

CAALS CFPs for ALA 2019

The next American Literature Association (ALA) annual conference will be held May 23–26, 2019, in Boston, MA. Below are calls for papers for the five panels sponsored by the Circle for Asian American Literary Studies (CAALS), which also holds its annual business meeting at ALA.

Please note that if your proposal is accepted and you agree to participate, you will need to become a member of CAALS prior to presenting, in addition to registering for the conference. For more information, please visit our website at <http://caals.org/>.

Panel 1 Title: (In)Visible: Asymmetries in Asian American Texts

Chairs: Na-Rae Kim, University of Connecticut, and Laura Wright, Berry College

Asian Americans have become increasingly visible to the public eye in various realms. Recent cinematic imaginations such as *Crazy Rich Asians*, *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, and *Searching* and bestselling or prizewinning literature by authors like Viet Thanh Nguyen, Marjorie Liu, and Hanya Yanagihara have all contributed to a growing national conversation around Asian Americans and representations of Asian Americans. However, while there are experiences and voices that become more visible through these forms, there are others that remain, or even become, increasingly more invisible.

We welcome inquiries into the asymmetries in Asian American in/visibility through various approaches, topics, and areas. For instance, how can we think about the invisible vis-à-vis the visible in Asian America? What are some of the productive tensions between them? Could some become more invisible because of the hyper-visible, or vice versa? Could this, perhaps, offer new insights for conceptualizing Asian American in/visibility? How do various genres play into this asymmetry? What populations are particularly susceptible to in/visibility in Asian American cultural production? What role does geography play in making some more visible than others?

Please email a proposal (max. 250 words) and a brief CV to Na-Rae Kim (na-rae.kim@uconn.edu) and Laura Wright (lawright@berry.edu) by **Monday, January 14, 2019**. Please be sure to mention any technological needs for your presentation.

Panel 2 Title: The Dis-contents of Asian American Literary Form

Chair: Chris Eng, Syracuse University

For the last two and a half decades, debates around the characteristics, uses, and politics of “Asian American” as a critical rubric have compelled a scholarly critique of identity, auguring what some term a postidentity turn. Asian American literary studies has been at the forefront of contemplating the fissures of identity and its dis-contents. Susan Koshy and Lisa Lowe interrogate how invocations of Asian American identity unwittingly replicate modes of power aligned with nationalist ideals that suppress difference. Therefore, rather than approach “Asian American” as a descriptor of a subjectivity to be accomplished, Kandice Chuh posits Asian Americanist critique as an analytic premised on a “subjectless discourse.” Relatedly, Viet Nguyen critiques the privileging of resistance in ethnic studies and scholarly assumptions of a homogeneous set of radical politics under “Asian American.” Moreover, scholarship on war, empire, and displacement by intellectuals such as YẾN Lê Espiritu, Mimi Nguyen, and Cathy Schlund-Vials further attest to the limits and inadequacies of grounding identity as the political platform for racial justice. In short, these scholars collectively interrogate cultural-nationalist attachments to the forms of identity and the nation-state as the bases for the theoretical and political work of Asian American studies. Meanwhile, renewed attention to formalism in literary studies has turned our attention to how race resides not merely as embodied difference but is also shaped through discursive arrangements, narratological techniques, and the ordering logics of social, political, and economic distributions. These studies of the formal and the aesthetic in Asian American literary studies complicate how a prioritization of apprehending content and context in literatures concretize fixed notions of identity. Instead, scholars beckon us to take seriously how Asian Americanness becomes articulated, reworked, and transformed through updated racial and literary forms.

This panel thus invites papers that grapple broadly with these questions of Asian American literary form. Specifically, in what ways might the formal, aesthetic, and experimental properties of literature shift conventional understandings about racial difference and Asian American critique? How can literature animate innovative approaches and insights into what Colleen Lye generatively terms “racial form”? How might attending to form nuance the political and affective work of discontent that Asian American literatures enact?

Please email your proposal (max. 250 words) and a brief CV (max. 500 words) to Chris Eng at ceng02@syr.edu by **Monday, January 14, 2019**. Please be sure to mention any technological needs for your presentation.

Panel 3 Title: Moving Parts: Travel and Identity in Asian American Representation

Chair: Min Lee, UC San Diego

The theme of travel is deeply imbedded in both fiction and nonfiction. Even more so in literature centered on the diasporic experience, conditions of human displacement are prominent. Dislocation—whether by geography, culture, or identity—is a trope regularly revisited in Asian American writing. States of refugeeism, exile by political dissidence, nomadism, economic migration, or tourism—these diverse forms of displacement encompass the transnational Asian American narrative.

If travel is about shifts through space and time, then the concept of identity can be seen as an equally fluid and mutable phenomenon. The idea that movement and crossing borders, imagined or real, effect change to one's sense of self is a common theme expressed in a range of representations, from literary to nonliterary genres. Therefore, the notion that travel is transformative and the experience can shape one's identity is central. In other words, the journey is not only through an external geographic landscape but the interior of the mind.

This panel invites proposals on a rich range of mediums and genres—filmic, pictorial, verse, or prose—that examines travel and identity as two wedded tropes. Such text-and-visual-based mediums may include graphic novels and comics, historiography, historical fiction, autobiography and memoir, to name a very few. Works of fiction and nonfiction articulating the profound ways unfamiliar, and once familiar, environments color a dynamic selfhood in Asian American storytelling are welcome. Again, the definition of storytelling here embraces a wide breadth of mediums and genres. If your interest lies in Asian American diasporic and/or transnationalism studies in general, we encourage you to participate.

Please email your proposal (max. 250 words) and a brief CV (max. 500 words) to Min Lee at m4lee@ucsd.edu by **Monday, January 14, 2019**. Please be sure to mention any technological needs for your presentation.

Panel 4 Title: The State of Asian America: Literary Representations of Asian American Space

Chair: Timothy K. August, Stony Brook University

The term “Asian America,” as opposed to Asian American, had a miniscule presence in scholarly or creative work until the year 2000, but has undergone a surge in Asian American Studies academic writing over the past 20 years. Despite the rootedness and place making implied by this spatial terminology, Asian America is a mobile concept that travels quite liberally in intellectual circles, crafting a rather disorienting conceptual history.

This panel will address the relationship between Asian Americans and the space they inhabit, queering how Asian America circulates in the literary imagination. Potential submissions could address literary presentations of Asian American space, the commodification of Asian America, the transnational allure of Asian American space, and Asian America as an inter-subjective formation.

Please send a 200-300 word abstract and c.v. to Timothy K. August at timothy.august@stonybrook.edu by **Monday, January 14, 2019**. Please be sure to mention any technological needs for your presentation.

Panel 5: OPEN CALL for Asian American Literary Studies

Chair: Caroline Kyungah Hong, Queens College, CUNY

We invite proposals on any aspect of Asian American literature and culture. Our aim is to provide a forum for new and innovative work in Asian American literary studies.

Please email your proposal (max. 250 words) and a brief CV (max. 500 words) to Caroline Hong at caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu by **Monday, January 14, 2019**. Please be sure to mention any technological needs for your presentation.