

# CALL FOR PAPERS & PANELS

## RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE PRESENTS THE EIGHTH ANNUAL OPEN BOOKS – OPEN MINDS STUDENT CONFERENCE

### *Borders and Portals*

Friday, April 12, 2019



Panels and roundtables: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Lunch and Keynote Lecture by photographer Thierry Cohen

<http://thierrycohen.com/pages/work/starlights.html>

Rhode Island College's Open Books – Open Minds Program is calling for paper, panel, roundtable, or other creative proposals to be presented at our Eighth Annual Student Conference. Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to submit proposals. Instructors are encouraged to submit collaborative proposals for student panels or innovative formats. We invite students to share their writing, research, and creative projects on any topic related to this year's common book, Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*. We welcome submissions from any academic discipline as well as interdisciplinary approaches.

We especially invite FYS and FYW students and faculty to use their imaginations to create fun ways to present their work—through posters or other visual displays, skits or dramatic performances, poetry readings, videos, interactive roundtable discussions or paper panels. Explore the possibilities!

To submit a proposal for a paper, panel, or roundtable discussion,  
email an abstract to [aduneer@ric.edu](mailto:aduneer@ric.edu) or [bhawk@ric.edu](mailto:bhawk@ric.edu) with OBOM PROPOSAL in the subject line.  
The deadline for submissions is March 22.

Please include the following with your proposal:

#### STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

- ✓ The name of the presenter(s)
- ✓ The title of your paper or project
- ✓ Type of presentation: paper or other creative format
- ✓ A brief description that concisely identifies your topic and approach (200-250 words)
- ✓ A faculty sponsor (or the name of the professor and the course in which you did the research)

#### FACULTY SUBMISSIONS

- ✓ The name of the faculty facilitator
- ✓ The title of the panel
- ✓ The names of the student presenters
- ✓ Type of presentation: panel or creative format
- ✓ A brief description of the proposed presentation (200-250 words)
- ✓ The title of the course in which students have researched this topic

Undergraduate papers will be allotted 10-12 minutes each (time for approximately 1000-1250 words or four-five pages, double-spaced); graduate student papers will be allotted 15 minutes. We will accept proposals for already-formed panels (one hour per session) or for individual papers, which we will group by topic. Inquiries about presentation ideas are welcome!

See page 2 for topic suggestions.

For more information about these and other spring events, visit [www.ric.edu/obom](http://www.ric.edu/obom).

### Possible topics for conference presentations and roundtables:

War/ Refugees & Immigration / Borders / Exile, Loss, & Dislocation / Self & Other / Human Rights  
International Relations / Storytelling & Social Activism / Gender and Sexuality / World Literature & History  
Islam / Globalization / Racial, ethnic, national & class identities / Nativism / Creative Writing & Culture  
Magical Realism / Ethics & Law / Apocalypse / Self-Determination / Rebuilding / Mohsin Hamid:  
*Moth Smoke*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, *Discontent and Its Civilizations*

### PAPER TOPIC 1: BORDERS, PORTALS, OR FRAMES

Begin with a textual example of borders, portals, or frames in in *Exit West*. Consider the physical, metaphorical, and conceptual meanings in your example and the ways in which these spaces evoke the “real” world beyond the text. Here are a few ideas for borders, frames, or portals:

Doors, windows, closets, rooftops, alleys, phones/computers, cyberspace (social media), geography/the landscape (islands, mountains, desert), photographs, surveillance drones, telescopes, houses/tents/apartments, restaurants . . .

Choose a point of connection that you see between the image or scene in the text and a real world association. Begin with a “burning question” and then do a little research on your topic.

Here are just a few examples (but the possibilities are unlimited):

- Why, for example, would Filipinas go to Japan or would a Brazilian artist go to Amsterdam?
- Why do you think Saeed and Nadia first find themselves on a Greek island? Is there any particular significance in the specific location of Mykonos?
- What is known about the way “coyotes” operate on the U.S. – Mexican border? What similarities do you see between these operatives and the “agents” who Saeed and Nadia pay to help them leave their country?
- What political or cultural pressures would motivate migration or shape “nativist” responses toward immigrants in one of these specific locations?
- What are some of the positive and negative effects of social media and surveillance for mobilizing or controlling migrants?
- What is the relationship between photography, time, and memory? How does the narrator’s observation, “We are all migrants through time” (209) relate to the “images by a French photographer [Thierry Cohen] of famous cities at night” (56)?
- In what ways does the novel challenge the boxes society puts people in—stereotypes of gender, sexuality, religion, or cultural identity?

### PAPER TOPIC 2: YOUR FAMILY STORY OF MIGRATION

That the city of Saeed’s and Nadia’s birth is unnamed opens the possibilities that it could be anywhere in the world. What circumstances that lead Saeed and Nadia to flee seem common to migrants around the globe? Does their story resonate with your own family’s story of migration? Tell a story of migration—your own experience; a story you have heard from cousins, uncles, aunts, or grandparents; or family lore that you have heard about family members who migrated a century or more ago. Do a little research to find out about the historical and political circumstances of that migration. If possible, interview a family member. What was going on in the world at the time? Do you know what motivated your relatives to leave their homeland? What was the immigration policy of the U.S. (or a different country) toward your family’s or your ancestors’ national or ethnic group? In what ways do members of your family seem fiercely independent like Nadia, and in what ways do they try to remain connected to their homeland like Saeed?

### PAPER TOPIC 3: CREATIVE RETELLING OR DEPICTION (with an analytical interpretation essay)

Retell a scene, vignette, or plotline from *Exit West* stories from an alternate perspective in any way you like: as a story, a poem, a one-act play, a scene of a graphic novel, a ballad (i.e., a story put to music), a piece of visual art (on paper or computer generated), a short film, or other imaginative medium. The creative project must be accompanied by an interpretive essay, in which you explain why you chose this particular genre or artistic medium, and what you want the reader/listener/viewer to notice about your work of art. What particular detail, motif, or issue from the original work do you highlight in your creative piece?