

Ellul Society 2026 Conference Schedule **DRAFT as of May 29, 2026**

Notes

All sessions are in Madaleva Hall, Saint Mary's College, unless otherwise noted.

For plenary sessions, we will stay in one large group.

For parallel sessions, please choose among three simultaneous tracks (A, B, or C)

Abstracts of all papers and presenter bios will be posted at ellul.org/conferences when available.

Help us keep on schedule by showing up on time at sessions. Thank you.

Tuesday, July 14

- 7:30am - 8:30am If you arrived on July 13, you are welcome to have breakfast at the dining hall on the campus of Saint Mary's College (\$10, pay out of pocket).
- 10:am - 11:00am Board members: IJES board meeting (location TBD)
- 11:00am - 1:00pm **Reception table open, book table**
- 12:00pm - 1:00pm **Lunch (dining hall)**
- 1:00pm - 1:30pm **Welcome and opening remarks**
Co-presidents Jake Marques-Rollison and Geri Forsberg, "The Importance of the Word"
- 1:30pm - 3:00pm **Plenary session: The Word and Image**
Moderator: Ken Morris
Daniel Cérézuelle, "Words, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm, from Marcel Proust to Bernard Charbonneau and Jacques Ellul"
David Lovekin, "Image, Word, Desire, and the Search for the Center"
- 3:00pm - 3:30pm **Break**
- 3:00pm - 5:00pm **Plenary session: The Word Spoken**
Moderator: David Gill
Christian Roy, "The Primacy of Speech in Bernard Charbonneau's Media Ecology"
Peter Blum, "Speech, Embodiment, Word: Ellul and Merleau-Ponty on *la Parole*"
- 5:00pm - 6:00pm **Break**
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm **Dinner (Foley's, University of Notre Dame campus)**

Timothy O'Malley. "Magnifica Humanitas and the Humiliation of the Word: Pope Leo XIV and Jacques Ellul's Diagnosis of Technique"

Wednesday, July 15

7:30am - 8:30am

Breakfast (dining hall)

8:30am - 10:00am

Plenary session: The Word Humiliated

Moderator: Jacob Van Vleet

Nowhere is the word more important than in the educational system. Yet it is being degraded and humiliated by technological dominance, political correctness, censorship, and philosophical errors. This panel uses Jacques Ellul's insights from *The Humiliation of the Word* to examine how the word is being disrespected in our educational system and to suggest ways to restore it to its proper place.

Dennis Cali, "Word, Image, and the Fate of Education"

Geri Forsberg, "Restoring a Theological Anthropology in Higher Education"

10:00am - 10:30am

Break

10:30am - 12:00pm

Parallel sessions (Choose A, B, or C)

Track A: AI Direct: The Word and AI

Moderator: Jason Hudson

Mark Honegger, "Can You Trust AI?"

Davin Heckman, "What Is a 'Word' to a Large Language Model?"

Track B: The Word in the Church

Moderator: Jake Marques-Rollison

Sophia Mandt, "The Agony of Idolatry: Word-Humiliating Worship and Separation from God"

Tyler Hanson, "The Transfiguration of Sight: Hope for Icons and the Reconciliation of the Imagination in Jacques Ellul's *Humiliation of the Word*"

Track C: The Word in Media

Moderator: Read Schuchardt

Michael Morelli, "Revolutionary Images? Going to the Cinema with Jacques Ellul"

Spencer Greenhalgh, "Image and Word in Mormonism's Foundational Media"

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Lunch (dining hall)

1:00pm - 1:50pm

Plenary session, The Humiliation of Vision

Moderator: Jake Marques-Rollison
Eugene Halton, "The Humiliation of Vision"

2:00pm - 3:30pm

Parallel sessions (Choose A, B, or C)

Track A: The Word and AI

Moderator: Christian Roy

Lee Cerling, "Language: Prison-House or Transcendence?: AI 'Speech' v. Ellul and Balthasar"

Luke Hartsock, "When Words Become Weights: Ellul's Prophecy Realized in Large Language Model Training"

Track B: The Word and Digital Culture

Moderator: Samir Younes

Matthew Littlehale, "The Humiliation of the Meme: The Word and Its Transmission in the Digital Age"

John Eger, "The Endless Patter of Interpreting Emoji: How Ellul Helps Us to Understand the Way We Communicate Through Smiling Faces and Red Hearts"

Track C: The Word and Propaganda

Moderator: Geri Forsberg

Robert Hogg, Holocaust, Propaganda, Ellul [title not yet provided]

2nd presenter TBD

3:30pm - 4:00pm

Break

4:00pm - 5:30pm

Parallel sessions (Choose A, B, or C)

Track A: The Word, AI & Human Communication

Moderator: Michael Morelli

Poppy Fynes and Nina Seron-Abouelfadil, "Ableist Intelligence: Normativity of AI Systems in Mediating Deaf People's Communication"

Dawn Sutherland, "Simulated Speech and the Silence of Meaning"

Track B: Ellul in Dialogue

Moderator: David Lovekin

Ian Tuttle, Ellul and Jean-Louis Chrétien [title not yet provided]

Dustin Peone, "Vico, Joyce, Ellul: Patternminds and Paradigmatic Ears"

Track C: The Word and Culture

Moderator: Lisa Richmond

Ginny Landgraf, "Bearing True Witness for One's Neighbor in a Time of Climate Science Censorship: Why Truth Needs Reality in a Material, Interconnected World"

Garrett Soucy, "Poetry as the Redemption of Efficiency"

Evening **Dinner on your own** / suggestions will be provided / Dining hall is open 4:30pm-6:30pm (pay out of pocket)

Evening Optional activity: Architectural walking tour of University of Notre Dame campus, with Samir Younes, professor of architecture and Ellul Society board member. Additional options will be suggested.

Thursday, July 16

7:30am - 8:30am **Breakfast (dining hall)**

8:30am - 10:00am **Plenary session: The Word and the Remaking of People**

Moderator: Michael Morelli

Jacques Ellul, one of the most incisive twentieth-century critics of technology's power in the modern world, and who wrote about "thinking machines" (p. 429) as early as *The Technological Society* (originally published in 1947), elaborated in *Humiliation of the Word* his fears that a world drowned in images and noises produced by technologies would turn away from the resonance and significance of spoken and written words. Now, with artificial intelligence (AI) being incorporated into everyday life, and transhumanist aspirations driving the desires of Silicon Valley executives, a (re)discovery of Ellul's concerns and proposals in *Humiliation* is facilitated by this panel.

Davin Heckman, "What is a 'Word' to a Large Language Model?"

Mark Honegger, "Can You Trust AI?"

10:00am - 10:30am **Break**

10:30am - 12:00pm **Parallel sessions (Choose A, B, or C)**

Track A: The Word in Media & Culture

Moderator: Jake Marques-Rollison

George Thomas, "Images, Desire, and the Primacy of the Word"

2nd presenter to be determined

Track B: The Word and Theology

Moderator: Michael Morelli

Jason Hudson, "Dialectical Presence, Partisan False Presence, and Christian Thirdwayism"

Noel Adams, "Ellul and Kierkegaard on the Significance of Humiliation: Influence, Similarities, Differences"

Track C: Reclaiming the Word

Moderator: Ken Morris

Almantas Samalavicius, "Reclaiming the Word in the Age of an Image"

Meg Shipp, "Time to Think: Fighting for Focus in an Accelerated Age"

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Lunch (dining hall)

1:00pm - 2:30pm

Plenary Session: The Word and Idolatry

Moderator: Jacob Van Vleet

Chris Sundby, "Ellul and the Situationists: May '68, les blousons noirs, and the Spectacle"

Read Schuchardt, "An Idol That Speaks: Humiliating the Word by Exalting the Language"

2:30pm - 3:00pm

Break

3:00pm - 4:30pm

Plenary session: The Word and Institutions

Moderators: Jake Marques-Rollison and Geri Forsberg

With steadily increasing distrust in "traditional" institutions brought about by phenomena too broad and diverse to describe at length here, it was nevertheless clear to Jacques Ellul, a professor of institutions and author of a multi-volume history of institutions, that the humiliation (i.e., manipulation, weaponization, and de-valuation) of written and spoken words plays a role in the decline of institutions once trusted by the average person. Panelists in this session investigate Ellul's writings on language, images, technology, and institutions to explore, in concrete, critical, and constructive ways, the changes taking place in educational, political, and ecclesial institutions.

Vincent Beaulac, "The Silenced Dialogue: Digital Isolation, Autistic Students, and the Humiliation of the Word in Education"

Stephanie Bennett, "What's Missing? How and a Changing Church Ecology"

Dawn Sutherland, "Simulated Speech and the Silence of Meaning: Reclaiming the Word in an Age of Noise"

4:30pm - 5:00pm

Conference adjourns