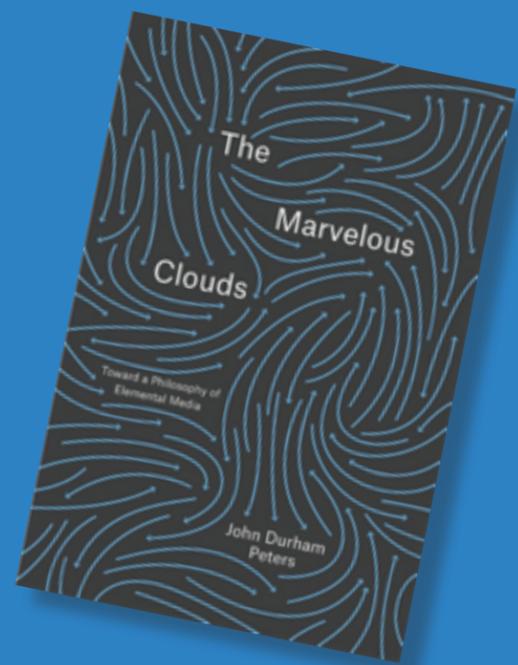


# WHY IT IS NOT DUMB TO TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER

On its face, weather sounds like the most banal and mundane thing possible. When people talk about the weather, we usually take that as a sign of nothing to talk about. This talk aims to show that the accusation that talking about the weather is intellectually empty is hardly the case in the age of climate change, and even dangerous. The history of human interaction with weather is also a history of cultural techniques and media technologies. Dramatists and divines have sought meaning from atmospheric events. Reading the skies is one paradigm case of human-nature interaction, and studying weather can stand in as part for whole as an inquiry into the environments humans have made or unmade. The history of modern weather forecasting is also a history of the militarization of the sky and oceans, and is co-extensive with the history of modern telecommunications and computation. Weather raises two questions of profound interest to recent media theory: how mundane infrastructures are full of meaning and how vaporous or evanescent entities can be tracked, recorded, and programmed. In this way, studying the weather is a special case in media theory's more general study of how media help constitute the world.

**Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 PM**  
**Hallie Ford Museum of Art,**  
**215 Roger Hull Lecture Hall**

Reception from 6-7 PM in Hallie Ford lobby. Light refreshments will be served.



**Dr. John Durham Peters: María Rosa Menocal Professor of English and of  
Film & Media Studies of Yale University**

A media historian and social theorist, he has authored a number of noted scholarly works. His first book *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* which traces out broad historical, philosophical, religious, cultural, legal, and technological contexts for the study of communication. His second book *Courting the Abyss: Free Speech and the Liberal Tradition* updates the philosophy of free expression with a history of liberal thought since Paul of Tarsus. His most recent book *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* radically rethinks how media are environments and environments are also media. He has held fellowships with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Leverhulme Trust.

Free and open to the public

For more information, contact Huike Wen at [hwen@willamette.edu](mailto:hwen@willamette.edu)

If you require disability accommodation for this event, contact the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at (503) 370-6195