

# RELATIONAL BORDERS AND (CROSS-) BORDER RELATIONS

UNIGR-CBS “BORDER SÉMINAIRE” 2026  
“BORDER CHRONOTOPES” WORKSHOP  
UDS AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATE FORUM 2026

25-26 JUNE 2026, SAARLAND UNIVERSITY

Borders are often imagined as lines of separation—demarcating territories, cultures, languages, identities, and political orders. Yet across contemporary Border Studies, borders are increasingly understood as relational and processual formations: historically situated, materially entangled, and continuously reconfigured through relations of power, mobility, temporality, and exchange that extend beyond the human alone. Approached in this way, borders do not simply divide; they emerge through ongoing interactions among people, infrastructures, environments, and cultural practices. This UniGR-CBS Border Séminaire invites contributions that explore relational borders and (cross-) border relations as perspectives for rethinking borders beyond static, territorial, or purely institutional frameworks.

Anchored in Cultural Border Studies and informed by relational thinking in postcolonial, transnational, and comparative scholarship, this UniGR-CBS Border Séminaire approaches borders as dynamic constellations shaped by interaction, encounter, negotiation, and translation. Relations are understood here in a broad sense—spatial and temporal, cultural and linguistic, political and affective, material and symbolic. Borders emerge through practices of bordering and de-bordering, through narratives and imaginaries, and through lived experiences shaped by migration, mobilities, colonial legacies, conflict, cooperation, and uneven power relations.

This UniGR-CBS Border Séminaire encourages dialogue across different geopolitical and epistemic contexts, including European, transatlantic, and American perspectives, as well as comparative and connective approaches that think borders across regions and scales. How do borders organize relations between people, communities, and spaces? How do cross-border relations generate new

forms of belonging, exclusion, solidarity, or opacity? And how can relational approaches help bridge theoretical, empirical, and methodological work on borders?

We welcome contributions from Border Studies, the Humanities, American Studies, Cultural Studies, Social Sciences, Geography, Linguistics, Literary and Media Studies, History, Political Theory, and the Arts, etc., as well as interdisciplinary, comparative, and practice-based research. Contributions from early-career researchers are explicitly encouraged.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Relational theories of borders and bordering
- Cross-border relations and transnational entanglements
- Temporalities, spatialities, and chronotopes of borders
- Language, translation, and multilingual border practices
- Postcolonial and decolonial perspectives on borders
- Displacement, migration, diaspora, and embodied border experiences
- Aesthetic, narrative, and artistic engagements with borders

By centering relations in a broader sens, the conference aims to foster interdisciplinary exchange and to rethink borders as relational formations in motion, rather than fixed or self-contained entities.

Abstracts (approx. 250 words) for presentations, panels, round-tables or other formats may be submitted in English, German, or French and should be sent to [borderstudies@uni-saarland.de](mailto:borderstudies@uni-saarland.de) by 22 May.

This UniGR-CBS Border Séminaire is conceived as a joint event that brings together different research and exchange formats. It merges

- the UniGR-CBS Border Séminaire, a two-day research workshop devoted to a specific border-related theme (see: <https://cbs.uni-gr.eu/en/activities/mobility/unigr-cbs-border-studies-seminars>),
- a workshop within the East Partnership project “Border Chronotopes,” and
- the Uds American Studies Graduate Forum, an open-topic platform for junior researchers, graduate students, and PhD candidates in American Studies (see previous editions: <https://www.amerikanistik.uni-saarland.de/home/uds-american-studies-graduate-forum>), co-organized with the German-American Institute (dai).