Call for Papers

The 55th International Conference organized by

The American Studies Association of Korea (ASAK)

**“Identity Politics and Political Institutions”**

**Venue: Zoom**

**Date: October 29-30, 2021**

The American Studies Association of Korea (ASAK) is pleased to announce an international conference on the theme, “Identity Politics and Political Institutions” to be held in Seoul, South Korea, from October 29 to 30, 2021.

These are turbulent times in U.S. politics. The 2016 presidential election sparked heated confrontations that quickly spilled over from party politics into renewed debates on and divisions of every aspect of American society and its institutional underpinnings. Not only branches of federal and state government but also courts, police forces, schools, corporations, media outlets, and medical facilities have become battlegrounds of virulent polemics. Some see in these political developments an alarming fragmentation of society, worrying that the recent rise of identity politics has eroded shared political values and public confidence in American institutions. Others see the current crisis as symptomatic, instead, of a nation whose core institutions have time and again succumbed to an identity politics grounded in racial and gendered privilege, and warn that this deeply entrenched political praxis cannot be dismantled unless Americans commit to fundamental structural realignments comparable to the post-Civil War reconstruction, the New Deal, and the civil rights revolution. By the same token, some hope that the 2020 elections signal a return to normalcy in U.S. politics, while others hope to further new political trends that emerged during this moment of crisis—whether it be right-wing populism, democratic socialism, “woke” culture, or the Black Lives Matter movement. These starkly divergent assessments and outlooks prompt us to reconsider the nature of U.S. politics from every possible angle—whether cultural, social, institutional, or historical.

For this year’s conference, we are delighted to welcome Robin D. G. Kelley, Distinguished Professor of History and African American Studies and Gary B. Nash Endowed Chair in U.S. History at UCLA, as our keynote speaker. Professor Kelley has received numerous awards and recognitions for his pioneering work on social movements, race relations, black culture, and radical thought in modern America. His prolific output includes acclaimed books such as *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (1990), *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (1994)*, Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (1997)*, Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2002)*, Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original* (2009)*,* and *Africa Speaks, America Answers: Modern Jazz in Revolutionary Times* (2012). His forthcoming book *Black Bodies Swinging: An American Postmortem* situates the recent uprisings against endemic racism in the U.S. within a long history of racial capitalism, state-sanctioned racialized violence, and grassroots resistance.

The 2021 ASAK conference calls for thought-provoking analyses of the divergent assessments and expectations that stem from continuing debates on identities and institutions in American politics. Scholars across multiple disciplines are encouraged to examine the current crisis in U.S politics and to consider its potential to produce new political movements and communities, and to reevaluate the relevance of ongoing struggles surrounding identities and institutions in American society.

Interdisciplinary perspectives are encouraged and new research methodologies are welcome.

Proposals may be submitted for either individual papers or sessions.

Individual paper proposals should include an abstract of no more than 250 words and a one-page abbreviated CV, along with a short bio.

Session proposals should include a one-page proposal with a title and topics for a session of three to four presentation papers, along with individual abstracts, one-page abbreviated CVs, and short bios.

Delivered in either Korean or English, each presentation will be no longer than 20 minutes, followed by discussions and Q&A sessions. Graduate students are also welcome to submit proposals and to participate in the conference.

All proposals should be sent to the Organizing Committee at [asakconference@gmail.com](mailto:asakconference@gmail.com) by April 30, 2021, Seoul standard time. Applicants will be notified of acceptance of their proposals by May 31, 2021.

We hope that the global pandemic will have subsided by the time of the conference, but in case international travel is still untenable at the time, we will ask international participants to join online. Please be advised, however, that once your proposal has been accepted, the expectation is that you will be physically present unless there are COVID-related travel restrictions.

For further inquiries, please contact the Organizing Committee.

Important Dates:

Deadline for submitting proposals: April 30, 2021

Notification of acceptance: May 31, 2021

Submission of papers for the conference proceedings: August 31, 2021

No Registration Fee