



# CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES

## CALL FOR PAPERS: “ON BOTHERING”

“On Bothering” is an interdisciplinary American Studies conference, hosted by Concordia University and the Canadian Association for American Studies (CAAS). It will take place at Concordia University in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke from October 4th-6th, 2024

From its earliest forms, “bother” etymologically suggests a conflation of “both” and “other”—at once kinship and distinctness. “Bother” still contains some of its early contradictions: it refers to making an effort—to concern oneself, to take the trouble to do something—and also to finding things inconvenient, irritating, or troublesome. To be bothered suggests at once a willingness to engage, a perception of nuisance, or, when sexualized, to be subject to unwelcome attention. To not bother, in turn, suggests indifference, complaisance, and/or disengagement.

This conference will take up all the valences of “bothering”: among them, bothering the both/other as constructs; bothering familiar narratives, genres, and paradigms; bothering the troublesome and the inconvenient; bothering the historical and mythic records; and bothering the question of not bothering—the perception that bothering will, in the end, make no difference at all. As Boots Riley’s, *Sorry to Bother You* suggests, “bother” speaks to both the (underpaid, often African American) labourers, who “bother,” by infringing on the time of their “marks” (the poor or middle class), and the Bezos-like capitalists who would rather “not bother” with (and indeed imagine, and instantiate, alternatives to) their workers.

We seek approaches to this theme from all disciplinary fields and periods. **Papers on other topics relevant to American Studies are also welcome.** In addition to single paper proposals, we encourage preorganized panels of 3-4 presenters (or other alternative formats).

Topics and themes might include (but are not limited to):

- bothering received history
- bothering with the archives
- bothering received genres, histories, and/or myths
- bothering as apology
- bothering as intervention
- bothering inequities
- bothering indifference and complaisance
- bothering as an effort of will
- bothering as trouble
- bothering as care
- bothering as noticing
- bothering as revolution
- bothering as stasis
- bothering as disrupting

Please send proposals of 250-300 words, 3-5 keywords, and a 50-word bio to Nicola Nixon (nicola.nixon@concordia.ca) by **January 31st, 2024**. For preorganized panels, please provide proposals, keywords, and bios for each presenter, along with a panel title and 50-100 word panel abstract.