

Call for Proposals: *Transnational America: Past, Present, and Future: Transpacific Overtures, The Black Atlantic, and Dynamics of Settler Colonialism.*
(Due September 15, 2017)

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 (U.S. citizens). We plan to select two ASA delegates (pending funding) for participation in the annual JAAS conference to be held in May–June 2018 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 first 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, anticommunism,

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 reinvigorated 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?

Transpacific Overtures, The Black Atlantic, and Dynamics of Settler Colonialism (2018). The first year of the three-year project seeks to cast a wide historical net and to consider the manifold connections to the world established between America and other spaces. As Lisa Lowe argues in the *Intimacies of Four Continents*, the connections between Europe, Asia and America are often under examined. She notes that the

“obscured connections between the emergence of European liberalism, settler colonialism in the Americas, the transatlantic slave trade and the East Indies and China trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (2) bear far deeper scrutiny.

As the history of the long 19th century illustrates, protests against racial discrimination, inequality, poverty, and injustice not only pervade (North) American history but span the globe and cross – oftentimes multiple – borders. Building on the transnational turn in American Studies and de-centering American Studies’ focus on the nation as the prime focus of analysis, this year’s focus, invites papers that trace the Atlantic routes/roots (Gilroy), the diasporic and global trajectories, as well as the movement, circulation, and dissemination of past and present forms and ideas of resistance. How does the notion of global intimacy help us to understand the manifold forms of imagining transnational America? In this year’s theme, we seek papers that address the transnational dimension of various forms of resistance that are embedded in larger social movements. What are the transatlantic and transpacific significance of these movements and how do they oblige us to rethink America as having had a long transnational history built through the intimacy of capital and labor? How do we conceptualize the connections between past and present forms of transnational resistance? How does this relationship between the past and the present shape existing notions of resistance? How did national movements for equality and justice impact as well as intersect with national and international forms of protest?

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 2018 conference theme, *Transpacific Overtures, The Black Atlantic, and Dynamics of Settler Colonialism*. 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 2018; 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, 2017. You may submit to the ASA via Dropbox or Google Drive to (asastaff@theasa.net).