

Identities of America as Concept and Continent

For the 2023 BAAS Postgraduate Symposium, we welcome proposals that reflect aspects of this year's theme, **Identities of America as concept and continent**.

The question of 'who' or 'what' is American and 'when' has raised difficult dialogues around (re)defining identities and geographic boundaries within the continents of the Americas. Historically, the name 'America' was first recorded in 1507 in the two-dimensional globe map of German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller (c. 1470-1520), named after the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512). The term 'America' to refer specifically to South America (Ringmann 1507) and to both North and South America (Mercator, 1538). Today, 'America' is shorthand for the United States of America and 'Americans' are assumed to be from the United States. How do we start a conversation about the identities in America as a continent beyond one country? The U.S.A is but one of the 35 sovereign states that constitute North and South America, and the continent includes indigenous populations not recognised as sovereign nations.

This symposium aims to interrogate the U.S.A-centric narrative of what it means to research 'American Studies', extending our purview to explore questions relating to marginalised and minority identity politics within the continent of America, in addition to the United States. This does not only concentrate on sovereign states recognised by the United Nations, but also nations of indigenous populations across the American continents. The difficulty or inability to define who is Canadian, American, or British in the history of transatlantic knowledge networks has diminished their importance in defining the fields of art, science, and technology. These quandaries have long-lasting, impactful consequences on the collaborative histories within British-American Studies.

Isabel Linares Uscher (2021) wrote in *The Eagle*, "It is time to realize that America is more than the U.S. and question what it means to be American," pointing out that the term 'America' in *The Urban Dictionary* is defined as "A country that claims the name of an entire continent to itself alone for no compelling reason." The 2023 BAAS Postgraduate Symposium invites proposals from postgraduates across all disciplines and time periods that address identity in America, not only as a country of the United States, but also as a continent comprised of 35 countries, and as representing nations of indigenous peoples colonised by superseding forces. We hope to expand the conception of what it means to have an 'American identity'. In a broad sense, the postgraduate conference welcomes research that investigates the concept of 'American identity' over time, and how that is reflected in the modern day. We are interested to hear how cultures and countries are shaped by their relation to America as a nation, a continent and a concept, and how American histories reflect the dominant narrative of what 'America' is and is seen to be.

We invite panels and individual papers on the topic of **Identities of America as concept and continent**. We welcome contributions from all realms of American Studies, including, but not limited to: history of art, science and visual culture, philosophical reflections on majority/minority contexts, postcolonial and de-colonial analysis of identity formation, collections and museum studies, literary and historical studies, historicization and progressive thoughts on the future of the field.

We welcome the submission of individual papers as well as proposals for complete panels of three researchers. Applications from groups of three or four researchers for roundtable discussions are also welcome. For panel and roundtable proposals, please also include a statement of up to 250 words on the aims of the collective submission, alongside the individual papers. Papers should be around 15 minutes long, and roundtables will consist of five-minute introductions by each researcher followed by 45 minutes of discussion. Interdisciplinary paper, panel, and roundtable proposals are encouraged.

The deadline for submissions is **Monday 31st July 2023**. Please send proposals including a title, an abstract of no more than **250 words** and a **short biography of no more than 300 words to Kimberly Glassman and Emma Hall** at pgbaas2023@gmail.com.

For further information and updates about this year's Symposium, follow us on Twitter [@BAAS_pgs](https://twitter.com/BAAS_pgs) or visit <https://www.baas.ac.uk/news-and-events>. We look forward to reading your proposals!