

**“*The Humanities and Our Global Future*”**  
**Virginia Humanities Conference (2020)**

Conference Dates: March 27-28, 2020

Submission deadline: February 3, 2020

**James Madison University**

We live in a world under siege from the threat of climate change, the erosion of democratic norms, growing passions inspired by ethno-nationalism, the questioning of basic scientific facts, and other challenges that urgently require present-day confrontations with the shared question of the future. Humanists, whose main task it is to shed light on understanding the human condition, are perhaps uniquely well equipped to play a central role in a world full of existential risks, to imagine, communicate, revise, and adapt our visions of the future even as they are shaped by the changing present.

How can (and should) the humanities respond to the existential questions facing us? What does it mean to be American in the present moment and to what it might mean in the future? What does it mean to be human in an age “posthumanism” – in a world of Artificial Intelligence (AI), big (biometric) data and an internet of things? How do we coexist with 7.7 billion inhabitants on this planet? Given the climate crisis, do we even have a future? How can we (re)create systems and structures in response to past, current, and future challenges? How will the humanities guide the discussion about the meaning and purpose of life in the 21st century, and beyond?

The 2020 Virginia Humanities Conference invites proposals for papers, panel sessions, and performances that explore the concept of the *The Humanities and Our Global Future*. Participation is open to national and international scholars. We wish to examine broadly the role of the humanities and related disciplines in linking the global past, present, and future, and to use innovative scholarship to help chart potential futures during an uncertain present.

Papers, presentations, digital humanities projects, and panels on our global futures might include, but are not limited to:

- Global migration and the refugee crisis
- Climate justice
- Local, national, hemispheric, and global identities and our futures
- Questions of past, present, and future social justice
- Imagined futures in literature, film and television, art, and other media
- Public scholarship and our future
- The future of “community”
- Technology and the future
- Digital futures
- The future of higher education

To participate submit a 250-word abstract at <http://vahumanitiesconference.org>. Graduate students are encouraged to submit a proposal. Undergraduate students are invited to present their research in poster form or individual papers with support of a faculty member. **Deadline for submission is February 3, 2020.** For more information, please contact Dr. J. Chris Arndt at [arndtjc@jmu.edu](mailto:arndtjc@jmu.edu).