



Zurich Human Geography Colloquium

Program Spring Semester 2025

Prof Dr Charles Heller, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bern, Switzerland

Public lecture: Tue, 25 February, 4 - 5pm, Room Y25-H-79

Border Environmentalities: Investigating The Weaponisation of Geophysical Environments Towards Border Control

Workshop: Wed, 26 February, 9 - 12pm, Room Y25-L-40

Please register for the workshop by February 10 via e-mail to ifigeneia.dimitrakou@geo.uzh.ch

Associate Prof Martina Angela Caretta, Department of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden

Public lecture: Tue, 18 March, 4-5pm, Room Y25-H-38

Fieldwork, job insecurity, publish or perish: how to navigate the neoliberal academia

Workshop: Tue, 18 March, 11:30 – max. 3pm, Room Y25-L-40

Please register for the workshop by February 28 via e-mail to sara.landolt@geo.uzh.ch

Prof Sandro Mezzadra, Department of the Arts, Università di Bologna, Italy

Public lecture: Tue, 25 March, 4-5pm, Room Y25-H-92

A Conjunction of War. Capital and Power in a Multipolar World

Workshop: Wednesday, 26 March, 9 - 12pm, L200, Langstrasse 200, 8005 ZH

Please register for the workshop by March 7 via e-mail to reta.barfuss@geo.uzh.ch



Tue, 25 February 2025 | Prof Dr Charles Heller

Border Environmentalities: Investigating The Weaponisation of Geophysical Environments Towards Border Control

Illegalised migrants from the Global South seeking to reach Europe face different modalities of border violence. Some involve direct violence, such as shooting and beatings by borders guards. Others operates far more indirectly and the harm that is inflicted by Europe's borders is mediated by a range of non-European and non-state actors, as well as particular geophysical environments and infrastructures. Reviewing recent or ongoing critical forensic investigations into forms of violence occurring across maritime, deserts and forest borders, this lecture will reflect on the way particular environments operate within processes of border crossing and bordering. We will also consider how urban environments and infrastructures contribute to operations of bordering within countries, such as Switzerland.

Charles Heller is SNF Professor at the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Bern where he is leading the "Circumference of Violence research" project (2024-28) and Director of Research of the Border Forensics investigation agency. Prior to founding the Border Forensics agency, Heller co-directed the "Forensic Oceanography" project between 2011 and 2021 within the broader Forensic Architecture agency. As a researcher, filmmaker and human rights activist his work has a long-standing focus on the politics of migration, borders, mediation and the law within and at the borders of Europe.



Tue, 18 March 2025 | **Associate Prof Martina Angela Caretta**

Fieldwork, job insecurity, publish or perish: how to navigate the neoliberal academia

In her talk, Dr. Martina Caretta will explore the current working conditions of academics in the grip of the neoliberal academia with a particular focus on the discipline of geography. Departing from feminist theory and social reproduction theory, she will show how the current requirements to succeed in our discipline build on a logic of metrics that do not account for self-care and often lead to the leaky pipe. Based on her lived-experience of PhD student, early-career faculty and now mid-career with a family to manage, she will share some autoethnographical reflections on how to navigate the neoliberal academia through mentoring, support-groups, self-care and time-management strategies.

Martina Angela Caretta is a feminist geographer with expertise in water, climate change adaptation, gender and participatory methodologies. In her feminist academic practice she critically explore the neoliberal turn of the academia and its consequences for early- career female faculty and PhD researchers.



Tue, 25 March 2025 | Prof Sandro Mezzadra

A Conjunction of War. Capital and Power in a Multipolar World

The talk will discuss the current conjuncture of war from the angle of a book I wrote with Brett Neilson, *The Rest and the West. Capital and Power in a Multipolar World* (Verso, 2024). It will address the disruption of the international and world system analyzing the persistent roles played by global processes in steering the working of contemporary capitalism. Connecting to my previous work on borders, mobility, and logistics I will delve into the current imbrication of “geopolitical” conflicts and “geo-economic” shifts to test the notion of multipolarity for understanding the current formation of capital and power. The discussion of the implications of the current predicament for social struggles will frame the whole talk and will end up with some reflections on the need of a new internationalism.

Sandro Mezzadra teaches Political theory at the University of Bologna (Department of Arts). His work centers on borders, migration, global processes, and contemporary capitalism. Among his books in English, *In the Marxian Workshops. Producing Subjects*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. With Brett Neilson he is the author of *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Duke University Press, 2013), *The Politics of Operations. Excavating Contemporary Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 2019), and *The Rest and the West. Capital and Power in a Multipolar World* (Verso, 2024).