Università Ca'Foscari Venezia
Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati

AISNA
ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA STUDI NORD AMERICANI



Call for Panels
29th AISNA Biennial Conference

UNFINISHED RECONSTRUCTIONS

Rethinking Democracy and Culture in the United States

September 1-3, 2027
San Giobbe Campus, Fondamenta S. Giobbe 873, Venice - Italy

The historical period of Reconstruction (1865–1877)—frequently described as the nation's "Second Founding"—placed the United States on the threshold of an expanded democratic order. Yet its abrupt end left many promises unfulfilled. As the 150th anniversary of its conclusion approaches, Reconstruction remains far from a closed chapter: it continues to shape political institutions, cultural imaginaries, and structures of knowledge.

While constitutional amendments abolished slavery and laid the foundations for a multiracial democracy, rights proved not to be self-executing. The contested settlement of 1877 organized racial violence and judicial retrenchment; Jim Crow exposed the fragility of democratic transformation without durable social structures. Reconstruction thus names both a historical period and a condition of incompletion: the persistent vulnerability of projects requiring continuous maintenance, negotiation, and renewal.

From this perspective, the concept exceeds its original historical object. The tensions between rupture and continuity, destruction and repair recur throughout American history—from the New Deal and Civil Rights movements to contemporary attempts at democratic renewal. Reconstruction functions as an intellectual disposition attentive to building forms capable of sustaining collective life across the humanities and social sciences—hence the plural, reconstructions.

Critical traditions—feminism, Marxism, queer and postcolonial theory, critical race studies, and postcritical methodologies—have exposed the contingency of inherited categories and generated alternative practices of reading and relation. The term *reconstructions* names a mode of interpreting phenomena and the challenge of imagining forms of life, art, and thought after historical rupture; *reconstructions* represent the continuous labor through which forms are recomposed, institutions reimagined, and shared worlds made inhabitable.

This paradigm reshapes the intersections of literature, history, and society, placing form at the center of inquiry. Aesthetic forms, historical experience, and political possibilities reciprocally constitute one another, inviting us to approach form as an open process through which history remains available to interpretation and imagination.

Marking this 150th anniversary, the 29th AISNA conference takes unfinished reconstructions as a double concept: recalling broken promises and structural inequalities and framing incompletion as the very condition for democratic renewal, artistic invention, and critical thought.
We invite interdisciplinary panel proposals exploring reconstructions in their historical, political, theoretical, aesthetic, pedagogical, and methodological dimensions.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Reconstruction and the unfinished promises of democracy: citizenship, rights, and constitutionalism
- Race, white supremacy, and the afterlives of Reconstruction
- Rethinking gender, sexuality, embodiment, and disability
- Indigenous sovereignty, settler colonialism, and contested projects of reconstruction
- Rethinking migration, borders, displacement, and diaspora
- Rethinking labor, political economy, and material infrastructures
- Empire, war, and reconstruction beyond the United States
- Reconstruction, memory, and public history
- Rethinking music, performance, visual culture, and popular culture
- Form, fragments, and aesthetic reconstruction
- Literature, reparative and reconstructive imaginative practices
- Reconstruction, archives, and cultural memory
- Reconstruction after deconstruction: postcritical methodologies and reconstructive criticism
- Transatlantic, hemispheric, and planetary reconstructions
- Reconstruction, ecology, and environmental futures
- Reconstruction, media, and digital cultures
- Reconstructive pedagogies
- Rethinking intergenerational justice, utopia, and civic imagination

IMPORTANT INFORMATION, TIMELINE AND DATES

The conference will take place entirely in person.
The official language of the conference and of all presentations is English.
Panel coordinators and presenters are not required to be AISNA members.
Separate registration fees will apply to AISNA members and non-members.

Panel proposal deadline
November 22, 2026

Notification of panel acceptance/rejection:
December 21, 2026

Conference website launch and publication of the call for papers
January 11, 2027

Individual paper proposal deadline
March 14, 2027

Panel coordinators' notification of paper acceptance/rejection
April 4, 2027

Panel coordinators' submission of final composition of panels to the committee
April 4, 2027

Notification of the provisional list of panels and participants
May 3, 2027

Conference registration deadline:
June 30, 2027
All accepted speakers must register by this date in order to be included in the final conference program.

Publication of the final conference program:
July 15, 2027

PANEL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Panel proposals must be written in English and submitted by email to the organizers at **aisnavenice2027@unive.it**

Each proposal must include:

- the proposed panel title;
- a description of the panel topic of no more than 250 words;
- the names, professional affiliations, and contact details of no more than two panel coordinators.

Panel proposals should define a topic around which an open Call for Papers can be developed. The coordinators of selected panels will subsequently solicit and evaluate individual paper proposals.

Each person may coordinate only one panel.

The scientific and organizing committee will be assisted in the selection process by the AISNA Board. Panels where at least one coordinator is a member of AISNA or EAAS (membership to be declared alongside the proposal) will be given priority.

PANEL FORMAT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Panels will normally comprise four papers and last 90 minutes. A fifth paper may be included only if the scientific and organizing committee approves an adjusted presentation format that preserves adequate time for discussion.

Coordinators may request a double session that will be granted where scheduling and room availability permit.

Panels that do not receive at least four suitable proposals may be canceled, combined with another panel, or reformulated in consultation with the scientific and organizing committee.

A general Call for Papers will be published on the conference website and circulated through the AISNA and EAAS listservs, as well as through major international scholarly outlets.

One place on the panel may be reserved for a coordinator. All remaining places must be filled through the open Call for Papers.

Paper proposals must be sent to the relevant panel coordinator(s).

Scientific & organizing committee: Pia Masiero, Mena Mitrano, Simone Francescato, Elisa Bordin, Ashley Merrill Riggs, Duccio Basosi, Vanni Pettinà