



## CALL FOR PAPERS: "ALTERNATIVE AMERICAS"

*aspeers: emerging voices in american studies*  
Call for Papers by October 15, 2017

From 'flyover country' to 'coastal liberals,' from the 'American heartland' to 'urban elites'—the 2016 presidential election engendered numerous debates about where the allegedly 'real' America lies. Beyond displaying political divisiveness, each invocation stylizes a vision of the United States that stands as an alternative to the presumed political and cultural mainstream, each locates 'real' America in a different place, and each constitutes an attempt at making alternative voices heard—from Americans who feel un- or misrepresented by politicians or neglected by the media, thus trying to reassert themselves into the public sphere.

'Alternative' visions of America and of what it means to be American, often cast as competing with or as polar opposites to a perceived mainstream, loom large throughout US culture and history. Whether their fault lines are drawn between rural and urban, conservative and progressive, or young and old, at their core, they form interventions into the status quo: voicing dissent, spotlighting difference and otherness, making the invisible seen and representing the previously unrepresented, criticizing assumed norms, or unearthing forgotten points of view. Implicitly or explicitly, such alternative configurations also highlight the constructedness of the 'mainstream' they position themselves against.

For its eleventh issue, *aspeers* thus dedicates its topical section to "**Alternative Americas**" and invites European graduate students to critically and analytically explore American literature, (popular) culture, society, history, and politics through the lens of alternative visions of the US. We welcome papers from all fields, methodologies, and approaches comprising American studies as well as inter- and transdisciplinary submissions, ranging from economy and political science to history, media studies, literary and cultural studies, and beyond. Potential paper topics could cover (but are not limited to):

- Expressions of counterculture, specific subcultures, or other counter-voices to what is considered (the political) mainstream (e.g., the hippie, Beat, Occupy Wall Street, Tea Party, or alt-right movements)
- Literary and filmic representations of alternatives, e.g., in fantasy and science fiction, (post)apocalyptic narratives, utopias and dystopias, alternate history, or conspiracy fictions
- Spotlights on the US beyond the mainland, towards its 'alternate' fringes—the border zones of the US with other countries, inter-American relations, etc.
- Anti-normative and alternative social constructions, e.g., alternative religions or family constellations
- Camp, queerness, and other concepts questioning the 'norm' or the 'natural'
- Notions of fact and fiction in journalism and politics (e.g., 'alternative facts' and fake news)
- Deconstructions/'revisions' of traditional mainstream genres in various media (music, literature, TV, etc.)

*aspeers*, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed journal of European American studies, encourages fellow MA students from all fields to reflect on the diverse meanings of "Alternative Americas." We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the eleventh issue of *aspeers* by October 15, 2017. If you are seeking to publish work beyond this topic, please refer to our general Call for Papers. Please consult our submission guidelines and find some additional tips at [www.aspeers.com/2018](http://www.aspeers.com/2018).