



CALL FOR PAPERS ON CRIME AND AMERICA

**aspeers: emerging voices in american studies
calls for submissions by 1 November 2009**

The past year has seen an unprecedented interest in white-collar crime. From the presidential election that pitched an honest Main Street against a criminal Wall Street to the trial of Bernard L. Madoff, crime, it seems, has become a central metaphor for the American public to reevaluate long-standing dogmas of neoliberalism. This recent surge of interest arguably is a consequence of the current economic developments, but it also reflects a more fundamental connection between American (self-)perception and 'crime,' a connection that is expressed in a wide range of cultural artifacts and texts. We are thus calling for submissions scrutinizing the role of crime from various disciplinary perspectives. Contributors are invited to explore the role of crime as a cultural signifier, a social reality with complex ramifications, an analytic category, or from other angles.

Different notions of crime have served as master tropes both for American culture's self-portrayal and for outside readings of the United States. From the celebrated lawlessness of the Frontier to the global appeal of gangsta rap, from the 1970s panic over serial killers to the perception of the US as a criminally imperial power, a wide range of discourses testifies to the significance the category has assumed. This cultural productivity of crime begs various questions. For example, how has crime been represented in different literary genres? How does fiction impact definitions and perceptions of crime? Have new forms of technology altered the way crime is being represented?

Apart from such a literary/cultural studies angle, crime is also an immensely productive field in the social sciences, history, and law. Here, the complex nature of 'crime' becomes most apparent: It is at once a central, well-defined category of social interaction and a continually changing, fragile agreement. A number of questions arise: How have efforts at social control criminalized previously legal behavior? How has city development intersected with law enforcement efforts? In how far are advances in technology both an impediment to and an enabler of crime?

In that an interest in crime modifies more traditional interests in race, class, and gender, it can be utilized not only as an object of inquiry, but as an analytic category that opens up interdisciplinary dialogues. In this sense, crime becomes a critical lens through which core concepts of American studies, such as the body, the nation, the border, etc., can be reconfigured.

aspeers, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed journal for European American studies, invites fellow graduate students to reflect on these issues. Please note that the contributions we are looking for might address but are not limited to the topical parameters outlined above. We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the occasion by 1 November 2009.

Please check out our submission guidelines and an editorial timetable at www.aspeers.com/2010.