

**2026 Social Contagions, Artificial Intelligence & Democracy Workshop Agenda**  
**Friday, January 9, 2026 | University of Virginia**

<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Opening remarks by Fred Epstein, UVA Associate Vice President for Research</b>
<b>9:10AM</b>	<b>Panel I: Trust, Deception, and Collaboration in the Age of AI</b> <b>Anjana Susarla:</b> Human-AI Collaboration with Large Language Models and Vision Language Models
<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>Naran Ramakrishnan:</b> Toward Deliberative LLMs
<b>9:50 AM</b>	<b>Alex Gates:</b> Diffusion or Isolation? Structural Shifts in AI Knowledge Networks
<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>Lana Swartz:</b> Navigating the Scam Economy: AI, Platforms, and Changing Financial Subjectivities
<b>10:10 AM</b>	<b>Discussion, moderated by Parantapa Bhattacharya, research scientist, UVA's Biocomplexity Institute</b>
<b>--- Break ---</b>	
<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Panel II: AI and the Politics of Labor, Ideology, and Power</b> <b>Lindsey Cameron:</b> The Future of Work: Is it Here Yet?
<b>11:20 AM</b>	<b>Mar Hicks:</b> AI and the Contagion of Neo-Luddism
<b>11:30 AM</b>	<b>Joshua Earle:</b> The Bigger the Model, the Bigger the Problem: How Eugenics Infects AI
<b>11:40 AM</b>	<b>Renée Cummings:</b> The Political Economy of AI Platforms: Who Controls the Infrastructure of Social Contagion and the Price of Democracy?
<b>11:50 PM</b>	<b>Discussion, moderated by Adrienne Wood, Assoc. Professor of Psychology and Principal Investigator UVA's Emotion and Behavior Lab</b>
<b>--- Lunch break ---</b>	
<b>1:30 PM</b>	<b>Panel III: From Models to Minds: How Data, AI, and Networks Shape Public Belief and Service</b> <b>Alex Vespignani:</b> Seeing the Next Wave: Turning Epidemic Models into Public Service
<b>1:50 PM</b>	<b>YY Ahn:</b> Networked Beliefs, Tailored Feeds, Synthetic Crowds
<b>2:00 PM</b>	<b>Roshni Raveendhran:</b> Psychological Underpinnings of Human-AI Interactions
<b>2:10 PM</b>	<b>Matt Kirschenbaum:</b> Grok is an Epistemic Weapon
<b>2:20 PM</b>	<b>Discussion, moderated by Maria Lungu, postdoctoral research fellow at UVA's Digital Technology for Democracy Lab</b>
<b>--- Break ---</b>	
<b>3:00 PM</b>	<b>Wrap-up conversation with featured speakers, moderated by Steven Johnson, Assoc. Professor of Commerce</b>
<b>3:55 PM</b>	<b>Closing remarks by Madhav Marathe, Executive Director, UVA's Biocomplexity Institute</b>
<b>4:00 PM</b>	<b>--- Reception ---</b>