

## Call For Papers

### “Alternative Sovereignties: Decolonization Through Indigenous Vision and Struggle”

The University of Oregon, May 8-10, 2014

The concept of “sovereignty” as both an international political norm and expression of cultural distinctiveness and political autonomy is central to American Indian and First Nations discourse in the United States and Canada. Yet this language is often an imperfect reflection of the goals that tribal nations seek to pursue, suggesting rigid political and social boundaries around and within indigenous nations. This stands in stark contrast to political relationships based in tribal epistemologies that acknowledge social flexibility, interdependence, reciprocity and non-coercive, respectful relationships between and within national communities.

This conference will explore both “alternative sovereignties” and “alternatives to sovereignty” that might better meet the political, cultural and social aspirations of American Indian and First Nations communities. We are especially interested in the relationship between vision and struggle. “Vision” theorizes alternative forms of sovereignty that might better reflect the social and political goals of American Indian and First Nations. “Struggle” interrogates the rhetorical, representational and discursive strategies necessary to pursue these visions within adversarial cultural and political environments still defined by colonial power.

Potential questions for investigation might include but are not limited to the following: What might visions of “alternative sovereignties” or “alternative to sovereignty” look like? What values, hopes and aspirations would they express? In what ways do such visions align or exist in tension with contemporary expressions of the nation, sovereignty, self-determination and human rights both in Indian Country and beyond? What forms of contemporary political and social struggle advance tribal visions that might substantively revise or intervene in non-tribal fields of power and knowledge? Finally, what are the theoretical and practical relationships between “vision” and “struggle,” and what role does Indigenous cultural and intellectual production serve in advancing these efforts?

Reflecting the interdisciplinarity of Native Studies, the conference is committed to conversation across historical periods as well as academic and institutional boundaries, including literature, law, philosophy, cultural studies, political science, education, anthropology, history and the arts. We welcome individual and panel proposals from established scholars, graduate students, independent scholars, community members, activists, and artists among others. We are also conceiving of this conference as a venue to gauge interest in the formation of an Association of Pacific Northwest Native Studies.

Please send brief proposals of no more than **300 words** to [alternative.sovereignties@gmail.com](mailto:alternative.sovereignties@gmail.com) by **December 1, 2013**. Also include brief biographical information, including academic and/or tribal affiliation, primary area of research, and relevant experience. Proposals from the broader Pacific Northwest and those dealing with issues relevant to Northwest indigenous communities are especially welcomed. For questions, please contact the conference organizers at the address above.