



NORTHWESTERN GRADUATE STUDENT  
**POLITICAL THEORY**  
CONFERENCE

# THE POLITICS OF WORLDMAKING

NOVEMBER 10–11, 2022

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

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UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## CALL FOR PAPERS

TO THINK POLITICALLY about and within “the world” is to call upon something shared in common across human and non-human life, and upon the meaning and content of political existence. An orientation toward the world considers the conditions necessary for freedom and for the staging of public appearance, while contending with the multiple ways in which the apparatuses that sustain public life emerge, flourish, decline, or must be reimagined. Worldmaking transgresses borders and boundaries of nation-state, East–West, metropole–periphery, etc., thinking in terms of flows, across territories, beyond regions, and through ecosystems animated by non-human agencies. Yet worldmaking, when linked to the brutal construction and reproduction of global structures of domination, also requires critique, diagnosis, and attention to figures of the newly thinkable, to alternative projects and wild fabulations.

This conference invites graduate students to submit papers engaging the possibilities and limitations of theorizing worldmaking, worldbuilding, or worlding. What political visions and practices are illuminated—or perhaps obscured—when we center the “world” in political theory? And what struggles, perplexities, crises, or catastrophes precipitate a turn to the “world” in political theory—or, alternatively, to a reinvention or withdrawal from it?

“The Politics of Worldmaking” encourages papers that approach the world from a variety of perspectives (historical, critical, normative, comparative) in Political Theory and related disciplines in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. Potential topics and questions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How the “world” and its associated verbs—worldmaking, worldbuilding, world-sustaining, world-destroying, worlding, etc.—appear in contemporary political analysis;
- The apparatuses and infrastructures of public life, commons, public things;
- Imperial, anticolonial, transnational, and/or hemispheric thinking as worldmaking practices;
- Worldmaking before, during, or after crisis or catastrophe;
- Worldmaking and ancient political thought;
- The hermeneutics of worldmaking: how practices of listening, interpretation, truth-telling etc. relate to the making or unmaking of the world;
- Global and environmental political theory and ecofeminisms;
- The relation of worldmaking and sovereignty, including questions of non-sovereignty and its worldly conditions, collective sovereignty, and the activities of *homo faber*;
- Utopian political thought.

The conference will offer attendees the chance to share their research on thematically-linked panels of around three participants. Panels will be chaired by members of the Northwestern faculty, and each panel will be assigned a discussant from among Northwestern’s political theory graduate students.

**The deadline for submitting proposals is August 1.** Paper proposals should be around 350 words and should be formatted as a PDF document for blind review. Please submit a second PDF including your name, institutional affiliation, and your paper title. Decisions will be made and applicants notified by mid-August. Full papers will be required by mid-October to be distributed to discussants and other panelists and attendees.

Participants will receive a stipend of \$150 each. We will not be able to provide travel assistance, but we can offer accommodation with our graduate students on a first-come, first-served basis depending on availability. Please indicate in your application whether you would require lodging.

For submissions and further information, please contact Usdin Martínez, Sam McChesney, and Charlotte Mencke at [politicaltheory.nu@gmail.com](mailto:politicaltheory.nu@gmail.com).

