

Geographies of Promise and Betrayal: Land and Place in US Studies

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Sponsored by the **Canadian Association for American Studies, York University** and
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What makes a house a home? What makes a home a good investment? What makes a real estate “bubble” burst? Who “owns” the streets? The water? The land? What makes this land your land, my land, or our land, from California to the New York Island, or beyond? How do you “occupy” Wall Street? How can you “walk for the cure”? American mythologies and narratives are traditionally reliant upon the presumed availability of space (the frontier thesis) and American identity typically defined through the occupation, subjugation, conquest, or mastery of space. In *Critical Regionalism* (2007), Douglas Reichert Powell points out that “‘senses’ of place and region are not so much essential qualities, imparted by singular events, practices, or topographical features, as they are ongoing debates and discourses that coalesce around particular geographical spaces.” How is land/earth/terrain understood and used? What are the distinct debates, discourses, and spatial practices that have defined American culture and society in the past, and how might they be changing today? These are some of the questions that will be posed at this 2012 CAAS-sponsored conference.

Topics/Themes might include but are by no means limited to the following:

- Critical Regionalism
- The Politics of Occupation
- Architecture
- Land and Music
- Mobility and Conquest
- Culture and the Environment: After (?) Eco-criticism
- The City, the Edge City, the Suburb, the Exurb, and the Country
- Interior Decorating
- Planned Communities and Communitarian Utopias
- American Pastoral
- Confinement, Incarceration, Renditions, Prisons
- Moving People: Streets, Lanes, Highways; Ships, Busses, Airports
- Stopping People: Walls, Gates, Fences, Perimeters, Police Lines, Security Checks
- CGI and Digital Culture: Imagined Landscapes
- Migrants, "Illegals," and Domestic

This is only a partial list – topics from all areas of American Studies will be considered

To participate, submit a 300-word abstract by **March 15, 2012** to <aredding@yorku.ca>.
Please include in the body of the email: your name, institutional affiliation, and contact information.