



# Western

Centre for Research on  
Migration and Ethnic Relations

Winter Colloquium  
Series 2017

## \*Dr. Franca Iacovetta\*



Franca Iacovetta is Professor of History at the University of Toronto and co-editor of Studies in Gender and History at University of Toronto Press. She is past president of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians and recipient of the Canadian Historical Association's Sir John A. Macdonald prize for *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (2006). A Canadian and transnational historian of gender and migration, she has authored or edited ten books, including *Women, Gender and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World* (2002) and, most recently, *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (2nd ed. 2016).

## Reframing Multiculturalism: Women's Community-based Pluralism in the International Institute Movement, 1940s-1970s

Franca Iacovetta's talk draws on the book she is writing on the history of women's "bottom-up" pluralism in Canada. It focuses on the activities of women involved in the international institute movement – a North American movement whose origins date to 1910 – in Toronto.

The talk will assess the ideals and practices of the mix of Anglo-Canadian, ethno-Canadian, and immigrant women involved and the double-edged nature of their pluralism. As pluralists, they viewed immigrants as bearers of cultural gifts, such as folk customs and enriching talents, and their big colourful events drew culturally diverse audiences. They advocated pluralist social-work methods that professed respect for non-dominant cultural custom, but as integrationists, also demanded conformity to a common core of Canadian values and norms. To facilitate immigrant adjustment to Canadian society, they offered a range of services, such as individualized counselling for personal and family problems. At times, Institute staff acted like progressive pluralists, other times, as intrusive experts. Results of their activities were both positive (community-building) and negative (Eurocentricism). These doubled-edged features would also influence late-twentieth-century official multiculturalism in Canada.



Thursday, February 9, 2017

4:00 pm, SSC 5220

Refreshments at 3:30pm in SSC 5230

All Welcome!

For More Information email: [mer@uwo.ca](mailto:mer@uwo.ca)