

**Twelfth Biennial Conference of the
Swedish Association for American Studies (SAAS),
Södertörn University – Stockholm, October 3-4, 2024
*Call for Contributions***

Dramatic times in North America. A month before one of the strangest and most fateful presidential elections in the history of the USA, there will be an opportunity to look across the Atlantic from the perspectives of Swedish academics with special insights and interests in aspects of the cultural, social, and political world that will be so much in focus this fall. In a public part of the event, Harvard historian James T. Kloppenberg will hold the keynote lecture, followed by a panel discussion, putting the current situation in a wider perspective. (See next page!)

The Swedish Association for American Studies will hold its 12th conference at Södertörn University, Stockholm/Flemingsberg, a full day October 3 and a half day (morning to early afternoon) October 4. SAAS is an academic network that encourages scholarship in the multi-disciplinary field of American Studies. SAAS seeks to develop a critical understanding of the role, position and meaning of the United States and North America. In Sweden, research about the US/North America is conducted in many different disciplines. The biennial SAAS conference thus functions as an important forum for interdisciplinary exchange and provides American Studies scholars with an opportunity to meet and network.

We invite scholars to submit proposals for presentations of ongoing or planned research projects, including PhD projects, and/or topics for informal roundtable discussions. Presentations/roundtables concerning *teaching* within the field of American Studies are also very welcome.

We welcome submissions from junior and senior scholars on any topic related to the study and teaching of the United States and North America, from historical as well as contemporary perspectives. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to: anthropology, art, cultural studies; film and media studies; gender studies; literature; musicology; popular culture; political science; religion; US or North American history; visual culture.

- ❖ To submit a proposal for a **presentation of an ongoing or planned research project** (including PhD projects), **or of an issue in teaching**, please provide a title and an abstract (150-200 words) that presents the project as well as what aspects the presentation will focus on. We encourage presenters to use a format conducive to discussion of challenges and interesting points of exploration, rather than traditional papers. Length of presentations will be ca 10 minutes.
- ❖ To submit a proposal for a **topic for a roundtable discussion** that you would be interested in leading and contributing to, please provide us with a tentative heading, and a short description of the topic (150-200 words) that explains the significance of the topic to American studies today and identifies central issues or problems. Proposals of topics can be individual or collaborative. Please also indicate if there is a text that would be useful for participants in the discussion to read before the roundtable. The length of the discussion will be 45-60 minutes.

Send submissions to david.ostlund@sh.se. Please include name, email address, and brief bio of the presenter(s).

Extended deadline for proposals: May 31, 2024. Notification of acceptance will be sent by the end of June.

For more information, please contact David Östlund (david.ostlund@sh.se) or check our website: www.saasinfo.se.

“Democracy begins in bloodshed [...]. To survive, however, let alone thrive, it requires a culture of mutual respect. Popular government often emerges as a result of conflicts that turn violent, but it cannot be established or sustained unless people are willing to let their worst enemies exercise power if they win an election. That willingness requires the predisposition that I have characterized as the ethic of reciprocity. In its absence, democracy is impossible; even in its presence, democracy is fragile. Although issues in politics often seem too important to submit to vote or a jury of randomly selected citizens, sustaining democracy depends on individuals’ willingness to do just that. Either rejecting the outcome of established procedures such as elections or trials or responding to defeat with violence is fatal to democracy. Conceding legitimacy to opponents requires [...] forbearance and humility, because it signals the realization that one might be wrong and one’s foes might be right. That willingness is uncommon in human history, which explains why democracies have been rare and why they have rarely lasted long.

James T. Kloppenberg, *Toward Democracy*, 2016.



October 3, 15:00, Södertörn University, MB 505
Public keynote lecture:

James T. Kloppenberg

Solidarity Embattled: American Progressives since 1900 in Atlantic Perspective

James T. Kloppenberg is the Charles Warren Professor of American History at Harvard University – a world renowned intellectual historian and scholar of democratic thought. Among his books may be mentioned *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (1986), *The Virtues of Liberalism* (1998), *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition* (2010), and the magnum opus, *Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought* (2016).

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October 3, 17:00, Södertörn University, MB 505
Public panel discussion:

Sound and Fury: The U.S. Election and Media Images in Long-term View

Participants:

James T. Kloppenberg, **Cecilia Khavar** (radio reporter, cofounder of “USA-podden”, author of *Stormningen: våldet, lögnerna och åren som förändrade USA*, forthcoming in the summer of 2024), **Göran Rosenberg** (journalist and author, TV-correspondent during the Reagan-Bush eras, whose book *Friare kan ingen vara: Den amerikanska idén från revolution till Reagan*, from 1991, will soon be published in yet another expanded version), **Dag Blanck** (historian and director, the Swedish Institute for North America Studies, SINAS, Uppsala University, and a frequent commentator in Swedish media coverage of the U.S.).

Moderator: **Christin Mays**, historian and sociologist of education, SINAS.

