



## Call for Papers

# CONTAGION AND CONTAINMENT

**21 May 2016 Newnham College, University of Cambridge**

Conference organised by graduate students in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Latin American Cultural Studies Consortium, University of Cambridge  
<http://contagionandcontainment.weebly.com>

Contagion stems from the Latin *con* meaning 'together with' and *tangere* meaning 'to touch'. Similarly, containment stems from *con* and *tenere* meaning 'to hold'. Their shared prefix signals togetherness and their roots point to contact and connection, but contemporary uses of the terms often invoke separation and holding apart. In this conference we hope to grapple with the linguistic resonances, the historical development, and the current deployments of both terms: contagion and containment. We are particularly interested in touching on their ethical, political, sexual, and social implications.

Ideas of contagion and containment are of particular relevance in a world that is characterised by vertiginous globalisation in which the increased movement of people, capital, and information is faced with ever-evolving practices that strive to hold back these flows. The resurgence of barriers to contain what have been described xenophobically as 'swarms of migrants' is one of many such examples. Contagion and containment also appear within medical, scientific, financial and technological phenomena. For example, the use of the internet and social networks to spread political dissent is cited as justification for increased state surveillance of online activity. Entwined with the negative connotations of the terms, contagion is a provocative way of understanding intermediality, interdisciplinarity, and alternative models of human and non-human relations. For example, hybrid artistic practices such as pastiche, collage, and digital performance may reflect reconfigurations of subjectivity, intimacy, and community. In our analysis of contagion and containment, we hope to make connections between the abstract and the material, the technological and the affective, and the local and the global.

We invite paper proposals from researchers working in all disciplines. Aware of the contradictions in containing a debate about containment, we are ambivalently focusing the debate on flows within and without the Iberian and Latin American context.

Potential topics may include (but are not limited to):

- migration, xenophobia, racism

- national identity
- the 'trans-' e.g. transnationality, transgenderism
- gender and sexuality
- virus, parasite, disease
- internet, social networks
- technological innovations and exploitations
- science-fiction and apocalyptic narratives
- financial crisis, financial contagion, neoliberalism
- class, property, privatisation, collectivisation
- activism, protest, resistance
- policing, surveillance, punitive practices
- ecology, environment, space
- dialects and varieties of language, code-switching
- translation, adaptation, fidelity
- rumour and gossip
- crime, criminality and innocence

Interested applicants should send an abstract (max. 250 words) for a 20-minute paper to [contagionandcontainment@gmail.com](mailto:contagionandcontainment@gmail.com) by 14th February 2016.

A limited number of bursaries will be available to postgraduate students to assist with travel expenses. Details of these bursaries will follow in due course.