

# WHAT IS ? UNIVERSE

COMMUNICATION • COMPLEXITY • COHERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON IN PORTLAND

APRIL 19–21, 2018

The **What is Universe?** (2018) conference-experience examines communication, complexity/simplicity, coherence/incoherence and, how they may or may not contribute to “a pluralistic universe.” This conference marks the third collaboration among scholars from the natural and social sciences, communication, media, law, design, and art. We invite proposals for scholarly papers, panels, exhibits and installations on a wide variety of issues and topics. Please see [whatis.uoregon.edu](http://whatis.uoregon.edu) for more details.

Participants will explore universes—from reality bubbles, immersive virtual environments, and alternate histories, to agential realism, media genealogy and archaeology, to bio-inspired, urban and ecological design, to universal rights, disabilities studies, multicultural communities, networks, and cosmologies.

**Proposals may address the following questions (as well as others):**

- What are communication, science, media, design, and philosophy universes today, and how are they syncretizing? How can universities and disciplines be understood as universes?
- How are citizens increasingly being drawn into alternate, fictional, cinematic, and comic book universes, social networks, immersive worlds, and augmented realities?
- In an age of increasing communicative complexities and oversimplifications, what is truth and what is reality? How do real/virtual and analogue/digital universes overlap/separate?
- How is journalism overcoming vernaculars of real/fake news in a “post-truth” era, while still actively seeking solutions?
- What constitute material universes in antiquity and contemporary culture?
- How do technological and cosmological universes transform theory-practice?
- In this context, what is posthumanism and how are speculative futures already integrating into (re)generative medicine, music, law & other disciplines?
- How are emerging systems, environments, architectures, the sciences and the arts converging/diverging into societies and universes? What are universes of values?

With the definitions of “universe” continuing to multiply, important questions abound as we address a sweeping range of issues next April in Portland, Oregon.

**Conference Organizers:** Janet Wasko and Jeremy Swartz (University of Oregon)

Send 100–150 word abstracts or installations by **DECEMBER 31, 2017** to:  
Janet Wasko • [jwasko@uoregon.edu](mailto:jwasko@uoregon.edu)

School of Journalism and Communication • University of Oregon • Eugene, OR 97403-1275