



MARMARA
ÜNİVERSİTESİ



INSTITUTE FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY

Call for Papers:

Critical Social Theory in a Time of Global Uncertainty

Institute for Critical Social Theory

criticalsocialtheory.com

2nd Annual Conference

Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

July 8-9, 2026

The Institute for Critical Social Theory (ICST) would like to invite established and emerging scholars to submit presentation abstracts to our 2nd annual international conference, which will take place at Marmara University in Istanbul, Turkey on July 8-9, 2026. This year's theme is **Critical Social Theory in a Time of Global Uncertainty**. This is an in-person conference.

The world is in a state of turmoil. The post-WWII neoliberal “rules based” world order is challenged by outside detractors, mainly Russia and China, and from within, from homegrown anti-globalist populists. At the same time, Artificial Intelligence, long hailed as a means to an easier life, has seeped into our daily lives whether we want it or not and has begun to replace the hard labor of the mind with the quick and cheap labor of the machine. Art and religion, the last bastions of refuge from the travails of the modern world, have also become victims of AI's pernicious creep. While advances in healthcare have promise us longer, more productive, and healthier lives, there remains an increase in “deaths of despair” amongst those who see no reason to live such extended lives. The modern world's crisis of faith heralded by Friedrich Nietzsche's “God is Dead” thesis, has come to its full fruition in a wholly technologized world, a world determined by tech-mediated human relations, rampant alienation, extreme isolation, mindless and meaningless spectacle, and unabashed greed. The unfinished wars of the 20th century have given birth to subsequent wars in the 21st century. Humanity has once again witnessed the horror and terror of genocide as well as the intellectual transgression of genocide denialism. Because the world has become thoroughly interconnected, a crisis in one nation cascades into the political-economic and cultural spheres of all nations, often leading to repressive and authoritarian backlashes. New identities formed by alternative worldviews and ways-of-being are challenged by retrotopian Traditionalists, neither of which are willing to enter into robust dialogues, discourses, or debates,

but rather cultivate their hatreds of each other amidst the vast ecosphere of online social media platforms. All the while, global climate change hovers over the world's societies like a specter ready to bring the whole notion of "civilization" down upon itself. In this onto-political climate, desperate voices clamor for the "return to the old gods" of nationalism, tribalism, authoritarian religion, cultural isolationism, war, and empire. The Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci had a name for such an anomic age: it is a "time of Monsters," and just like Gramsci, it is our fate to live in such a troubled time.

Just like world-historical moments before, the present time calls for robust critical analyses of global problems. Additionally, the complex nature of the world's problems necessitates an inter-disciplinary approach toward its analysis. Along with the rest of the world, Critical Social Theory (broadly construed), has begun to shed its Eurocentrism as it continues to globalize. It no longer only speaks within a Western idiom, but has also learned to commune with the philosophers, sociologists, psychoanalysts, historians, artists, and other scholars from outside of the West, who are equally concerned for the future of the world. Therefore, the Institute for Critical Social Theory invites those scholars who are working on globalized problems from a variety of disciplinary approaches, intellectual traditions, and geographical locations, who engage with these questions and beyond to join us in Istanbul to discuss our emerging age of globalized uncertainty.

Possible topics include – but are not limited to – the following:

- Nationalism, far-right populism, authoritarianism
- The threat and promise of Artificial Intelligence
- Race, ethnicity, gender, and religious identity in modernity
- Globalization and its discontents
- Decolonial critiques in the study of religion, philosophy, political economy, etc.
- Antagonisms between religion and secularity
- Nihilism, materialism, and pseudo-spirituality
- Multipolarity and its challenge to Unipolarity
- Inter- and Intra-antagonisms within nation-states, civilizations, and religions
- Militarism and War in Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas
- Critique of prevailing ideologies
- Colonialism, decolonization, and post-colonialism theory
- Psychological health in times of socio-political trouble
- The arts as forms of resistance
- Gnostic Philosophies and Futures of Humanities

The Institute for Critical Social Theory:

The Institute for Critical Social Theory (ICST) was founded in 2021 by the American philosopher Dustin J. Byrd (The University of Olivet, USA) and the Swedish Iranian sociologist Seyed Javad Miri (Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, Iran) as an international consortium of scholars working on social-political and cultural theory. Interdisciplinary in its outlook, ICST seeks to create opportunities for scholars throughout the world to collaborate on projects, share their publications, discuss their ideas, and network on common interests. The Institute for Critical Social Theory is especially interested in collaborative work that critically focuses on social, economic, and political change as it relates to both the global North in relation to the global South. Presentation articles will be considered for publication in ICST's journal, *Critical Perspectives*. For more information, visit our website at: criticalsocialtheory.com

Abstract Submission:

Paper abstract for both individuals and proposed panels should be no more than 300-350 words. Abstracts should be submitted to institutecriticalsocialtheory@gmail.com Please include "Istanbul 2026" in your subject line.

Plenary Speakers:



Dustin J. Byrd, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy and Religion
The University of Olivet, USA



Seyed Javad Miri, Ph.D.
Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies
Tehran, Iran

Deadlines:

April 1, 2026: Deadline to submit abstract.

April 20, 2026: Notification of acceptance.

Schedule for Conference:

July 8: Paper presentations and Plenary Address 1.

- Evening dinner in Istanbul (optional).

July 9: : Paper presentations and Plenary Address 2.

- Evening dinner in Istanbul (optional).

July 10: Guided sight-seeing tours in Istanbul.

Registration:

\$250 for Tenured/Tenure-track Professors

\$125 for Graduate Students & Post-Docs.

Location:

The conference will take place in-person at:
Marmara University, Göztepe Yerleşkesi
34722 Kadıköy, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey

