CALL FOR PAPERS

Oceans and Deserts 2017: Charting Transdisciplinary Currents in Environment and Culture

The graduate students in the Department of German Studies at the University of Arizona invite proposals for their fourth annual interdisciplinary conference for emerging scholars (graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and junior faculty) on March 31-April 1, 2017 in Tucson, Arizona.

Oceans and deserts are phenomena in the natural world, but they also exist on a metaphorical level in concepts such as “cultural deserts” or “oceans of time.” These ideas draw on the characteristics of these environments, from the desert’s isolation, hostility to life, and strange beauty to the ocean’s currents, vast dimensions, and variety of life forms. Through an interdisciplinary lens, this year’s conference explores specifically oceans and deserts in the German-speaking world, both as spaces in the environment and concepts of thought. We are looking to discuss how a wide range of disciplines engages with oceans and deserts as places and metaphors in German-speaking contexts. We invite papers from all disciplines engaging with German-related notions of oceans and/or deserts. The conference language will be English.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Simon Richter, Professor of German, University of Pennsylvania

Contributions might touch on the following questions and keywords: What types of oceans and deserts exist in the German imagination across time, from art and literature to popular culture? How have actual and symbolic oceans and deserts shaped human and nonhuman lives, and vice versa? Which implications come to light in rhetoric and media discourse involving oceans and deserts? How do ideas of oceans and deserts relate to historical and contemporary political crises and currents? Do oceans and deserts carry a particular religious or ethical weight? In what ways do ocean or desert cultures impact other lifestyles and spaces? How do policies affect oceans and deserts, both in the private and the public spheres?

rising tides
linguistic landscapes and deserts
space(s) and place(s)
cultural nomads
(deserted) islands
remoteness and isolation
cultural deserts and tides
frontiers and ports
transculturalism and transnationalism
waves of ideology, e.g. feminism
political crises and currents
hostile environments
refugee experiences
oasis and refuge
exile
survival
food deserts
floods of products and resources
cash flow, circulation, and offshoring
concepts of waste and trash
colonialism and postcolonialism
history of oceans and deserts
evolution(s) and ecosystems
environmental concerns regarding oceans/deserts
ocean and desert plants and animals
climate change and cultural climates
temperature and affect
tourism
travel and travel literature
dimensions of sand
images of the sea and seaside
pirating (arrrrr!)
torrents and tsunamis
mirages and illusions
aesthetics of oceans and deserts
performing oceans and deserts
ocean and desert fictions
ocean and desert myths, legends, and adventures

Please submit a proposal of no more than 350 words for a 15-20 minute paper presentation (including your name and institutional/departmental affiliation, paper title and A/V needs) together with a short description of your current position and research by December 10, 2016 to OceansAndDesertsUA@gmail.com. Proposals for full panels are also welcome.