



Law in Transit

Moving Subjects, Universal Rights, and the Contingencies of Recognition

10th International Osnabrück Summer Institute on the Cultural Study of the Law

July 18–26, 2026

For its 10th edition, the OSI turns to the ‘moving subject’ of rights and to the ways in which migration, displacement, and exclusion challenge modern ideals of equality before the law and unsettle inherited conceptions of legal subjecthood. The 2026 OSI asks how recent political developments – ranging from the tightening of border regimes to the erosion of democratic norms and the criminalization of migrants – are redefining the boundaries and discourses of rights and citizenship. In particular, we will consider how legal humanities can help us see how everyday people, as well as activists, artists, and critics are reclaiming or reimagining the space of legal subjectivity.

We invite contributions that interrogate the shifting terrain of rights in an age of mobility and political re-entrenchment, including but not limited to the following areas:

- The re-configuration of legal personhood and citizenship in response to global migration, statelessness, and refugeehood, and the increasing denial of full rights to non-citizens.
- The shifting semantics of democracy and legality in political and social discourse, most obviously about migration and diversity, particularly where rights are claimed, but also where they are suspended or selectively applied.
- Cultural representations and mediations of rights and belonging, including literature, visual art, and digital media that depict the struggles of mobile or excluded subjects, but also insist on and reaffirm their agency and capabilities.
- Critical and creative practices of reclaiming legal subjectivity – through activism, art, or narrative – that contest exclusion and imagine alternative communities / subjects of rights.

The OSI brings together leading scholars in cultural legal studies with graduate students and early-career researchers from the humanities, legal studies, political science, social theory, history, and related fields. The OSI offers a mix of keynote lectures, workshops, and seminars, culminating in a closing conference that will address current debates on law, migration, and cultural critique. The 2026 OSI will accept up to 20 international participants (doctoral, post-doctoral, and advanced M.A. students).

Confirmed faculty for the 2026 OSI include:

Jeannine DeLombard (English and History / UC Santa Barbara)

Cassandra Falke (English / Arctic U of Norway)

Angela Naimou (Arts and Humanities / Clemson U)

Arthur Rose (English / University of Exeter)

Leti Volpp (Law / UC Berkeley)

Marco Wan (Law / University of Hong Kong)

Devin Zuber (American Studies / GTU Berkeley)

For further information on application procedures and updates please visit our website or contact us via email.

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