



SPIRITED MINDS, SPECTACULAR SETTING: THE 2009 ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL ASPEN, COLORADO, JUNE 29 – JULY 5

Aspen Ideas Festival 2009: Ideas that Work

The Aspen Ideas Festival will present substantive conversation across a variety of types of sessions – panels, debates, individual presentations, and roundtable discussions. **What's new?** For our fifth anniversary, we will create sessions that focus specifically on “**ideas that work**” – collecting interesting thinkers and doers to describe and discuss proven, innovative solutions to challenging problems. Presenters will contribute provocative perspectives from their fields, and discuss the world with a sophisticated audience highly motivated to engage in dialogue.

Daily forums throughout the week will include:

- **Plenary sessions** offered three times a day: panels, one-on-one interviews, and presentations;
- Multiple, **concurrent tutorial sessions** twice daily, where attendees pick and choose from a menu of discussions across the programming spectrum;
- **Casual conversations, book signings, and “action”-oriented discussions** on campus between attendees and speakers, offering further opportunities for exchange;
- **Evening Exchanges and in-town events** in venues around Aspen that will bring Aspen Institute moderators and Atlantic editors and other of the nation's prominent journalists together with presenters for substantive conversation. Films, performances, and presentations will also take place.

The Festival is designed around a series of “**program tracks**,” each of which offers discussions relevant to a certain topic area. These tracks offer participants the opportunity to focus on a particular area of interest during their time with us, but most attendees choose to sample from many tracks over the course of the Festival.

Four **program tracks** will span the length of the Festival, June 29 – July 5

- **World Affairs and the Global Economy**
- **Arts and Culture**
- **Life in America**
- **Managing Planet Earth**

In addition, a number of **four-day program tracks** will cover more specific topics:

June 29 – July 2

- **Media Crack-Up**
- **Darwin's Legacy**
- **Justice and Society**
- **Rebuilding the American Economy**

July 2 – July 5

- **The Science of Being Human**
- **Innovations in Education**
- **Living Digitally**
- **The Middle East**

2009 PROGRAM TRACKS: A Brief Overview

WEEKLONG TRACKS: JUNE 29 – JULY 5

SEVEN-DAY TRACK WORLD AFFAIRS AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

In today's globalizing and interdependent world, the responsibilities of protecting and advancing America's key economic and national security interests are more numerous, and more intertwined, than ever before. Among them are combating a constant threat of terrorism both at home and abroad; restoring America's reputation across the globe; resolving the nation's ongoing military commitments, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan; and contending with depleting energy resources and the portent of global warming. And if these problems weren't formidable enough, we have been confronted with a global financial meltdown of unprecedented scale and complexity. This track will examine how the new administration is tackling these daunting challenges, and how our leaders might make progress in the years to come.

SEVEN-DAY TRACK ARTS AND CULTURE

How do ideas become art? Explore the creative process, timeless themes and forms, and the role of art and artists in the modern world through discussions, readings, performances, and more by some of the most interesting minds in literature, music, dance, design, visual arts, and popular culture.

SEVEN-DAY TRACK LIFE IN AMERICA

What does it mean to be an American today? With an eye toward the new leadership in Washington and its multifaceted mandate for change, we'll enlist fresh thinking and vibrant dialogue on the issues that define and challenge us as a nation and will dictate how future generations of Americans live, from politics, race, and ethnicity to work, immigration, religion, and more.

SEVEN-DAY TRACK MANAGING PLANET EARTH

The human imprint is evident almost everywhere on Earth. This track will look closely at that footprint and size up our capacity to mitigate its effects, from the carbon and climate problem to our endless demand for clean water to the increasing strain put on agricultural systems by growing populations in the developing world. What critical tipping points must we recognize before it's too late?

FOUR-DAY PROGRAM TRACKS: JUNE 29 – JULY 2

FOUR-DAY TRACK THE MEDIA CRACK-UP

The pace of change in the media world is extraordinary, if not revolutionary. Bombarded by breakthroughs in electronics, communication technology, online resources, social networks, and growth of the “blogosphere”, traditional media across the globe are hard-pressed to keep up with consumer demand. Tastes, needs, and expectations are evolving at an exponential pace. The times beg questions about who will be delivering news in the not-so-distant future, the veracity of sources, what constitutes “entertainment”, and what’s next.

FOUR-DAY TRACK DARWIN’S LEGACY

The year 2009 marks Charles Darwin’s 200th birthday and also the 150th anniversary of his seminal work, “The Origin of Species.” A remarkable man whose theories regarding natural selection and evolution transformed science and became the foundation for understanding biology, Darwin left a monumental legacy. Where has it taken us, and where will it continue to lead us? And why, in the 21st century, do we still debate and question the scientific principles that underlie and continue to drive bioscience and medicine? Distinguished scientists, historians, and theologians will explain, explore, and debate

FOUR-DAY TRACK JUSTICE AND SOCIETY

Justice: A concept pondered by philosophers of all eras and cultures, and a universal demand and rallying cry since ancient times by those without it. The Aspen Institute has conducted seminars in Justice and Society for over 30 years, with profound effects on participants including US Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun. But what *is* justice? How does it relate to other values, such as equality? How just is American society? How should we respond to injustice outside our borders? Who is to judge? Is justice a human right?

FOUR-DAY TRACK REBUILDING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Extraordinary upheavals in US finance have precipitated the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. How do we right our economic ship? How do we ensure that this does not happen again? We’ll take an in-depth look at America’s financial system, seeking a deeper understanding of just what went wrong and raising ideas that could prevent such crises in the future. Experts will also examine the underpinnings of America’s economy, with an eye to such diverse issues as labor, Infrastructure, industry, R&D investment, and energy.

FOUR-DAY PROGRAM TRACKS: JULY 2 – JULY 5

FOUR-DAY TRACK **THE SCIENCE OF BEING HUMAN**

Consciousness, intelligence, emotion, psychology, neuroscience, genomics, anthropology, creativity, morality — what can science tell us about our human-ness? We will hear from experts with remarkable insights about the brain, the body, our environment, our psyche and how they all fit together to make “humans” what we are.

FOUR-DAY TRACK **INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION**

American public education is in crisis. Many of our children are ill-prepared to meet the demands of high school education, much less the needs of the global economy. And our democratic institutions? Absent a citizenry that can read, write, or think critically, these are at risk, too. Statistics citing declining literacy rates, achievement in science and math, and basic graduation rates are daunting. But there is hope; explore the ideas and strategies that are working with today’s most passionate innovators, determined policy makers, and dedicated educators from the US and abroad.

FOUR-DAY TRACK **LIVING DIGITALLY**

We all know that the “digital age” has arrived. The question now is, where is it taking us? We’ll look at the trends, people, and ideas that are shaping the digital world, and discuss the impact that digital media, digital technology, social networks, and games are having on our society. A “must” for those of us who are already living digitally, but who want to understand the nature and impact of our digital present — and future.

FOUR-DAY TRACK **THE MIDDLE EAST**

In our annual in-depth focus on one of the world’s regions, we will gather leaders in politics, religion, history, and culture to discuss and debate the Middle East — its history, religions, and cultural landscape — with a special emphasis on comprehending the current challenges to peace in the region. We’ll also look at ideas and initiatives now underway — such as new policies, reforms, negotiations, and economic development proposals — that could ease tensions, strengthen relationships across borders, and perhaps even help effect lasting peace.