



# Metaphysical and Religious Naturalism: Present Forms and Future Prospects

June 11-14, 2012  
Manitou Springs, Colorado

Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought

## Keynote Speakers

Lawrence E. Cahoon, College of the Holy Cross  
Nancy K. Frankenberry, Dartmouth College  
Ursula Goodenough, Washington University in St. Louis  
Robert C. Neville, Boston University

## Intellectual Autobiography

Nancy R. Howell, Saint Paul School of Theology

## Conference Chairs

Donald A. Crosby, Colorado State University, [donald.crosby@att.net](mailto:donald.crosby@att.net)  
Pamela C. Crosby, Florida State University, [pcrosby@fsu.edu](mailto:pcrosby@fsu.edu)

## Submission Deadline

**January 15, 2012**

## Submission Address

[pcrosby@fsu.edu](mailto:pcrosby@fsu.edu)

## Proposal Guideline

### CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals should contain a descriptive title and brief (no more than 500 words) but informative and readable description of the paper to be presented, with some indication of why the proposer considers the paper to be an important contribution. Proposals should also include a brief (150-word) biographical sketch of their authors.

The theme of the 2012 HIARPT conference encompasses exploration, defense, and criticism of the various forms of metaphysical and/or religious naturalism that have been proposed in the past, are being argued for in the present, or are thought to be inviting possibilities for the future.

Part of the task of the conference will be to address issues concerning the nature of naturalism itself as a metaphysical position or religious outlook and commitment. For example, was Aristotle a naturalist? Why or why not? Is panentheism a naturalistic position? Does adequate explanation of the present existence and character of the universe require the positing of an ultimate source or ground that is not itself a part of the existing universe—and if so, does this mean a departure from naturalism? Did the universe begin at some point, or has it always been, in some shape or form? Is *natura naturans* a part of nature, or does it transcend nature? What is the relationship of naturalism and materialism? Can an idealist be a naturalist? Does naturalism simply mean rejection of anything that could be termed supernatural? How are metaphysical and epistemological naturalism to be distinguished?

Other questions to be considered might include the following: What are the specific merits or strong points of a naturalistic outlook? How can such an outlook be criticized? What is the relation of metaphysical or religious forms of naturalism to the findings of the natural sciences? What sort of case could be made in favor of some sort of transcendent theism or spiritualism as over against various forms of naturalism? Which, if either, is primordial or emergent, matter or mind? What is matter and how does an adequate metaphysical or religious definition of it relate to current physics? How does naturalism relate to scientism? How does it relate to the natural sciences in general? How does naturalism account for evil or provide resources with which to respond to and cope with the menace of evil? Does evil exist only among human beings or is it a feature of nature itself? How do humans relate to the natural order? What are their responsibilities to that order?

These questions are only suggestive. Proposals relating to the history of naturalism or the future prospects of naturalism are welcome, as are constructive or critical attempts to come to terms with any aspect or aspects of a naturalistic metaphysics or religious naturalism. Proposals for panels on the theme are also invited.

As in the past, proposals are also invited in areas different from the theme of the conference but relevant to HIARPT's mission statement and will be considered on their merits.