



Western
Centre for Research on
Migration and Ethnic Relations

**Fall Colloquium
Series 2016**

Dr. Alison Mountz



Alison Mountz is Professor of Geography and Canada Research Chair in Global Migration at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University. She was the 2015-2016 Mackenzie King Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies at Harvard University. Mountz publishes broadly on migration, borders, asylum-seeking, and detention. She is the author of *Seeking Asylum: Human Smuggling and Bureaucracy at the Border* (Minnesota), which was awarded the 2011 Meridian Book Prize from the Association of American Geographers. Her recent scholarship explores migration and detention on islands. Mountz recently completed two monographs based on this research: *The Enforcement Archipelago: Hidden Geographies and the Death of Asylum* and *Boats, Borders, and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Non-Citizen Detention in the United States*, the latter co-authored with Jenna Loyd. She has begun new research on US war resister histories in Canada.

The Geopolitics of Asylum as Global Intimate

This paper calls for greater attention to geopolitics in analyses of political asylum. While migration scholars have long asserted that borders are more open for some people than for others, less has been written about the role played by geopolitics in shaping human migration in the form of asylum. How do geopolitical relations influence the permeability of borders and chances for human mobility of those seeking asylum? Why do some asylum-seekers in some places cross borders with relative ease, while others in other places encounter a proliferation of forms of confinement (such as walls, fencing, and detention centers)? Borders are sites where the geopolitical order is established, reified, or at the very least expressed through spatial controls exercised over mobility. This talk juxtaposes different migrations that are proximate in time and space to illuminate the influence of geopolitics on legal geographies, technocratic-seeming processes and procedures, and – ultimately – their outcomes. At once politicized in individual histories and aggregate outcomes, the geopolitics and intimacies of asylum operate as the global intimate or what Adam Ramadan (2012) references as "double helix".

Thursday, December 8, 2016

4:00 pm, SSC 5220

Refreshments at 3:30pm in SSC 5230

All Welcome!

For More Information email: mer@uwo.ca