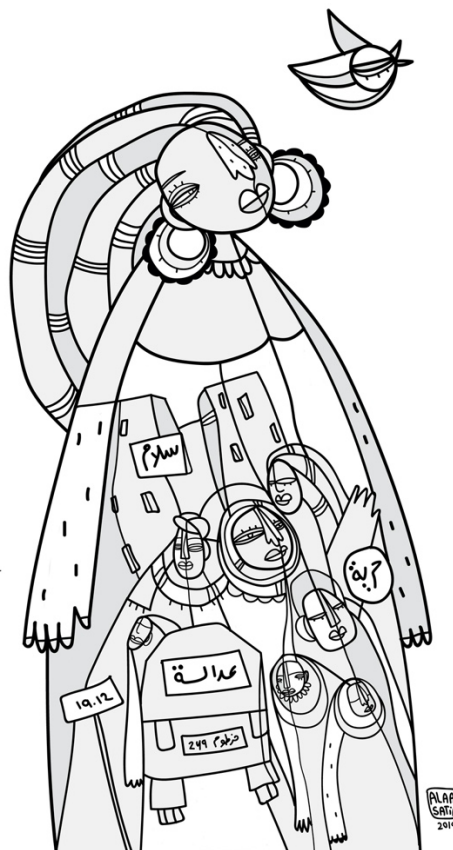


# NOISE

network of interdisciplinary  
gender studies in europe

\*WE ARE THE REVOLUTION



Summer School 2021

## ***Borders, Boundaries and the Politics of Belonging. Feminist Digital Cartographies***

August 30 - September 3, 2021 @Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Organized by the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies  
In collaboration with the ERC Project [ConnectingEurope](#)  
Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging

**Coordinators: Sandra Ponzanesi & Koen Leurs**

*The border is also a migrant.*

—Rebecca Solnit

### **Topical urgency and focus:**

This year, the 28th edition of the NOISE Summer School will introduce you to cutting-edge scholarship on borders, boundaries and the politics of belonging, by looking at the intersection of feminist cartographies, digital media and affect theories. Stuart Hall once asked, “Where does Europe begin and end?” (2003, 36), questioning not only the ambivalence and desirability of borders but also the notion of belonging and affiliations. In this summer school we will not only take border zones as an object of inquiry but mobilize the border itself as an epistemological standpoint, or as a method. In *Border as Method* (2013), Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson argue at length that globalization has not produced a borderless world; rather it has resulted in a proliferation of borders that are dense sites of conflict. Étienne Balibar maintains, in fact, that borders have not been eliminated but that there is a multiplication of borders in the form of ‘internal borders’, a myriad of new invisible borders that are ideological, radicalized and politicized (Balibar, 2003).

Therefore, borders and boundaries are not lines or just physical and territorial descriptors, but epistemological and phenomenological entities (Ahmed, 2000; Whitley, 2019) that strongly determine and influence the politics of identity and belonging at the individual and collective levels, locally, nationally and transnationally. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her classic and influential work *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), introduced us to the intricacies of borders, bodies and languages not just as a psychic, social and cultural terrain that we inhabit and that inhabits all of us, but also as sites of negotiation of visible and invisible forces, multiplicities and hybridities. As the popular slogan in the immigrant rights movement says, “We Didn’t Cross the Border, The Border Crossed Us”, highlighting not only the politics of borders and boundaries but also the embodiment and embeddedness of location and belonging. In particular we want to recognize how border politics and resistance movements are gendered, as illustrated on the cover of this flyer with the powerful visualization made by Alaa Satir, a Sudanese artist and illustrator whose work amplifies how for example border protests intersect with patriarchy and heteronormativity among others.

In our contemporary digital age, borders and boundaries become evanescent and virtual, resulting in an affirmation and redrawing of territorial and symbolic borders (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2019). New articulations of bordering and divides come into place, becoming more pervasive than ever in terms of reorganizing structures of inclusions and exclusions, reproducing biased hierarchies based on configurations of race, gender, sex, age and nationality (Nakamura, 2002; Costanza-Chock, 2014; Shah, 2020). Decisions about which bodies are allowed to cross borders are increasingly relegated to machines, databases and algorithms drawing on systems of artificial intelligence. Travelling bodies are machine-read at airports, disproportionately affecting transgender bodies that do not fit technological body-scanning standards that are based on a limited, binary understanding of gender (Quinan & Bresser, 2020). During asylum procedures, biometrical technologies, including fingerprints, facial scans, speech, bone-marrow and vein pattern analysis, are used to distinguish between insiders and outsiders with respect to the Global North (Tazzioli, 2020). Here we see the longer lineages of colonialism, which drew heavily on ranking, subjugating and extracting populations through experimentation with new forms of racialized science and technology (Madianou, 2019; Leurs, 2020). At the same time, social media platforms, digital networks and digital diasporas create new, unprecedented forms of connectivity for mobile and migrant people that cut across space and time. Digital connectivity promises to bridge distance by offering transnational digital proximity, creating conditions of co-presence, ubiquity and simultaneity. As such, borders seem to evaporate and be replaced, or at least affectively negotiated, by multiple networks and diasporic belonging that cut across nations and boundaries. Or do borders come back with a vengeance?

In this summer school we will trace the different cartographies of belonging by paying specific attention to feminist interventions into the politics of space, migration and mobility. We build our understanding of cartographies on the work of Rosi Braidotti: “a cartography is a theoretically-based and politically-informed account of the present that aims at tracking the production of knowledge and subjectivity and to expose power both as entrapment (*potestas*) and as empowerment (*potentia*)” (2019, p. 33). In particular, we will explore how the implications of these new articulations have been amplified, intensified and accelerated by digital media technologies that allow for new forms of activism, connectivity and affectivity as well as surveillance and monitoring. We will explore this through theoretical, methodological and artistic/creative investigations that combine institutional and political dimensions with individual and subjective articulations.

**Aims:**

This NOISE Summer School will introduce students to cutting-edge scholarship around questions such as (but not limited to): how to identify borders politics and border figurations in an interdisciplinary way; how to recognize feminist interventions into the field of digital media studies that challenge the normativity of mainstream media discourses and algorithmic coding; how to apply postcolonial/decolonial/queer interventions to debates on connectivity and belonging by signalling protracted forms of inequality and disparity, not only across the North and South of the world but also within communities and diasporas; how to re-envision a form of cosmopolitan belonging that is respectful and aware of difference, otherness and alterity.

**Questions:**

- How can gender and postcolonial/decolonial perspectives be fruitfully combined for an emancipatory re-imagining of borders and boundaries as sites of political contestation?
- How do axes of difference, including gender, race, religion, sexuality, national identity, class and generation, intersect in redrafting feminist cartographies of representation, belonging and lived experiences?
- How can affect theory help us to rethink the sense of belonging from the point of view of users, participants, activists and producers?
- What is the impact of the contemporary digital media platforms on the feminist politics of belonging?
- How can we mobilize feminist digital cartographies to rethink the role of borders and boundaries from a European and transnational perspective?
- How can we rethink solidarity and cosmopolitanism from a feminist, post-/decolonial perspective?
- What do we think of the right to disconnection and immobility? How can we avoid the cultural industry dynamics that co-opt participation and co-productions into neo-liberal forms of fandom and digital participation?

**Target audience:**

This advanced training course offers a diverse yet coherent programme of study from an interdisciplinary perspective. The summer school is meant for PhD and MA students. Separate seminars for these two groups will be organized.

**Online setting:**

The 28<sup>th</sup> NOISE Summer School will be the first online summer school ever in the long history of the NOISE. Though the format will be different without the conviviality of meeting each other in the beautiful and cozy Utrecht we hope to reap the advantages of the online environment by being able to reach out to people from remote locations who would not otherwise be able to attend. We also hope to foster an interactive and critical digital community that is Covid proof and digitally savvy and ready to put in practice the politics of belonging through feminist digital practices.

**Formula:**

- Each day is structured by a mixture of pre-recorded and live lectures: the day starts with a lecture, followed by Q&A and PhD and MA seminars in Breakout rooms
- Social online programme
- Students prepare for NOISE by reading and collecting material for assignments (approximately 40 hours of work). After the school has ended, participants who fulfilled all requirements (preparation of assignments and reading, active participation and a final essay of 3500-4000 words) receive a NOISE Certificate (5 ECTS).
- All students are expected to participate in the entire programme for the duration of five days.

Please check the website for more information, registration and regular updates:

<http://www.graduategenderstudies.nl> → Education → NOISE 2021

**Tuition fees:**

The tuition fee is €200. This includes digital reading materials.

**Teachers on the course**

The NOISE Summer School is organized by the Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies (NOG, Utrecht University). The 2021 edition is coordinated by Prof. Sandra Ponzanesi and Dr. Koen Leurs.

Several renowned international scholars from various disciplines including gender and postcolonial studies, media and communication studies, migration and border studies, and science and technology studies, will be teaching at the summer school.

**Confirmed guest teachers:**

- Dr. [Roopika Risam](https://www.roopikarisam.com/) (Associate Professor of Education and English, Salem State University, USA), see also <https://www.roopikarisam.com/>
- Dr. [Sasha Costanza-Chock](http://ajlunited.org) (Research Scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Senior Research Fellow at the Algorithmic Justice League ([ajlunited.org](http://ajlunited.org)), and a Faculty Affiliate with the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University)
- Dr. [Rahul Rao](#) (Senior Lecturer in Politics, SOAS University of London, UK; from September 2021 fellow at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies, NIAS)
- Dr. [Earvin Cabalquinto](#) (Lecturer in the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Australia)
- Dr. [Martina Tazzioli](#) (Lecturer in Politics and Technology, Goldsmiths University of London, UK)

**Coordinators:**

- Prof. [Sandra Ponzanesi](#) (Gender Studies, Utrecht University, NL)

Sandra Ponzanesi is Full Professor of Media, Gender and Postcolonial Studies, Department of Media and Culture Studies/Graduate Gender Programme at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Her expertise and interests are gender and postcolonial critique from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. She has published widely in the field of postcolonial feminist theory, cinema studies, Italian postcolonialism, digital media, and migration. Among her recent publications are *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe* (2018), *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe* (2016), *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry* (Palgrave, 2014), *Gender, Globalisation and Violence* (2014), and *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (Routledge, 2012). She has also guest-edited several special issues on Postcolonial Europe, Digital Migration and Transnational Cinema Studies. She is project leader of the ERC project “Digital Crossings in Europe: Gender, Diaspora and Belonging” [CONNECTINGEUROPE](#), director of the [PCI](#) (Postcolonial Studies Initiative), and project leader of the NWO-PIN network (Postcolonial Intellectuals and their European Publics). See also <http://sandraponzanesi.com/>.

- Dr [Koen Leurs](#) (Gender Studies, Utrecht University, NL)

Koen Leurs is Assistant Professor in Gender and Postcolonial Studies in the Graduate Gender Programme, Department of Media and Culture, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His interests include digital migration, urban youth culture and social media, and participatory methodologies. He is the chair of the European Communication Research and Education (ECREA) Diaspora, Migration and the Media section. Recently, he was the principal investigator of the Dutch Research Council funded study *Young connected migrants. Comparing digital practices of young asylum seekers and expatriates in the Netherlands* and the Dutch National Research Agenda funded participatory action research project *Media literacy through making media: A key to participation for young newcomers*, see <https://mmm.sites.uu.nl>. Recently he co-guest-edited a *Sage Handbook of Media and Migration* (2020) and special issues on “Forced migration and digital connectivity” with Kevin Smets for *Social Media + Society* (2018) and “Connected Migrants” with Sandra Ponzanesi for *Popular Communication* (2018). Currently, he is a fellow at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) writing a monograph titled *Digital Migration*.