

Skepsi's 9th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference – Call for Papers

27th May 2016 -University of Kent, Canterbury

[School of European Culture and Languages](#)

Keynote Speaker: Professor [Glenn Bowman](#) (Kent)

A few decades ago Thor Heyerdahl, widely known for his Kon-Tiki expedition, remarked “Borders? I have never seen one, but I have heard that they exist in the mind of some people”. Arguably, Heyerdahl might be mistaken for questioning the existence of borders, yet his statement nonetheless draws attention to some highly interesting and controversial questions: What exactly are borders and on what necessary, legal and ethical grounds do we build them – and where? These questions seem particularly relevant today, as the European Union is facing the so-called migrant “crisis”, and with Daesh’s auto-proclamation of an Islamic State.

It is, thus, not surprising that academic interest in borders is on the increase. Over the last decades the topic has been developing into a new interdisciplinary field of research drawing together scholars from the social sciences and humanities. Border studies notably looks at the historical, anthropological, sociological and geopolitical aspects of borders “in the quest to understand the changing nature of territory, power, governance, and identity within both national and more global frames of reference.” (Wilson & Donnan: 20-21).

This conference, chaired by postgraduates in the School of European Culture and Languages, wishes to explore these plural facets of borders – particularly the structures, the roles and the meaning of borders in contemporary society and culture. It also wishes to explore the function and modes of border (and boundary) representations in texts and in the visual and plastic arts, and warmly invites contributions.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- **European Borders and the Refugee Crisis**
- **Shifting Borders, Territory and Partition**
- **The Frontier**
- **Security and Conflict**
- **Globalisation vs. National State**
- **Colonialism and New Imperialism**
- **Mobility, Migration and Multicultural Societies**
- **Borders and (national/sexual/racial) Identity**
- **Performativity**
- **Crossing Borders**
- **The Impact of Borders on Literature and their Literary Representation**
- **The Representation of Borders in the Arts**
- **Borders and Language(s)**
- **Physical Boundaries and the Self**
- **Psychological Aspects of Borders and Boundaries**

Papers should last for 20 minutes and will be followed by a 10 minute discussion. Abstracts of approx. 300 words should be sent as word documents to the conference organising

committee at: skepsi@kent.ac.uk by 31st March 2016. The e-mail should also include the name of the author, institutional affiliation and brief autobiographical details. Please, also indicate any audiovisual requirements that you may have.

The conference is organised by *Skepsi*, a peer reviewed postgraduate journal based in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent and kindly supported by the [Centre for Modern European Literature](#) and the [Modern Languages](#) and [Comparative Literature](#) departments, University of Kent.

(<https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/skepsi/>).