical concerns. The inevitability of change is inescapable, and its centrality to modern civilization undeniable. Concordantly, the imperative to engage in informed and critically reflexive discourses about the kind of world we will, should, or might live in, continues to increase rapidly. The conference will serve to facilitate interdisciplinary exchange relating to the continuing challenge of capturing the warped nature of modernity at the intersection of the past and the future and of utopia and dystopia.

***Organizer:***

Harry F. Dahms (Sociology)

***Co-Organizers:***

Steven P. Dandaneau (Sociology)

Allen R. Dunn (English and Religion)

The organizers welcome proposals on any topic in social theory, and request submission of abstracts (between 150-250 words), 5-page outlines, papers, or proposals for sessions. Papers will receive preferred consideration. For list of conference theme-related topics, submission deadline, and registration fee, see the following page.

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*List of possible session topics:*

1. The End of “The End of History”
2. Globalization or Demise of the Neoliberal Regime?
3. The Dominant Powers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
4. The Future of “Democracy”
5. The Obama Presidency
6. American Critical Theory vs. Critical Theory in America
7. Feminist Futures
8. Perils and Promise of Pragmatism
9. Critical Theories: Race, Class, Gender
10. The Global Crisis of Capitalism
11. The Present and Future of Social Justice
12. Environment, Catastrophes, Risk
13. Utopia & Dystopia
14. The Purpose and Place of Postmodernism
15. Individual Identity and Social Structure

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:  
MARCH 15, 2009**

Papers accepted for inclusion in the program will be considered for publication in *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* (ed. Harry F. Dahms) or *Soundings. An Interdisciplinary Journal* (ed. Allen R. Dunn).

For submission of proposals and inquiries, please contact:



Harry F. Dahms  
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or send a letter or fax to:

8<sup>th</sup> ISTC Conference  
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University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996  
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**Registration Fee: \$75**

For additional information, incl. keynote speakers, visit <http://web.utk.edu/~hdahms/ISTC2009>.