

The Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought  
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

aspect.vt.edu | facebook.com/aspectvt | aspect@vt.edu

## On Violence: Domination, Control, and Resistance

March 27th and 28th, 2025



Image from Wikimedia Commons: re-colored detail from Picasso's *Guernica*

The 2025 ASPECT Conference Committee is inviting submissions on the social, political, psychological, religious, ethical, and epistemological dimensions of violence. How is it that violence constitutes both a normative and exceptional tool of social organization? When is violence exercised as a means toward an end, and when is the option to inflict violence itself the desired goal? How are various forms of violence utilized as tools of control and domination, and how can they be turned towards the cause of resistance? What is our relationship to the media spectacle of both real and fantasized violence? What exactly is 'non-violence' and under what conditions does it possess illocutionary or discursive weight? These questions are by no means exhaustive, and we invite graduate students across disciplinary boundaries in the humanities and social sciences, with their submissions, to reflect on the place of violence, in all its myriad forms, in and around their own work.

Graduate students at any level and irrespective of disciplinary affiliation are encouraged to submit abstracts of approximately 300 words by **Tuesday, December 31st, 2025**, based on papers that engage topics related to artistic, aesthetic, social, political, philosophical, cultural, theoretical, ethical, educational, and critical concerns. The conference will primarily be held in person on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, and will take place over two days: **March 27th and March 28th 2025**. The first day of the conference consists of entirely-virtual panels held over Zoom, with an opening plenary lecture and reception in the evening for in-person attendees at the Moss Arts Center. The second day of the conference will exclusively host in-person panels and events and will take place at the Squires Student Center. There will be no hybrid panels. Please specify your preferred modality in the submission. There are limited virtual spots available and will be allocated on a per need basis.

The conference will open on March 27<sup>th</sup> with a **keynote address and lecture by Dr. Nick Estes**, eminent historian and journalist from the University of Minnesota, and founder of the indigenous advocacy group The Red Nation.

We welcome contributions that span the wide variety of interests that intersect with or are adjacent to the ASPECT program. Violence permeates every area of society and culture, and as a result we welcome explorations of the role and meaning of violence in sites where its presence might otherwise be effaced. As an interdisciplinary and theory-oriented program, the ASPECT PhD program at Virginia Tech features scholarship that engages a variety of disciplines and encourages research that uses critical theoretical methodologies across fields of study in the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts primarily. As a result, we will accept a broad range of papers from across these areas to host diverse panels and workshops. Possible paper topics may include, but are not limited to:

- food studies
- secularism and statehood
- epistemological debates across the social sciences
- critiques of empire/imperialism
- science and technology studies
- racial and ethnic studies
- gender and sexuality/sexualities
- security studies
- ecocriticism/environmental thought
- critical pedagogy
- native/Indigenous studies
- violence and representation
- postcolonialism/decolonialism
- disability studies
- self, selfhood, and embodiment
- pluralism and world-making
- new materialism/materialities
- political economy/ecology
- critical geographies
- Black feminisms
- Women of Color feminism
- queer theory and LGBTQ+ studies
- biopolitics/necropolitics
- folklore and regional studies

**Paper Submissions:** Submit a 300-word abstract by **5 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31st, 2025**, to the [Google Form](#) linked here. Please provide the following:

1. Paper title, abstract, and five keywords that best describe your paper.
2. Names, institutional affiliation, and presentation modality.

If accepted, full drafts of seminar-style conference papers must be submitted to the conference organizers via [aspectconferencevt@gmail.com](mailto:aspectconferencevt@gmail.com) by **5 pm on Saturday, March 1st, 2025**. Papers typically range from 3000 to 6000 words (12-24 double-spaced pages). Papers will be distributed to discussants prior to the conference. Only submissions by current graduate students (Master's or PhD levels) will be considered. Papers presented at the conference may be solicited for peer review and possible publication in an upcoming issue of *SPECTRA: The ASPECT Journal* ([spectrajournal.org](http://spectrajournal.org)) (@SPECTRA\_VT). Please forward questions concerning *SPECTRA* submissions to [journalspectra@gmail.com](mailto:journalspectra@gmail.com)

The ASPECT Conference does not discriminate against applicants based on age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or military status. Dis/abilities: Virginia Tech is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in employment and education and complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Amendment Act of 2008, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. If individuals need special accommodations to attend, please inform the conference organizers.

ASPECT is an interdisciplinary doctoral program at Virginia Tech that integrates social, political, ethical, and cultural thought. Our program encourages critical scholarship across the humanities, social sciences, and arts. For more details about the ASPECT doctoral program, scan the QR code below or visit [aspect.vt.edu](http://aspect.vt.edu).

