

# Call for Papers: IARPT Annual Conference

## June 12-15, 2023 · Katholische Akademie Berlin

### Borders and Boundaries

The Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought (IARPT) is pleased to announce its 2023 international meeting, which will be held at the Katholische Akademie in Berlin on June 12-15 2023. The theme of the meeting is *borders and boundaries*. Keynote and plenary speakers include Sigurd Bergmann, Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, Terrence Deacon, John Thatamanil, Robert Yelle, Marcia Pally, Matthew Bagger, and Randall Auxier.

As sites of power manifested, borders and boundaries characterize some of the prevailing developments of our time, encompassing families separated, hope and hopelessness, and the limits of civil and political order. Christian Parenti has written that “the border becomes a text from which to read the future—or a version of it” (2011). This conference theme finds inspiration in Parenti’s metaphor, both by recognizing a radical openness to the present situation and insisting on the capacity of theology, philosophy, ethics, and other associated disciplines to rewrite better outcomes and mitigate those that are catastrophic.

This conference program invites an interdisciplinary and integrative look at these dynamics. In the fluidity of the contemporary global order, attending to relationships among forms of bordering offers lessons on how to reimagine borders and boundaries more justly and with greater sensitivity to both ecological systems and human communities, religious or otherwise. Particularly welcome are proposals for papers that explore *political, religious, ecological, or analytical* borders, which can be defined as follows and linked to some (non-exhaustive) potential paper topics:

*Religious borders/boundaries* can be defined as points at which the contrasts between religious traditions become explicit and self-conscious to the members of the cultures in question or to third parties, giving rise to narratives that reinforce said contrasts. Possible paper topics include: approaches to interreligious dialogue, the theological “spatial turn,” the limits of the secular/post-secular, political theologies regarding land and territory, or peace/violence in interreligious terms.

*Political borders/boundaries* can be defined as demarcations between neighboring sovereign territories, in which sovereignty is typically understood according to the (contested) norms of the Westphalian system, i.e., as mutually recognized, mutually excluded, and uniformly distributed within each territory in question. Possible paper topics include: the proliferation of walls, changing patterns of sovereignty, cartographic practices, and postcolonial dynamics, as well as various theoretical perspectives.

*Ecological borders/boundaries* can be defined as thresholds concerning human interaction with more-than-human biological and climatic systems, challenging as well as reinforcing such terms as “nature” and “culture” and traversing the limits of the human. Possible paper topics include: the Anthropocene, planetary boundaries ecology, biosemiotics, or ecotheologies.

*Analytical borders/boundaries* can be defined either as distinctions between analytical approaches, i.e., academic disciplines, or as distinctions which are themselves of a predominantly analytical character, i.e., logical or metaphysical distinctions. Possible paper topics include: approaches to interdisciplinarity, paradox, continuity/discontinuity, spatial or temporal boundaries considered as such, or theories of entanglement.

By examining and layering these forms of bordering in succession, the program for the conference represents a structure by which the various types of borders can be analyzed and compared. To do so is to invite inquiries into the dynamics of interreligious interaction, territorial sovereignty, and the human relationship with nonhuman nature within planetary systems. Any paper that speaks to some aspect of the above question is welcome, but we particularly welcome papers that engage with one or more of the core traditions of IARPT: pragmatism, process thought, naturalism/empiricism, and liberal theology. Moreover, as always, we will consider proposals that do not address the conference theme but are related to the intellectual traditions that are of special interest to IARPT.

Proposals should contain a descriptive title and a brief (no more than 500 words) but informative and readable description of the paper to be presented. Proposals should also include a brief (150-word) biographical sketch of their authors. Proposals should envision paper readings of approximately twenty minutes followed by moderated questions from the audience. All proposals should be sent in Word/PDF format to the program chairs: Gary Slater ([garyslater@uni-muenster.de](mailto:garyslater@uni-muenster.de)) and Lisa Landoe Hedrick ([landoe@uchicago.edu](mailto:landoe@uchicago.edu)). The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2023. Responses to paper proposals can be expected by March 15, 2023.