



## EMERGING SCHOLARS' FORUM

of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries

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Dear Colleagues,

The Emerging Scholars Forum of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS) invites abstract submissions for paper and poster presentations at their upcoming conference:

### **Imagining Canada:**

#### **'Discovering' and Navigating 'All Our Relations' in an (Un)Common Country**

It will take place **September 3 - 5, 2020** at the Freiburg Research Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) in Freiburg, Germany (depending on the status of the Covid-19 pandemic, this event may need to be facilitated creatively with the help of teleconferencing technologies).

Please send your titles, abstracts (up to 300 words) and biographical notes (up to 100 words) to [canada.2020@mail.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:canada.2020@mail.uni-freiburg.de) by **May 30, 2020**, indicating whether you would like to give a talk or present a poster. Applications will be accepted in the languages of the conference: **English, French, and German** - but we recognise the many Indigenous languages and multilingual research that exist in Canada and would welcome presentations and/or posters that speak to this linguistic plurality.

Situated in the interdisciplinary academic field of Canadian Studies, our conference theme addresses the terms **"Discovering," Navigating, and Imagining** in order to trace differences, overlaps, misunderstandings, silences, and possible reconciliations between various ways of understanding what Canada is, could, or should be. Taking Canada as our shared point of departure, we plan to engage a concept expressed in many Indigenous languages, which can be roughly translated as **"All My Relations"**, for devising new approaches to imagining Canada, past, present, and future. Indigenous novelist Thomas King defines this expression as:

First a reminder of who we are and of our relationship with both our family and our relatives. It also reminds us of the extended relationship we share with all human beings. But the relationships... go further, the web of kinship to animals, to the birds, to the fish, to the plants, to all the animate and inanimate forms that can be seen or imagined. (1990, ix-1)

With this understanding, the question that leads us in this conference is: **How do various ways of relating –between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, but also between different humans and non-humans– engender different imaginations of Canada?**

This forum is intended as a space for emerging scholars to share their ongoing or finished work that relates to Canada, but also as a networking and learning opportunity for young scholars. The format, therefore, is slightly unconventional: we will be showcasing scholars' work in familiar paper and poster presentations, but there will also be interactive workshops and optional excursions in the city of Freiburg. Our intention is to create an environment that fosters exchange, support with potential problems, and interactions with colleagues across disciplines and languages. The terms 'Discovering', Navigating, and Imagining help us approach our multifaceted question and provide a thematic roadmap that guides us through the panels and workshops. Here are our initial approaches to the terms, but we welcome abstracts and posters that imagine beyond these (limited) interpretations!

**'Discovering:'** This term carries multiple meanings: it can critically refer to contact periods and an imagined *terra nullius*. It can also refer to the discovery of new partnerships or new homelands within Canadian borders, for instance for recent refugees or hopeful immigrants; or to scientific or technological discoveries made by Canadians or in Canada. Scholars from History, Native Studies, Diaspora Studies, Linguistics, Science and Technology Studies, or International Relations may find their research topics fit well here.

**Navigating:** We think of the routes of Indigenous and Settler movements through Canada, and the various institutions, discourses, and politics associated with them. These include the Two Row Wampum as a key alternative to the European doctrine of discovery, depicting relations of mutual benefit between equal and independent Nations. Navigating also speaks to the historical and current spread of ideas, technologies, languages, diseases, and genes through the fur trade, river catchments, the internet, and other networks. Scholars from Environmental Sciences, Anthropology, Hydrology, or Religious Studies may find their research best suited to this area.

**Imagining:** Here, we focus on ways of thinking about Canada, what it is, how it came to be, and what it may become. In critically looking at terms like urbanization, decolonization, reconciliation, and sovereignty, we can interrogate everyday imaginative practices: imagining futures, identity, and a certain 'Canada', depending on one's perspective and relations. Research in Literature Studies, Philosophy, Political Studies, Economics, or many other disciplines could be well situated to help address these issues.

Our conference **goals** are:

- 1) To critically examine all types of relations and their approaches to Canada from a variety of perspectives.
- 2) To create a welcoming and collaborative space (even if it has to be virtually!) to share, network, and aid each other in our emerging, ongoing, and concluding research projects concerning Canada!
- 3) In the German-speaking world, both public discourse and this academic field equate Canada too often with its majority, white Settler population, culture, and politics. Therefore, our conference aims to dislocate this bias by exploring alternative tropes and new voices, particularly beyond literature and cultural studies, and thereby rethink the scope of Kanada-Studien (German Canadian Studies).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the conference organisers at [canada.2020@mail.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:canada.2020@mail.uni-freiburg.de).

Your organizing team,

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