

Forms and Feelings of Kinship in the Contemporary World

Date: 27th April 2024

Location: University of Warwick (in-person)

Keynote speaker: Professor Janet Carsten (University of Edinburgh)

Submission deadline: 30th November 2023

Call For Papers

The ontological meanings of kinship have long been a central question in academia. From the notion of ‘relatedness’ (Carsten, 2000) to the idea of the ‘mutuality of being’ (Sahlins, 2013), the static blood-based structure of kinship has now been comprehensively dismantled. In today’s world, forms of kinship are becoming simultaneously manifold and mutable. We witness, on the one hand, previous familial structures such as the heteronormative nuclear family being brought into question due to a range of visible social changes such as high divorce rates, low birth-rates and rising longevity in many parts of the world. On the other hand, we also see emerging new practices of kinship such as the ideas of ‘families we choose’ (Weston, 1991), ‘intimacy at-a-distance’ (Elliott and Urry, 2010) and same-sex marriage in the context of the globalised LGBTQ movement. Meanwhile, forms of kinship have also been transformed in the current era of global environmental crisis, economic upheaval, Covid-19 and armed conflict.

While observing forms of kinship from a macro perspective, we may also notice everyday life and our bodies on a more micro level. Kinship can be perceived as a felt phenomenon through our sensations and we can sense kinship visibly, audibly, haptically and kinetically. These feelings come from interactions between bodies, dwelling spaces and ordinary living materials.

Importantly, we increasingly perceive kinship through the plethora of narrative images and messages now circulating **on our audio-visual screens**. In this sense, the representation of kinship on film, television and social media serves to diversify and problematise conventional understandings of the topic.

By further questioning ‘what kinship is and is not’ (Sahlins), this one-day conference aims to explore the multiple forms and feelings of kinship in their contemporary social and audio-visual contexts. It encourages **an interdisciplinary dialogue between kinship studies and screen studies**, as well as a transcultural viewpoint between globality and locality. Topics might include but not be restricted to:

- parenthood and childhood
- queer kinship
- kinship in ageing societies
- migrant families
- kin ties between humans and non-humans
- the materials of kinship
- the spaces of kinship within and beyond the home

It is hoped that the conference will lead to an edited publication on the theme as part of the [Warwick Series in the Humanities](#) published by Routledge.

To participate as a speaker, please submit an abstract of 250-300 words for a fifteen-minute paper, along with a short bio (100 words max), to kinshipconference2024@gmail.com by **30th November 2023**.

Please use this email address for any further questions and see updates on our page: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/hrc/confs/ffkcw/>.