



American Studies Association

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Call for Proposals: *Walled Worlds: Sovereignty, Nationalism and Globalization* (Due October 6, 2018)

The American Studies Association (ASA) and the Japanese Association for American Studies (JAAS), with support from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission (JUFSC), are pleased to announce a competition open to ASA members (United States citizen or permanent resident of the United States). You may apply and be considered as long as you primarily live and work in the United States.

We plan to select two ASA delegates (pending funding) for participation in the annual JAAS conference to be held in May–June 2019 in Japan. We invite proposals for papers to be presented at the JAAS conference and for the two-day pro-seminars in Japan. The award covers round trip airfare to Japan, housing, and modest daily expenses.

The members of the ASA-JAAS Project Advisory Committee and the International Committee of JAAS will choose the delegates by collaborative assessment and selection. Two-day pro-seminars will be held, most likely after the JAAS conference, which will enable JAAS scholars to participate. Themes of the pro-seminars will be connected to the papers delegates present at JAAS. The ASA delegates will collaborate with the International Committee of JAAS in finalizing the format of the pro-seminars and will be responsible for participating in scholarly exchanges with JAAS members, from graduate students (including those who may not yet be JAAS members) to senior scholars. Under the proposed project, the ASA delegates will tentatively spend two days at the JAAS conference, two days in their pro-seminars, plus travel time, for a total of about a week.

Project Theme:

This is the second year of our newest proposal for scholarly exchanges between the American Studies Association (ASA) and the Japan Association for American Studies (JAAS) covering the three-year project period, 2018-2020.

The scholarly theme proposed for the three-year cycle by the project advisory committee is “**Transnational America: Past, Present, and Future,**” building on the previous three-year project, which highlighted scholarship on our current historical moment, when US officials (and their counterparts around the world) claim and proclaim the United States as the lone “superpower” and pursue policies

and practices to secure that status. With the proliferation of studies on empire, anti-communism, radical movements, mass incarceration, indigeneity, and globalization in recent years, American Studies has emerged as a vibrant site of critique. Over the past two decades, scholars have been addressing the three absences that former ASA President Amy Kaplan identified in *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993): “the absence of culture from the history of U.S. imperialism; the absence of empire from the study of American culture; and the absence of the United States from the postcolonial study of imperialism.” The scholarly theme, “Transnational America: Past, Present and Future” addresses perhaps the most pressing issue faced by American Studies today: understanding how the United States has been constructed by its manifold connections to the world, its multiple impacts across the globe, and the relationships among national sovereignty, imperialism, migration, and globalization. Narrating the history and future of the U.S. as a series of encounters with the world entails contending with how settler colonialism, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, immigration and human trafficking, war, empire, and transnational capitalism that have shaped identities, cultural productions, and notions of citizenship, and have produced and exacerbated inequalities while also providing ways to resist them.

With this three-year grant proposal, we elicit emerging American Studies scholarship that illuminates the place of the United States in the world and highlights how engagement with the world shapes social, political, and economic categories within the U.S. In an era resounding with cries to “build the wall,” how can scholars address countervailing forces of isolationism and globalization? How have writers, artists, and activists envisioned alternative possibilities? How have citizens and migrants (documented and undocumented), both claimed America and critiqued it? How is renewed nationalism in the U.S. related to reinvented nationalist and xenophobic movements around the globe, and what explains their emergence? How do U.S. militarism, foreign policy, and economic interests elicit and respond to a rising China, growing Russian ambitions, and refugee crises? How have fields like queer studies, indigenous studies and critical ethnic studies been at the forefront of defining new and important ways to think about transnational America?

Walled Worlds: Sovereignty, Nationalism and Globalization (2019): The current political moment in the US is one of xenophobia. Within his first 100 days President Trump aimed to push through legislation to ban travel from several designated “enemy” states, erect a wall along the US-Mexico border, and expand the deportation powers of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). At the same time, the Trump administration’s rhetoric and actions have emboldened perpetrators of hate speech and violence who feel their attacks are now justified on people of color and non-Protestant religious groups. And yet within this prevalent formation and vision of a physically and psychically walled-in state, we also live in an era when dreamers and ever more flexible citizens expand our notion of what a transnational America looks like. The expansion of international migration-- supported by formal structures within the government apparatus along with

globalization of the American economy and labor pool--requires more fluid borders and access to protections often only granted to fully-recognized citizens. With a focus on the current socio-political moment, what does it mean to consider the US as a transnational state, at a moment when it appears to be inward looking and hostile to open borders? How have political elites obscured the impact of global capitalism (e.g. neo-liberalism, free trade, international finance, etc.) by scapegoating marginalized populations and simultaneously requiring their labor, both inside and outside of the nation-state? What role does the internet, especially social media, play in both supporting and subverting isolationist movements throughout the world? How have other forms of protest (marches, petitions, voter registration drives, lawsuits, etc.) contributed to the articulation of a more inclusive American body politic.

Application Procedures:

Each application should include a summary in 300 words of the proposed paper to be presented at the JAAS annual meeting. Participants should explain how the proposed paper contributes to a discussion of the project theme in general, and more specifically to the 2019 conference theme, ***Walled Worlds: Sovereignty, Nationalism and Globalization***. Applicants should include a personal statement, no longer than two pages, describing their interest in this project and the issues that their own scholarship and teaching have addressed. Personal statements may include comments on previous collaboration or work with non-U.S. academics or students. Prior experience of work or travel in Japan is not a requirement for selection, but if applicable, applicants may comment on their particular interest in, or connections to, Japan. In addition, applications should include a two-page curriculum vitae, emphasizing publications and teaching experience and the names and addresses of three references. All applicants must be available to travel for a weeklong period to Japan in May-June 2019; exact dates required for travel will be forthcoming. Applicants must be current members of the ASA and U.S. citizens and preference will be given to candidates who are active participants of the ASA. Please explain in what capacity you have participated in ASA panels, committees, journal, etc. in your personal statement. Scholars must have a Ph.D. and preference will be given to those with teaching experience and a publication record.

Application materials should be addressed to the ASA-JAAS Project Advisory Committee and submitted as a Word or PDF document in a single attachment before midnight (US DST) October 6, 2018. You may submit to the ASA via Dropbox or Google Drive to (asastaff@theasa.net).