

Summer School: Border Regimes (Kandersteg, 4–9 Sep 16)

Kandersteg (CH), Seminarhotel Alpha Soleil, Sep 4–09, 2016

Deadline: May 20, 2016

Melanie Altanian

Border Regimes: Confrontations, Configurations, Transpositions

The notion of the border as a clear cut geopolitical division of national territories has been challenged for quite some time in multiple disciplines, including history, art history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, and cultural theory engaged in the field of postcolonial studies. Even though state borders prove effective in terms of inclusion and exclusion, they can never be reduced to one single meaning.

The transposition of persons, commodities, materialities, and imaginaries involved in border regimes both reflects and affects the transpositioning nature of borders. Such a dynamic and fluid notion of the border shifts our focus beyond geopolitical landscapes with its fences of death, barbed wire, walls, mountains or swamps, towards a more complex notion of border regimes. This implies all sorts of triages of socio-cultural inclusion and exclusion (such as those found within financial markets, art markets, schools, and health check centers), but also the connecting, collaborative, and creative aspects of “contact zones” (Pratt), “-scapes” (Appadurai), “trading zones” (Galison) or interstitial “third spaces” (Bhabha, Soja). Although never free from confrontations, the border can be seen as “not that at which something stops but [...] from which something begins its presencing” (Heidegger). Moreover, it generally complicates dichotomies between natural/real/factual and conceptual/imaginary/fictional borders, those inside our heads and those outside. Borders are always to be understood as highly complex configurations of difference and identity, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, diachrony and synchrony, imagination and its real effects. The analysis of border regimes, therefore, requires a plurality of methodological approaches as well as an inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue.

The Summer School invites doctoral and postdoctoral scholars from all disciplines of the Humanities and the Social Sciences to contribute to a critical interdisciplinary discussion on borders and analogous concepts. It addresses the following questions:

- What are the idiosyncrasies, constitutive elements and specific discursive, socio-cultural or political conditions of borderlands, borderscapes, contact zones, liminal spaces, margins etc.? Which institutions, agents or actants are involved?
- What are the impacts of knowledge transfer, the circulation and flows of persons, objects, images, and information on the transpositioning of borders, whether physical or imaginary?

- In which ways can 'border thinking' or 'border knowledge' (Mignolo) inform us about our own disciplinary positions when analysing border regimes? What are the consequences of the claim that we tend to invoke/produce the borders we describe (Mezzadra/Neilson)?

Keynote speakers and possible foci of their lecture:

Mary C. Fuller

(Head of the Literature Section, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT)

Early modern European and North American literature and culture, history of early modern voyages, exploration and colonization, cultural encounters, cartographies

Monica Juneja

(HCTS Professor "Global Art History", Universität Heidelberg)

Global art history, transcultural visibility, cultural translation, transcending boundaries

Sandro Mezzadra

(Associate Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences, Università di Bologna)

Political philosophy, colonial and postcolonial studies, frontiers of citizenship, border struggles, inclusion and exclusion, global governance, transit labour

Bernhard Siegert

(Gerd-Bucerius-Professor für Geschichte und Theorie der Kulturtechniken, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)

Media philosophy, comparative visual and cultural theory, medial and cultural triages (grids, filters, doors, passages)

Please provide us with the following application material:

- a letter of motivation, indicating how you expect to benefit from participating in this Summer School and how you can contribute, in turn, to the discussions (mentioning your specific interest in the topic)
- a CV of max. two pages
- an abstract (500 words) of your current research project
- one referee we might contact

Please apply electronically (PDF) to Melanie Altanian who is happy to answer questions regarding the application: melanie.altanian@wbkolleg.unibe.ch. For further questions please contact michael.toggweiler@wbkolleg.unibe.ch.

The full CfP (PDF) can also be found on our website: http://www.wbkolleg.unibe.ch/e277930/e379838/e425334/CfA_GSH_SummerSchool_2016_BorderRegimes_ger.pdf

Reference:

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