

Call for Papers

CITY MARGINS, CITY MEMORIES

Monday 7 – Tuesday 8 April, 2014

**Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies,
University of London School of Advanced Study, Senate House, London**

*An International Interdisciplinary Conference organized by the School of Modern Languages
and the School of Philosophy and Religion, Bangor University, and the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies*

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Professor Bill Marshall (IGRS / University of Stirling)

Professor Hugh Campbell (University College Dublin)

There is little doubt that cities are growing, often merging with each other, as they spread across the face of the planet, seeking to contain the needs of our increasing populations. The number of city dwellers has increased from just 3% of the global population in 1800, to 50% in 2008, rising to a prediction of 75% in 2050. Just last year, in 2012, 26 urban areas qualified as ‘megacities’ with populations of over 10 million. Such growth brings an inevitable increase in interactivity and communications between cities, accentuating at once a sense of community and isolation within its inhabitants. The intense urbanization of recent times has also brought into focus the need to assimilate disparate memories of the past into a landscape of the future. Despite the predominance of cities and the fact that they shape who we are and how we relate within the world, attempts to define and encapsulate their very nature remain elusive. *City Margins, City Memories* thus proposes to explore the multiplicity of meanings of the city, taking ‘margins’ and ‘memory’ as two important and, often, intersecting phenomena to orient this investigation of urban spatialities.

The organizers encourage submissions on all aspects of the city that involve the ideas of ‘margins’ and/or ‘memory’, and would particularly welcome interdisciplinary contributions. ‘Margins’ is to be understood broadly as encompassing any topic that addresses issues of boundaries (as an inhibiting force) or borders (as areas of intersection), while standing both for isolation and alterity, as well as for connectedness, communication and creativity. ‘Memory’ is similarly to be interpreted broadly, referring to the recall of ideas and cultures, to remembrance and its links with the imagination. The following questions suggest a number of themes to be explored, but wider interpretations of the conference theme are encouraged.

Where do cities begin and end? Is there a city ‘centre’? Where are city margins? To what extent can the margin be considered an unstable/mobile condition? Are margins boundaries or borders? What is the role of architecture in creating (or destroying) sites of community? Does the city have an ‘everyday life’? Where and what is ‘public space’? What does it mean for the margins to ‘belong’ in the city? To what extent is ‘home’ an imagined condition? How do alternative perspectives on the city alter urban understanding/experience? Do ‘marginal’ memories destabilize the histories of dominant groups at local, national and/or international levels? Is there such a thing as an urban body? What is the relationship between body and building? What is the relationship of the sensory to the cultural? Is architecture ever ‘beyond words’? Is architecture historical or mnemonic? What is the relationship of architecture to the imagination? Is the city archetypal?

The deadline for proposals is 7 June 2013

Proposals should take the form of a paper title and a 250-word abstract, accompanied by a brief biographical note, including institutional affiliation where appropriate. To submit a proposal, or for more information, please e-mail cityconference@bangor.ac.uk. It is planned to publish a selection of papers on ‘City Margins, City Memories’ after the conference.