

# **The Metaphysical Society of America**

## **Seventy-Sixth Annual Meeting**

*-- On a theme selected in recognition of the resurgent interest in systematic metaphysics as first philosophy --*

**Cosponsored by the Yale University Department of Philosophy**

**New Haven, Connecticut**

**March 19-21, 2026**

### **Metaphysics and the Authority of Intelligence:**

### **On the Noetic Grasp of Fact as Meaning across Domains of Knowledge**

#### **CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

Challenges to the authority of metaphysically attuned intelligence in the various domains of knowledge have antecedents that stretch back to antiquity. In our day, many of us have had firsthand experience with the socially and culturally corrosive impacts that such challenges can have on the institutional fabric of civilized life, impacts that subvert the very nature and warrant of our grasp of fact as meaning, meaning that is “convertible” with the very intelligibility of what *is*. Systematic philosophy in the Great Tradition arguably constitutes a vital organon of inexhaustible and *actionable* (“practical”) insights into the inseparable, indeed mutually constitutive ontological and epistemological – i.e., the *onto-epistemological* – character and implications of our grasp of fact as meaning (including the meaning of *that* fact). There has been a growing recognition (or recollection) in recent decades that systematic metaphysics, as a vehicle of philosophical wisdom, has a potentially transformative, orientational relevance for disclosing and assessing the character and limits of rational, discursive understanding as the latter accords with the modes of conceptualization and praxis commonly taken to differentiate domains of knowledge in the sciences and humanities.

Papers selected for presentation will focus on the defining authority of metaphysically attuned, noetic intelligence as a power that at once discloses the character and delineates limits – formal, practical, orientational – of the thinking associated with discursive reasoning in the modes of thought specific to culturally formative domains of knowledge: art, the exact and physical sciences, history, information science, religion, moral philosophy. The selected papers will address, with one of these fields in view, one or more of the following questions:

- What are the most philosophically pregnant implications of the thinking that systematically discloses or establishes or applies, within a culturally constitutive realm of knowledge, the relation of ontology and epistemology as inseparable moments in our grasp of fact as meaning characteristic of that domain?
- What are the most consequential differences between, on one hand, an axiomatic or semantic or constructivist or pragmatic approach to the authority of metaphysically attuned intelligence in a culturally formative domain of knowledge and, on the other hand, an account – ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary – that is “onto-epistemological” in orientation and purport?
- What major ancient, medieval, modern, or contemporary philosophical works either tacitly presuppose or explicitly articulate what might count as the first principle of onto-epistemology, namely that *knowing is of being* (in both senses of the genitive)? What is the most properly “scientific,” wisdom-engendering approach to thinking with first principles?
- How has a particular systematic philosophy (ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary) characterized “intelligence” – not the IQ variety but that which originates with Platonic and/or Aristotelian *nous* – and most consequentially related it to speculative and practical reason, or simply to calculative thinking at large?
- How in one or more realm of culturally formative knowledge – physical science, information science, art, religion, history, morals, etc. – is the authority of noetic intelligence ultimately predicated “somehow” (as Aristotle put it) upon the identity, with each other, of the knower (as such), the act of knowing, and the known?

**Abstracts** (*without* the author's name) of approximately 500 words are to be emailed as a pdf attachment to a cover letter which contains 1) the author's full name, 2) institutional affiliation, if any, and 3) title of the abstract. The email subject line should read: 2026 MSA submission [*last name of author*]. The deadline is September 1, 2025. All submissions will be vetted by the conference program committee. Address: [communication@metaphysicalsociety.org](mailto:communication@metaphysicalsociety.org).

To ensure inclusion in the program, and in order to be made available to all who register for the conference, the complete text (*including authors' names*) of the papers selected for presentation are to be submitted as a pdf attachment to a cover letter no later than February 1, 2026. Completed papers are to have a reading time of no more than 30 minutes, which correlates, approximately, with a 3750-word limit (c. 15 pages). This is necessary in order to meet scheduling demands and to allow sufficient time for open discussion. Further information on the conference is available at the website of The Metaphysical Society of America.

**Aristotle Prize:** Awarded for an outstanding paper by an author who does not, or not yet, hold a PhD. To be considered for the Aristotle Prize submissions must include both an abstract and the completed paper (not to exceed 3750 words, excluding notes and other supporting material). Eligible submissions must be accompanied by a covering letter indicating that the attached pdf files (abstract and paper) are to be considered for the Aristotle Prize of the Metaphysical Society of America. The Prize – which is strictly merit based – is not necessarily awarded each year – carries a cash award of \$500, inclusion in the program, and assistance with costs associated with attending the meeting. Send submissions to: [communication@metaphysicalsociety.org](mailto:communication@metaphysicalsociety.org). Deadline: September 30, 2025.

**Plato Prize:** For an outstanding paper by an author with a PhD awarded no more than six years prior to the submission deadline: September 30, 2025. Authors should email pdf files of the complete paper along with the abstract and clearly indicate in the covering note that the submission is to be considered for the Plato Prize. Entries are subject to a 3,750-word limit (excluding notes and other supporting material). The Plato Prize – which is strictly merit based – is not necessarily awarded each year – carries a cash award of \$500, inclusion in the program, and assistance with costs associated with attending the meeting. Send submissions to: [communication@metaphysicalsociety.org](mailto:communication@metaphysicalsociety.org).

**Travel Grants:** Thanks to the generous support of past presidents of the MSA, along with grants from the Hocking-Cabot Fund for Systematic Philosophy and the estate of John Lachs, the Metaphysical Society is pleased to be able to offer reimbursements for travel expenses up to \$400 to graduate students and post-doctoral researchers whose papers are selected for the conference program. (All relevant expense-receipts must accompany every request to the Metaphysical Society of America for reimbursements.)