

Jacques Ellul & the 21st Century Technological Society

An International Jacques Ellul Society Conference

Hosted by Roosevelt University, Chicago, Illinois

July 11-13, 2024

Jacques Ellul (1912-94) is best known as one of the premier voices of the 20th century analyzing the emergence, characteristics, and challenges of the “technological society”—the growing and seemingly irresistible dominance of technological tools, processes, and values over the whole of life and the whole of the world. From July 11 to 13, 2024, the International Jacques Ellul Society (www.ellul.org) invites not just academics but working technologists, prophetic artists, thoughtful students, and concerned citizens to a multi-disciplinary, international conference on “Jacques Ellul & the 21st Century Technological Society.”

Our point of departure—and occasion for celebration—is the 70th anniversary of the 1954 publication of Jacques Ellul’s ground-breaking masterpiece, *La Technique, ou l’enjeu du siècle* (*The Technological Society*, 1964). What has been and remains most insightful and significant in Ellul’s work? What about Ellul’s own subsequent development and application of his perspective in his many writings since 1954? What corrections or additions to Ellul’s perspectives might be appropriate, especially in our age of digital technology and artificial intelligence? What kinds of critical, constructive, or practical responses can be suggested for today?

The registration fee for this conference is US \$200 regular / \$100 students and unemployed/financial hardship (\$230/\$130 after May 1, 2024). The conference will take place on the campus of Roosevelt University in downtown Chicago. Registrants (including presenters) are responsible for their own transportation, meals (except for a Thursday evening banquet included as part of the conference), and housing (a list of local options will be provided at the online registration site). Check at www.ellul.org for the latest details on the conference and program.

Call for Papers & Presentations

The conference committee welcomes paper and presentation proposals from multiple disciplines and perspectives with a critical focus on (1) Ellul’s definitions and “characterology” of technique/technology, (2) Ellul’s applications in terms of politics and the nation state, work and economics, communication and propaganda, and “human technique,” (3) comparisons of Ellul’s perspectives with those of other writers during and since his lifetime, and (4) contemporary developments and challenges in our technological environment such as artificial intelligence, data sharing, privacy, and security, technological dependency and addiction, and the like. These are just examples and should not inhibit proposals on other topics related to Ellul and technology. Our purpose is to understand Ellul (and contemporary technology) in depth, to critically re-examine his perspectives, and to consider their relevance and application today.

Presenters will have 20-25 minutes maximum and should prepare accordingly (roughly 1500 words for papers). Fifteen minutes of discussion will follow each presentation. Selected papers may be revised, expanded, and submitted for possible inclusion in a published volume after the colloquium.

This is not a performance event and all participants are expected to register, attend, and engage in the entire conference. We are a community that prizes dialogue and relationships.

Proposal Deadline: October 1, 2023

Potential presenters should submit a 100-200 word abstract/summary of their paper/presentation topic and a brief 100-word professional bio to the program committee in care of ellulsociety@gmail.com. The final proposal deadline is October 1, 2023, but early proposals are encouraged and at least preliminary feedback will be provided within four to six weeks. Final program decisions: November 1, 2023.

Conference Organizing Committee: Peter K. Fallon, Geri Forsberg, David W. Gill, Ted Lewis, David Lovekin, Carl Mitcham, Jacob Van Vleet, Langdon Winner.