

Call for Papers:

**Indigenous Spaces:
Pushing the Boundaries of History, Bodies, Geographies, and Politics**

A Graduate Student Colloquium

Presented by
The *Collaborations on Indigenous Studies Project (CISP)*

**Columbia University
February 15, 2012**

We invite graduate students to submit proposals for a graduate student colloquium on the theme of *Indigenous Spaces: Pushing the Boundaries of History, Bodies, Geographies, and Politics*, to take place at Columbia University in the City of New York on February 15, 2012. Contributors are encouraged to think about 'indigenous spaces' that connect indigenous communities, bodies (understood in a broad sense), histories, geographies, and academia.

The spatial turn made evident the need to develop new ways of using spatial concepts and metaphors in the humanities. Thus, in research pertaining to indigenous peoples, politics, histories, and geographies, 'indigenous spaces' constitutes an essential and timely topic for academic study across a variety of disciplines. Experiences of space can shape or be shaped by the geopolitical realities of modern nation-states, social, ethnic, gender and class divisions, academic traditions, cultural taboos, or moral lines drawn by the secular and the divine. Old and new spaces, along with their shifting borders—ideological, physical, imposed and entrenched—can isolate or connect people and places in ways that have also been central in global and local conflicts. Indigenous peoples—sometimes with the collaboration of non-indigenous activists and practitioners/professionals—have carved out spaces for themselves and their interests in relation to settled (or settling) bodies. The same is true for indigenous communities that were made 'indigenous' by colonizers and colonizing states. Activists, indigenous peoples, as well as indigenous studies scholars also work to create spaces for indigenous issues within the worlds of politics and academia. In various ways, the practice of 'carving out (an) indigenous space(s)' can situate indigenous peoples and indigenous studies in any number of strategic, cooperative, competitive, stable or unstable contexts and intersections. 'Indigenous spaces' can thus often be located along and across, between and beyond, as well as within and outside of various types of borders, boundaries, frontiers and barriers. Such spaces may be the result of the application of new approaches to political organizing or advocacy, cross-disciplinary theories and methods, accounts of discrepant experience, or new research that challenges long-established paradigms. *Indigenous Spaces* thus points to the fluctuating nature of experienced, theoretical, conceptual, and methodological spaces as they relate to indigenous people.

If 'indigenous spaces' can be thought of as metaphysical sites of praxis or resistance, or as conceptual 'places' that are malleable, socially constructed, and historically contingent, we hope to receive papers that consider such spaces in light of decisions or actions taken in the spheres of law, politics, ideology, spiritual life, public policy, the economy, and academia. As they relate to indigenous studies, we aim to think of indigenous spaces in two primary ways: First, what happens to indigenous studies as identities, ideas, and practices are created in new spaces? Second, how can scholars push at the borders and boundaries of scholarly and disciplinary ways of thinking, in order to open up new spaces and lines of inquiry into thinking about indigenous issues in academia? We particularly encourage submissions that consider the well-being of indigenous communities as well as the practice, theory, and methodology of indigenous studies.

Suggested topics:

- The role of the state and statehood in the production and cognition of space with regard to indigenous ways of thinking and living.
- The role of technologies.
- In what senses is the category 'space' relevant in order to better understand phenomena of indigeneity?
- What kinds of productions of space, both material and symbolic, are used by indigenous people(s) to maintain or secure livelihoods, create identities or pursue political strategies?
- What specificities of spatial cognition exist among indigenous communities and if so, what can they accomplish?
- Comparative and/or relational studies of uprisings, social movements, and resistance.
- Histories/studies of Indigenous peoples, communities, organisations, etc.
- Readings of indigenous studies, histories, and peoples that take place outside of imagined geographies.
- Discussion of "internal borders" and "border thinking" as they relate to indigenous peoples
- Questions of colonialism and decolonization.
- Approaches to power, knowledge, and experience engaging coloniality and decoloniality.
- Comparative projects that link indigenous spaces or communities politically, culturally, economically, socially, or environmentally.
- Scholarship that problematizes academic orders.
- Intersectional analysis of identities and belonging between and within indigenous communities, or between and within indigenous communities and surrounding non-indigenous communities.
- Imperial geographies and cartographies.
- 'Experienced spaces', or articulations of different experiences of spaces by individuals and/or communities.
- Spaces of art/exhibition/memorialization that are important to, controlled by, or relevant to indigenous peoples in public spaces such as museums, monuments, etc.

Graduate students interested in participating should **submit a paper abstract** not exceeding 300 words and a recent CV as email attachments (PDF or Word format) **by DECEMBER 28, 2011** to the colloquium organizers, Aur lie Roy and Maria John, at indigenous.spaces@gmail.com. Participants will be notified in the first week of January, 2012.

Please note: Columbia faculty will act as commentators on the day of the colloquium. Papers will also be pre-circulated at this event; a deadline for submission of pre-circulating papers will be announced in due course.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions about the colloquium.