Boundaries, Barriers, Lines and Limits

ASMCF-SSFH Study Day
University of Leeds, 16 April 2027

The closer one looks, the more it is evident that lines are omnipresent. They have shaped much of history: lines of separation have been at the crux of war, empire, international relations, trade, migration, and more. They are drawn and redrawn; sometimes they are consigned to history themselves. And as history is written, time itself can draw lines — as can we. As researchers, they separate our disciplines. But lines can represent more than just division; they can come in different forms and serve different functions. Our lives and work are shaped by lines, written and unwritten, visible and invisible: rules, norms, divides, barriers, categories, axes, edges and margins. Can a given boundary be pushed? What is it made of? Where did it come from? Why is it there, and who does it serve? What happens if it is crossed? Some lines seem, or are, insurmountable — what makes a limit? What distinguishes a limit from a barrier? And are all these objects, and the space around them, inherently black and white?

As postgraduate researchers, we look to come together to consider boundaries, barriers, lines and limits — their presence, forms, purposes, impacts, and relevance. We invite submissions for 20-minute papers from postgraduate researchers in all disciplines of the humanities who are working in any area relevant to the activity of either the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France (i.e. any dimension of French Studies post-1789) or the Society for the Study of French History (i.e. French history of any period). The day will also feature a keynote speaker and a development panel, with further details to be announced.

The aim of this annual collaboration between the ASMCF and the SSFH is to foster community and dialogue among postgraduate researchers across all areas of French Studies. Amidst a climate in which PGRs and ECAs face increasing isolation, precarity, and obstacles, our chosen theme is all the more apt: through this event, we seek to break down the lines that separate our disciplines, our departments, our institutions, and our regional bases. In keeping with this aim, we expressly encourage a broad range of interpretations of our theme. Possible approaches might include, but are not limited to:

- Generational boundaries
- Citizenship and migration
- *Vers une VIe République?*
- *L'Hexagone et les DOM-TOM*
- Class divides
- Disciplinary boundaries
- Political lines
- Form and definition
- Genre and classification
- Corpora
- Intermediality
- Visual lines, borders, and frames
- Lines of sight; perspectives
- Norms
- Liminality
- Margins and marginalia
- Edges
- Lineages and genealogies
- Fences, walls, barriers, hurdles
- Pushing boundaries, testing limits
- Pioneers and the avant-garde
- Transgressions
- Lines in the sand
- Tipping points, turning points, points of no return
- Deadlines
- Expiry
- Threads
- Expansions
- Crossings

- Transitions
- Access
- Urban/rural divides
- Regional identities
- Community; the Commons
- Limits to interpretation
- The (im)possible; potential and potentiality
- Drawing and redrawing
- Physical/technological limits; capability and capacity
- Maps and mapping
- Railways; transit lines
- Trajectories
- Containment
- Language barriers/limits
- Inside/outside, within/without
- Constraints
- Grey areas

Abstracts of 300 words maximum should be sent to asmcf.ssfh.pgstudyday@gmail.com by **Friday 15th January 2027**. Papers may be given in French or English.

Any enquiries may be directed to asmcf.ssfh.pgstudyday@gmail.com.

Organising committee: Kelsey Yi Wing Yuen (SSFH, Cambridge), Eleanor Dufton (SSFH, Leeds), Jake Stumpf (SSFH, Brunel), Eli Jeannin (ASMCF, Queen Mary), Amy Bergman (ASMCF, Kent)