

NASS 2026 Conference Schedule

Day 1 – Friday, October 23

8:30-9:00am Registration and Welcome

(All scheduled times are U.S. Eastern Standard Time, EST)

9:00-10:45am Sessions A1 & A2

Session A1: Authenticity and Freedom in the Algorithmic Age

Moderator: Dane Sawyer

- Oris Kondwani Chimphambano – *Rethinking Authenticity on Social Media through Sartre*
- Pujarini Das – *Digital Existentialism: Freedom and Authenticity in the Age of AI*
- Christophe Premat – *Cyber-Enframing and the Generalization of the “Negro Condition”: Existential Freedom in a Probabilized World*

Session A2: AI, Bad Faith, and Self-Deception

Moderator: Kiki Berk

- Beth Butterfield – *AI, Self-Deception, and Bad Faith*
- Dominic Brandolini – *Social Media Algorithms as Idea-Exis: How Social Media Facilitates Bad Faith*
- Joseph Nguyen – *Sartre on Bad Faith: A Metastable State of Human Reality*

11:00-12:00pm Keynote Address: Professor Stefano Gualeni: Existence and Care in Virtual Worlds?

Stefano Gualeni is a Full Professor at the Institute of Digital Games, University of Malta. His academic books include *Virtual Worlds as Philosophical Tools* (Palgrave, 2015), *Virtual Existentialism* (Palgrave Pivot, 2020, with Daniel Vella), and *Fictional Games: A Philosophy of Worldbuilding and Imaginary Play* (Bloomsbury, 2023, with Riccardo Fassone). Stefano’s games, essays and philosophical fictions can be found on his webpage at www.gua-le-ni.com. Stefano’s philosophical fictions include *The Clouds: An Experiment in Theory-Fiction* (Routledge, 2024), *What We Owe the Dead* (Set Margins', 2025), *Scholar's Codex* (Tune and Fairweather, 2026), and *Errata Corpora* (Set Margins', forthcoming in 2027)

12:00-1:15pm Lunch Break

1:15-3:00pm Sessions B1 & B2

Session B1: Meaning, Difference, and the Existential Condition

Moderator: Damon Boria

- Kiki Berk – *Beyond Nihilism: Camus on Worthwhileness and Meaning in Life*
- Madeline Brenchley – *AI and the Age of Apathy: Rereading Irigaray and Descartes on Wonder*
- Peter Jones – *Transcendence Through Ignorance and Inauthenticity: A Crisis of Identity*

Session B2: Phenomenology, Worldhood, and Artificial Intelligence

Moderator: James Sares

- Rui Ge – *Phenomenologies of AI: From Husserlian Horizon to Sartrean Hodology*
- Paulo Alexandre e Castro – *Being and Nothingness in the Digital Era: Sartre's Relevance for Today's World*
- René Gimpel – *Artificial Intelligence, a virtual misnomer; Virtual Worlds, a nebulous artificiality*

3:15-5:00pm Sessions C1 & C2

Session C1: AI, Ethics, and the Fate of Human Freedom

Moderator:

- Christopher Riendeau – *The Sub-Man in the Machine: How AI Threatens Radical Freedom*
- Nico Gascon – *The Implicit Rights of AI: A Sartrean Critique*
- David Detmer – *An Existentialist Critique of “Artificial Intelligence”*

Session C2: Existentialism, Art, Language, and Meaning

Moderator:

- Varun Chandrasekhar – *Existentialism And/As/In Music*
- Paul Gyllenhammer – *Prose and Poetry (again)*
- Timur Cengiz Uçan – *Ludicity and Lucidity: Language, Games, and Language Games in the Works of Sartre and Wittgenstein*

5:15-5:45pm Digital Get Together (Honor Michel Rybalka and Steve Hendley)

Day 2 – Saturday, October 24

9:00-10:45am Sessions D1 & D2

Session D1: Telecommunication: Regressive and Progressive Analyses

Moderator: Dane Sawyer

- Judith Chavarria – *Technology and Subjectivity: The Critique of the Radio in Sartre and Adorno*
- Tyrique Mack-Georges – *Transmitting Praxis: Sartre's Method and Telecommunication*
- Owen Davies – *Sartre, Situation, and Micropolitics*

Session D2: The Look, the Other, and Digital Recognition

Moderator:

- Farhang Erfani – *The Look Without a Subject: Sartre, AI, and Authenticity*
- Niten Singh Rana – *Posting-For-Others*
- Justin Taylor – *The Digital Big Other: Sartre, Lacan, and the Culture of Evaluation*

11:00-12:45pm Sessions E1 & E2

Session E1: Virtual Worlds, Community, and Existential Relationships

Moderator:

- Kimberly S. Engels – *Existential Rupture and Authentic Support in Digital Spaces: The Case of the Reddit Experiencer Forum*
- Amy Gardner – *Haunted and Helped by Virtual Ghosts: An Argument for Meaningful Online Relationships*
- Daniel Smith & Robin Babb – *One Bad Actor Spoils the Whole World: Care, Vulnerability, and Agency in Role-Playing Games*

Session E2: AI, Language, Knowledge, and Social Science

Moderator:

- Dennis Skocz – *Artificial Intelligence: What Would Sartre Say? Clues for a Sartrean Perspective in His Philosophical Works*
- Solange Guénoun – *Jean Améry (1912-1978): Naufragé de l'existentialisme sartrien?*

12:45-2:00pm Lunch Break & Business Meeting (Everyone is Welcome!)

2:00-3:45pm Sessions F1 & F2

Session F1: Existentialism, History, Politics, and Liberation

Moderator:

- T. Storm Heter – *Existentialist Anti-Colonialism*
- Devin Zane Shaw – *Francis Jeanson: Logics of Colonialism and Resistance*
- A. Shahid Stover – *Existential Liberation Phenomenology of Black Rage*

Session F2: Sartre, Embodiment, Identity, and Ontology

Moderator:

- Joshua Silickas – *The Body in Theory and the Body in Practice: Sartre at the Limits of Critical Phenomenology*
- Dane Sawyer – *An Existentialist-Oriented Metaphysics: Reading Sartre through Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism*
- Monosree Chakraborty – *Existence Without Record: Biometric Citizenship, the Algorithmic Gaze, and the Ontological Erasure of Bengal's Partition Survivors*

4:00-5:45pm Sessions G1 & G2

Session G1: AI, Art, Literature, and Creativity

Moderator:

- Heiner Wittmann – *Rethinking Sartrean Studies in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*
- Steven W. Quackenbush & Alanah K. Vargas – *What Is Synthetic Literature? Generative AI and the Poetic Project*
- Kyle Glasgow – *Examining Creativity through the Lens of Rollo May and Artificial Intelligence*

Session G2: Freedom, Agency, and the AI Subject

Moderator:

- Xiaoqi Weng – *Beyond Nested Positionality: Algorithmic Mediation and the Need for a Richer Existential Geometry*
- Jose Fernandez – *Existence Precedes Essence in the Machine: Why Superintelligent AI Will Not Punish Humanity*
- Sarah Silveira – *What Kind of Subject? AI, Freedom, and Self-Referential Subjectivity*

6:00-6:30pm Closing Remarks