

## 1. Events

### Event Details

# Imagining the Railway in the 20th Century

### Conference session

**Start date : 26 August 2024 09:00**  
**Date de fin : 30 August 2024 17:00**

**Where : Lausanne**

**Hosted by : European Society for the Study of English**

### Information sources :

<https://wp.unil.ch/esse2024/>

Convenors: Frederik van Dam (Radboud University, Netherlands), Jason Finch and Adam Borch (Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

### Abstract:

That the arrival of the railway changed people's perception of the world has been well established since Wolfgang Schivelbusch's pioneering work. There is a substantial body of scholarship documenting the nineteenth-century railway's influence on the experience of travel and its impact on different cultural media. The history of railway experience in the twentieth century, when the train was challenged by the automobile and aeroplane, remains neglected in comparison. Trains did not disappear, however, but were invested with new imaginative possibilities, for instance in novels by Graham Greene and Toni Morrison.

This seminar will explore the literary and cultural significance of the railway in the twentieth century. It reflects on new developments in mobility studies and infrastructure studies. We welcome proposals that focus on the relationship between the twentieth-century railway and English-language literature, cinema, the visual arts and/or other cultural modes.

Themes to be explored include, but are not limited to the following:

- the railway and (literary) form
- gender and sexual identity
- (post)colonial perspectives
- railway and war
- experiences of long-distance travel
- experiences of commuting
- spaces of the railway
- the railway's impact on landscape and environment

comparisons between literary and visual depictions of the railway

## **Mobility**

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

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## **Long-distance travel**

Long-distance travel is variously defined, with reference to either distance, travel time, overnighing or being outside of a person's usual environment. When defined by distance (for example, over 100km), it typically accounts for the top 1-2% of trips.

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## **Practical informations :**

Submission: send a c.250 words abstract of the proposed presentation and a brief bio to the convenors.

Contact: Frederik van Dam (frederik.vandam@ru.nl), Jason Finch (jason.finch@abo.fi) and Adam Borch (aborch@abo.fi)

Deadline: 31 January 2024

The seminar will be held at the 2024 conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) in Lausanne, Switzerland (26-30 August 2024). For more information on ESSE and the conference:

Conference website: <https://wp.unil.ch/esse2024/>