

**AAG Newsletter**  
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## Geography Interacting with the Humanities

The AAG will be continuing a decade long arc of sustained activity around the theme of "Geography and the Humanities" with a special set of sessions on these interactions during its upcoming Annual Meeting in Seattle. We invite all interested geographers and humanities scholars to attend and participate in these sessions, to be held on April 12-16, 2011.

As noted previously in this column,<sup>1</sup> there has been a remarkable resurgence of intellectual interplay between geography and the humanities in both academic and public circles. Metaphors and concepts of geography now permeate literature, philosophy, the arts, and other humanities. Terminology and concepts such as *space*, *place*, *landscape*, *mapping*, and *geography* are increasingly pervasive as conceptual frameworks and core metaphors in recent publications in the humanities.

The diffusion of ideas between geography and the humanities is significant for the insights and connections it has spawned. Scholars and writers outside of the field of geography have developed new understandings from interrogating a sense of place, or by examining the changing landscapes of globalization and complex new international realities in traditionally geographic terms. Old and new geographic techniques and ideas applied to humanities studies have opened new lines of intellectual inquiry and have changed research methodologies in numerous fields. And, of course, the mutually beneficial interactions between the discipline of geography and such humanities fields as the philosophy of science, cultural and ethnic studies, and various literatures in post-modernist thought have also had far-reaching implications for geographic research and education.

For many years, the AAG has focused on developing ideas, methods and partnerships through which we might further explore, showcase, and foster the emerg-

ing interactions between geography and the humanities. These efforts resulted in a seminal Symposium on Geography and the Humanities, sponsored jointly by the AAG, the American Council of Learned

Societies (ACLS) and the University of Virginia, in 2007. This symposium explored how geography informs the humanities and vice versa, took stock of the new and evolving connections between geography and the humanities, and identified promising new research pathways along which such interaction can proliferate and be strengthened in the future.

These Geography and Humanities interactions are now the subject of two new books, emanating in part from the AAG Symposium, and supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. The first of these complementary explorations, *Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities*, focuses a lens on the deep traditions of the humanities within the discipline of geography, with contributions from many of the most prominent authors in the humanities traditions of geography. The second book, *Geohumanities: Art, History, Text at the Edge of Place*, reaches outward to explore the new, rapidly evolving experimental and experiential engagements by humanities disciplines themselves as they seek to understand and incorporate geographic methods and concepts of space and place into their own work. Both of these new books, forthcoming from Routledge in Spring 2011, will be the subject of featured discussions by attendees of the AAG Annual Meeting's special "Geography and the Humanities Sessions" in Seattle, together with the books' editors and authors.

Another highlight of the Geography and the Humanities track at the Seattle meeting for me will be a keynote presentation by



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the exquisite writer and long-time friend of geography, Barry Lopez. I am delighted to note as well that Barry has been selected as the AAG's 2011 Honorary Geographer, a fitting award in light of this year's special focus on Geography and the Humanities. Barry Lopez's keynote talk will be presented on Friday, April 15, 2011.

The AAG welcomes and encourages broad participation by geographers and other scholars in the special Geography and the Humanities Sessions in Seattle. Please see the Call for Papers at right if you are interested in presenting a paper, poster or panel session related to these topics. I look forward to seeing you in Seattle, a beautiful

and most apt setting for these sessions on Geography and the Humanities. ■

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<sup>1</sup>Richardson, Douglas. 2006. "Geography and the Humanities," *AAG Newsletter*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 2,4.

# Geography and the Humanities Special Sessions at the 2011 Annual Meeting

The Association of American Geographers is sponsoring a special set of sessions on new interdisciplinary research and practice taking place at the intersections of geography and the humanities at its upcoming Annual Meeting in Seattle, to be held April 12-16, 2011. This special sequence will feature a presentation on the evening of Friday, April 15 by internationally-renowned author Barry Lopez, winner of the National Book Award for *Arctic Dreams*. His most

recent book is *Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape*. That evening, Lopez will be recognized as the AAG's 2011 Honorary Geographer.

The AAG welcomes abstracts engaging topics and methods at the crossroads of geography and the humanities, broadly conceived to include the arts. Sessions currently under development involve literature, history, philosophy, popular culture, performance art, and photography and their relation to place, space,

landscape, cartography, or other aspects of geography.

Those interested in participating or proposing sessions should submit abstracts of approximately 250 words by November 10, 2010 at [www.aag.org/annualmeeting](http://www.aag.org/annualmeeting), and should also send the abstract to [jketchum@aag.org](mailto:jketchum@aag.org) with "Humanities Sessions" as the subject line.

For additional information please contact AAG Executive Director, Doug Richardson, at [drichardson@aag.org](mailto:drichardson@aag.org).