

The logo for the Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (MIGC) features the letters 'MIGC' in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. The 'I' and 'G' are connected, and the 'M' and 'C' are also connected. The background of the logo is a dark, textured, metallic surface with some rust and wear.

# Asymmetry

The 13th Annual Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference

Keynote: Lisa Parks

February 16-17, 2018

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Call For Submissions  
Deadline: December 1st, 2017  
themigc@gmail.com

*Urban development. Access to information technologies. Voting districts. Drone warfare.* The asymmetrical identifies a lack of equivalence that is increasingly characteristic of contemporary economic, material, political, and visual relations. Asymmetry is often at the surface of history: where sustained and repeated practices of inequality manifest as image. The asymmetrical is also an aesthetic that registers imbalance and refuses a call to order. The 2018 Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (MIGC) asks how asymmetry and the asymmetrical can be used to interpret sites of conflict and complicate traditional ideas of equivalence, balance, and organization.

Knowing where images come from and how they come to exist matters. As Lisa Parks contends, equality is deeply entangled with the materiality of media systems. Her rich interdisciplinary work on televisual infrastructures and drone surveillance suggests that media systems configure cultural imaginaries of the global, the immaterial, and the biopolitical – imaginaries that often carry uneven distributions of value, sensation, and equivalence. However, while media systems may be centrally owned by nation-states or corporations, at their uneven edges they are “imagined, arranged, and adopted in different ways by people or ‘end-users’” (*Signal Traffic*, 11). The uneven and the local are often the sites where media and infrastructure are felt as matter and matter most.

We invite emerging scholars in the humanities, arts, and humanistic sciences to present work that broadens our current understanding of asymmetry and how it engages with culture, theory, and society. What are critical examples of asymmetrical development? How does the asymmetrical work in literature, the visual arts, and performance? What theoretical frameworks inform our understandings of the asymmetrical? How does asymmetry draw attention to patterns of inequality? When should we strive for asymmetry?

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Studies of infrastructure and public development
- The aesthetics and politics of drone use
- Race and ethnicity in American politics
- Geography and geographic information systems
- Contemporary wealth distribution
- Valuations of affective labor
- Imperfect and experimental cinema

- Postmodern literature
- Dadaism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Militarization of daily life
- Studies in political activism and community organizing
- Representation of LGBTQ+ communities
- Environmental regulations and climate change
- Asymmetry and philosophy

Please email 300-word submissions for individual papers, panels, roundtables, or other formats to: [themigc@gmail.com](mailto:themigc@gmail.com) by December 1st, 2017. In your submission, please include a title, institutional affiliation, department, and whether you are a MA or PhD student.

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