

SoSe 2015

Prof. Dr. Astrid M. FELLNER

***VL "Border Cultures: Theorizing and (Con-)textualizing North American Borders"*
*together with Claire M. Massey, M.A. ***

***Wed, 6-8 p.m.
B3 2, room 003 ***

This lecture attempts to establish the border paradigm as an aesthetic category that has defined North American literature and culture from its inception and that has performatively constituted itself at the moment of intercultural encounter. Border thinking allows students of North American Studies to rethink not only their object of analysis—North America—but also their scholarly interactions with American and Canadian literatures. It opens a revisionist approach to North American literature that entails a remapping of national traditions within a large web of transhemispheric perceptions. Border thinking, we will show, has not only emerged with the growing importance of the U.S.-Mexican border since the 1990s but lies at the heart of American literature and culture. It inhabits border spaces, which are spaces “where cultures conflict, contest, and reconstitute one another” (Smith 1993:169).

Focusing on the multiple interdependencies between the United States and its neighbors in the Americas, we will talk about a great variety of texts which deal with borders, ranging from literary texts that deal with or are set in borderlands spaces (e.g. Chicano/a literature, Native American/First Nations literature) to films (e.g. Western movies), TV series (e.g. /The Bridge/), and other cultural productions and border performances (e.g. the works of Guillermo Peña, Coco Fusco, Monica Palacios, Kent Monkman).