

TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies

CALL FOR PAPERS

Out of the Ruins: The University to Come

Guest Editors

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This special issue of *TOPIA* seeks contributions (articles, offerings, review essays and book reviews) that reflect on the contemporary university and its discontents. Fifteen years after the publication of Bill Readings' seminal book *The University in Ruins* and in the wake of the UK government's new austerity budget, Nick Couldry and Angela McRobbie proclaim the death of the English university. In Italy students demonstrating against the Bologna Process protect themselves from police with giant books. On the heels of severe budget cuts and increasing privatization in the California state system, protesting students occupy university buildings, while in British Columbia and Quebec hundreds of students gather for rallies against spiraling student debt and increasing corporate influence on campus. Everywhere university systems are being eviscerated by neoliberal logics asserting themselves even in the face of economic recession. After decades of chronic under-funding and restructuring, public universities have ceded the university's public role in a democracy and embraced "academic capitalism" as a "moral" obligation. Acting as venture capitalists, they pressure academics to transfer and mobilize knowledge and encourage research partnerships with private interests; acting as real estate developers, they take over neighbourhoods with callous disregard for established communities; acting as military contractors, they produce telecommunications software and light armoured vehicles for foreign governments; acting as brand managers, they open branch plant campuses around the world and compete for foreign students who can be charged exorbitant fees for access to a "first world" education. With tuition fees and student debt on the rise, academic labour is tiered, cheapened and divided against itself; two-thirds of classes in U.S. colleges and universities are taught by faculty employed on insecure, non tenure-track contracts. The casualization of academic labour and a plea for sustainable academic livelihoods were at the core of the longest strike in English Canadian university history. As collegiality, academic freedom, and self-governance recede from view, the university remains a terrain of adaptation and struggle.

We will need all the conceptual tools that cultural studies can muster to analyze the changing university as the foundation for our academic callings and scholarly practices. In addition to external influences such as globalization, technoscience, corporatization, mediatization, and higher education policy, internal managerial initiatives, bureaucratization, deprofessionalization, structural complicity between administration and faculty, and intellectual subjectivities must also be analyzed. All of us, no matter what our political position, must take the time to reflect on the broad questions raised by these changes. Is the site of the university worth struggling over or re-imagining? Can the neoliberal university be

set against itself? Is it time for reform or exodus? What other practices of knowledge production, interpretations, modes of organization, and assemblages are possible? This special issue is designed to reflect upon, analyze and strategize about the past, present and future of the university.

In addition to these matters of concern, possible topics to further dialogue and enable further study include but are not limited to:

- analyzing and assessing the crisis of the public university
- implementing globalizations: theory, rhetoric and historical experience
- continuity and transformation in national academic cultures
- the position and role of the arts, humanities and social sciences
- university leaders and university making
- managerial theory/practice, academic ethics, and the symbolism of university finance
- university-private sector intermediaries and initiatives; “innovation” and “creativity” as alibis for academic capitalism; knowledge “transfer” and “mobilization”
- marketing, media relations and the promotional condition of the university
- space, time, speed and rhythm in the network university
- the professor-entrepreneur, research practice, and the imperative to produce
- academic labour, tenure, stratification and precarity
- faculty governance, unions and institutional democracy
- the indebted, student-worker and the decline of academic study
- scholarly disciplines and territories, infrastructure, information practices, communication and publishing
- the scholarly community of money: grant agencies, writing, committees and adjudication
- media/cultural production and critical/radical pedagogy
- the development of knowledge cultures and the expansion of the commons
- the university in relation to nearby communities and wider social movements
- resistance, common and counter-knowledge, alternative educational formations
- remaking the public university in Canada and in other national contexts

Submissions

To view the author guidelines, see

<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/topia/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

To submit papers (with titles, abstracts and keywords) and supplementary media files online, you need to register and login to the *TOPIA* website at

<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/topia/user/register>.

The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2012. Peer review and notification of acceptance will be completed by May 15, 2012. Final manuscripts accepted for publication will be due July 5, 2012. Comments and queries can be sent to Bob Hanke bhanke@yorku.ca or Alison Hearn ahearn2@uwo.ca.

For more information about *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, visit

<http://www.yorku.ca/topia/>.