

CALL FOR PAPERS

Italian Borderlands Restrictions, Breaches, Encounters

April 23–25, 2020

JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

Queens College, City University of New York

25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor (between 5th and 6th Avenues), Manhattan

Borders can be concrete parameters, and they can also be metaphorical markers. Either way, the border as a political, economic, cultural, and personal site, one to be policed, extended, breached, opened, celebrated, and/or erased, has long been of interest to those concerned with Italy. The areas of scholarly inquiry are as infinite as the varied Italian and Italianate borders themselves.

Irredentism and colonialism were policies the newly created nation-state officially promoted and enacted as a means to augment the scope of its boundaries. Italian immigrants, in turn, extended the boundaries of their respective villages and towns through transnational networks and diasporic realms. In the twenty-first century a global economy, digital communications, and migrants and refugees arriving to Italy, among others matters, have brought renewed attention to the question of political borders.

In addition, larger concepts of boundaries—those not necessarily tied to geo-political questions—have more and more come to inform collective and self-identities in ways that also connect to changing notions of Italy and Italian borders. In the cultural realm, a binary border demarcating inclusion/exclusion is a constantly articulated and negotiated site of discursive and performed authenticity even as it is disrupted or otherwise ruptured, leading to hybridic possibilities and formations. The “real Italian” embodied in such phenomena as a globalized and transcultural cuisine, or new migrations to and from Italy, are examples of enforced and ever-contested identities. If ethnicity can be understood as both identity construction and display, negotiated at points of encounter between various groups, as anthropologist Fredrik Barth proposed, then the boundary itself can also be seen as a dynamic source of cultural expressivity.

This interdisciplinary conference builds on recent books, symposia, and conferences investigating similar themes of Italian borderlands. The 2020 Calandra Institute conference proposes a transnational, mobile, and inclusive approach to Italy and “Italians”—including inhabitants of the nation-state, members of the diaspora, and former colonial subjects—as it positions itself at the border in an attempt to elucidate the consequences and possibilities that border studies suggest and to gain a deeper understanding of class, gender, and race.

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Political borders, e.g., during Fascism, as part of the European Union
- Borders and the global economy
- Migrations to and from Italy

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- Italian colonialism and imperialism in Africa
- Italian citizenship
- The Mediterranean as a border zone
- Italian borders as sites of hybridity
- Nonbinary approaches to border studies
- Rethinking identity
- The gender/sexuality spectrum as manifested in Italy and its diaspora
- Interfaith dialogue as border crossings
- Borders of religious and sacred borderlands
- Multilingual texts, translations, and hybrid genres as border crossings
- Borders and the imaginary

The official language of the conference is English. All presentations are to last no longer than twenty minutes, including audio and visual illustrations. Thursday evening is dedicated to welcoming comments and reception; sessions and panels will take place all day Friday and Saturday.

NOTA BENE: There are no available funds for travel, accommodations, or meals. There is no conference registration fee. The conference does not make arrangements with local hotels, so participants are responsible for booking their own accommodations. There is no conference fee.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: SEPTEMBER 15, 2019.

Abstracts for scholarly papers (up to 500 words, plus a note on technical requirements) and a brief, narrative biography should be emailed as attached documents by **September 15, 2019**, to calandra@qc.edu, where other inquiries may also be addressed. We encourage the submission of organized panels (of no more than three presenters). Submission for a panel must be made by a single individual on behalf of the group and must include all the paper titles, abstract narratives, and individual biographies and emails.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE OUR WEB SITE: CALANDRAINSTITUTE.ORG

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, is a university-wide research institute of The City University of New York, dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in the United States.