

Peripheries

The Politics of Space and Place

History Graduate Student Association Conference
Brown University
February 22-23, 2019

The issue of peripheries, of centers vs margins, of frontier zones and spaces of power, has been taken up from many positionalities within a number of geographic and temporal subfields. Although in its early stages these scholarly discussions were often rooted in physical places, especially in the context of empires, others have questioned the utility of focusing solely on physical peripheries. These scholars continue to broaden existing theoretical models to probe the relationships between centers and margins, question received hierarchies, examine the movement of people, ideas, and resources, and reveal the ways in which different peripheries overlap. In the process, they have called attention to networks of knowledge production and circulation, as well as the visual and material representations of imagined peripheries. Running through all of these “peripheries” are issues of power, control, economy, environment, identity, and terminology.

This conference is an opportunity for emerging scholars, from all geographic and temporal specialties, to critically examine previous understandings of peripheries and propose new ways forward. We aim to provoke discussions concerning what makes peripheries, how they function, how they change over time, how they are defined by various methodologies, and if and how peripheries remain a relevant category of analysis across the discipline. This could involve exploring the possibilities of classical and medieval peripheries, de-centering the East Coast in colonial Anglo-American history, the dynamics of nomadic empires on the Eurasian steppe, the extent to which the center(s) of the early modern world shifted, and the use of technology to re-configure and enforce peripheries in the modern world.

Possible paper topics and themes include, but are not limited to:

- The interplay of physical and imagined peripheries
- Conceptualizing and representing the ‘foreign’
- Views of the center from the peripheries
- Centering waterscapes / de-centering land logic
- Social and political peripheries
- Knowledges, circulation, and trade
- Sourcing the history of “peripheries”

- Peopling peripheries
- Food and commodity webs
- The politics of labeling a “periphery”
- Imagining and enacting violence
- The viability of systems models
- Peripheries in the academy

We welcome both individual papers and full panel proposals. We also welcome volunteers for chairing panels. Papers should be 15-20 minutes in length, and may be from any geographic or temporal specialization. Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words to hgsaconference2019@gmail.com by midnight on **November 15, 2018**.

Note: The costs of attending the conference, including travel, accommodation, and other expenses, will be the responsibility of the presenter(s) or their institutions.