

CALL FOR PAPERS
Indiana University Bloomington
2026 History & Philosophy of Science & Medicine Graduate
Conference

THEME:

Scientific Authority: The Role of Instruments and Institutions

DATES:

Deadline to Submit Abstracts: February 15th, 2026

Conference Date: April 11th, 2026

LOCATION

Woodburn Hall, Room 200
(1100 E 7th St, Bloomington, IN 47406)

Conference Theme:

Science is widely recognized as the best method we have for understanding the natural world. However, the authority of science is due in part to the academic, private, and governmental institutions that have provided scientists with the means to communicate their work, fund projects that require specialized or costly instrumentation, and collaborate with other like-minded individuals.

Conference presentations will address questions related to the role of instruments and institutions in establishing (or threatening) scientific authority. Talks will be accepted from scholars of various disciplinary backgrounds, including but not limited to history and philosophy of science, history, philosophy, the social sciences, the natural sciences, political science, and folklore.

Submissions:

We invite graduate students from all disciplines to submit abstracts of no more than 300 words. Proposals should be submitted as a Word document and include the following:

- Title of the paper
- Abstract (max 300 words)
- Author's name, institutional affiliation, and contact information

Submissions may address (but are not limited to) the following questions or themes.

- How do scientists establish authority?
- Does scientific knowledge have a special status?
- The role of academic, governmental, or private institutions in facilitating the professionalization and/or specialization of scientific knowledge in the past or present.
- The way that the advancement and standardization of scientific instruments (e.g., the microscope, satellite, telescope, fMRI, EEG, artificial intelligence) has affected scientific legitimacy in the past or present.
- The relationship (or lack thereof) between authority and expertise; scientific expertise more generally.
- The role of science advisors in government.
- The role of science in public policy.
- Charges of “scientism” and perceived threats to the integrity of non-scientific disciplines.
- Fielding anti-science sentiment on an institutional, public, or personal scale.
- Issues related to the democratization of science.

Speaker:

Dr. Judith A. Houck, Professor of History of Science and Gender & Women’s Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her expertise lies in medical history, bioethics, and women’s health research. In 2024, she published *Looking through the Speculum: Examining the Women’s Health Movement*, which highlights local history to tell a national story about the evolution of the women’s health movement, illuminating the struggles and successes of bringing feminist dreams into clinical spaces.

Lodging and Logistics:

Funding is not available to cover travel expenses, but we will facilitate lodging for student presenters with graduate student hosts here in town on a first-come, first-served basis. We’ll be glad to provide hotel recommendations for those who wish to make their own arrangements. For questions or further details, please contact us at iuhpsconf@gmail.com