**LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES**

**IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT**

*11th Annual London Graduate Conference in the History of Political Thought*

18-19 June 2020

Room G02 Maplethorpe

School of Pharmacy

**29-39 Brunswick Square**

**London WC1N 1AX**

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Katrina Forrester (Harvard)

The notions of ‘limits’ and ‘boundaries’ have held a position in the history of political ideas that is as prominent as it is contentious. For political thinkers from antiquity to the modern era, the definition and characterisation of political practices and institutions naturally entailed the need to circumscribe their agency and outline their boundaries, which consistently appeared malleable and elusive.

Sophocles’ reflections in the Antigone on the limits of law and justice and on the boundaries between human and divine law, humanists’ conceptions of *fortuna* and its restrictions on human virtue, and post-WWII visions of supranational institutions to overcome the faults of nation-states and sovereignty are just some historical examples of how political thinkers have re-shaped and defined ideas of politics, community, civilisation, morality, and freedom by proposing conceptual limits and by outlining ideal and material boundaries.

In an age of global political turmoil, how might an historical approach to conceptions of ‘limits’ and ‘boundaries’ help us re-imagine the intellectual foundations of the contemporary political order? The ongoing mechanisms of globalisation, migration, global governance, and market liberalisation are rapidly challenging the epistemic and political meaning of such concepts, thus calling into question their applicability. For historians of political ideas, these developments invite reflection on the historical role of limits and boundaries in political languages, theory and practices, as well as the ways in which such terms have undergone important semantic shifts.

The 2020 London Graduate Conference in the History of Political Thought will explore the themes of ‘limits’ and ‘boundaries’, and reflect on their various conceptualisations, including physical, institutional, symbolic, cultural, religious, emotional, and aesthetic.

We invite submissions from graduate researchers in intellectual history or related disciplines, drawing from different periods and places. Proposals for panels and papers may wish to consider the following themes:

* Border-drawing and border-crossing;
* The limit of the political;
* Limits of knowledge;
* The public and the private;
* Boundaries of the state and its institutions;
* Inclusion and exclusion;
* The limits of morality;
* Boundaries between morality and politics;
* The ‘limits’ of limit: questioning the applicability of a concept;
* Methodological limits in the history of political thought.

To apply, please email a C.V. along with your proposal to historyofpoliticalthoughtnet@gmail.com. Abstracts should be no more than 500 words for papers of 20 minutes in length. Panel proposals should include the titles of individual papers and not exceed 1500 words in total. The call for papers will close on the **20 March 2020**at 23:59 GMT. As this is a graduate conference, please note that we can only consider proposals from applicants who have not been awarded a doctorate. Successful applicants will be notified no later than 20 April 2020.

**Annual London Graduate Conference Committee**: Jack Edmunds (KCL), Peter Morgan (UCL), David Klemperer (QMUL), Cathleen Mair (QMUL), Giuseppe Grieco (QMUL), Conor Bollins (QMUL), Adela Halo (QMUL), Emily Steinhauer (QMUL), Alessandro de Arcangelis (UCL) Stephanie Conway (RHUL)