

**WARWICK LAW SCHOOL COLLOQUIUM:
'Thinking Gender, History and International Law'**

Thursday 12 June 2025 | 9:00am – 7:00pm

Friday 13 June 2025 | 9:00am – 3:00pm

Venue: OC1.06 (Oculus), University of Warwick

Hybrid Event: To join online please email sandra.phillips@warwick.ac.uk

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Thursday 12 June 2025

9:00am – 9:30am	Arrival, Registration & Coffee
9:30am – 11:00am	<p>Panel I: History-writing: Feminist Methodologies and Feminist Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Drakopoulou: Clio's International Travels: an excursus (University of Kent, School of Law) • Solange Mouthaan: "Finding our foremothers: stories of colonial racialisation through the burial record of the European cemetery in Peneleh, Surabaya" (University of Warwick, School of Law) • Paula Balmaceda & Gina Heathcote: "Plural Feminisms, Archive and Epistemologies of IL" (Newcastle University, School of Law) <p>Discussant: Laura Lammasniemi Chair: Paola Zichi</p>
11:00am – 11:15am	Coffee Break
11:15am – 12:30am	<p>Panel II: Decolonial Legal History and Gender Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ningning Liu: "Negotiating Women's Rights to Political Participation: Western Ideals, Confucianism, and Feminist Struggles in Semi-Colonial China (1840-1920)" (Queen's University Belfast, School of Law) • Dina Haddad: "Women's Rights and International Law in the Middle East: Temporality, Coloniality, and Development" (Centre d'Histoire et Anthropologie du Droit, Paris 10 Nanterre) <p>Discussant: Michelle Burgis-Kasthala Chair: Serena Natile</p>

12:30am – 1:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm – 3:00pm	<p>Panel III: Gendered Orders and Global Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paola Zichi: “Rethinking Emancipation: Relational Solidarity, Voluntary Servitude, and Feminist Contestations of League of Nations Governance” (University of Warwick, School of Law) • Miriam Bak McKenna: “Beyond Formal Equality: Nordic Welfare Feminism at the UN 1945-1975” (Roskilde University, Department of Social Sciences and Business) • Claerwen O-Hara: “Feminism, International Law and the Global Economy: Sketches of Alternative Legal Imaginaries from the 1970s” (The University of Melbourne, School of Law) <p>Discussant: Serena Natile Chair: Christine Schwöbel-Patel</p>
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Coffee Break
3:15pm – 4:45pm	<p>Panel IV: Feminist Visions of Justice: Between Movements and Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saadiya Alam: “The Historiography of the 1990s and the Impact of this on the CEDAW Committee” (Birkbeck Law School) • Char-Lee Lewis: “Recognising the Necessity of Acknowledging Intergenerational Trauma in International Human Rights Instruments: A Case Study on Femicide in Jamaica” (University of Leicester) • Selin Altay: “Bringing Reproductive Justice to the Judgements of ECtHR through Polymorphous Queer Biokinships” (Ruhr-University Bochum, Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict) <p>Discussant: Loveday Hodson Chair: Aisel Omarova</p>
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Get Together: Drinks & Dinner
Friday 13 June 2025	
9:00am – 9:30am	Arrival & Coffee
9:30am – 11:00am	<p>Panel V: Historical and Contemporary Challenges to Children’s Rights</p>

- **Ludovica Aricò:** “The International Action Against Child Labour: a Mirror of the Evolving International Dynamics” (Università degli Studi di Padova)
- **Aisel Omarova:** “Children’s Rights to Life, Protection, and Consent in the ICESCR and the ICCPR: Evolution of the Drafting Process” (University of Warwick, School of Law; Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University)
- **Natalia Krestvoska:** “Returning Ukraine’s Children: Can Mediation Help?” (National University ‘Odesa Maritime Academy’)

Discussant: Naomi Lott

Chair: Daniel Lowe

11:00am – 11:15am Coffee Break

11:15am – 12:45am **Panel VI: Gendered Harm, Structural Violence and Feminist Tribunals**

- **Nivedita Joon:** “In the Courts of Women: Feminist Tribunals, Gender Experts and the Making of the International Women’s Movement (1976-1995)” (Geneva Graduate Institute, International History and Politics department)
- **Anna Gopsill:** “Interpreting sexual violence and masculinity in the tribunal space: Male victims of sexual violence at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda” (University of London, School of Advanced Study)
- **Michelle Burgis-Kasthala and Matilde Placci:** “Out of the Frying Pan and into the Fire: The Collapse of Gender Governance in Gaza” (University of Edinburgh, Law School)

Discussant: Christine Schwöbel-Patel

Chair: Marina Veličković

12:45am – 1:30pm Lunch

1:30pm – 3:00pm **Keynote:** Parvathi Menon and Leila Ullrich
Concluding Remarks

We will be in the Oculus for the duration of both days. Please see the map included on page 29 for directions on how to find the building from the Warwick Bus Interchange and Scarman House. Alternatively, you can follow this interactive campus map to find the room: <https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/search/623c8942421e6f5928c0f4f1?projectId=warwick>

You can also join us on MS Teams (For those who requested online participation, the link will be sent directly — no registration required).

Please email Sandra Phillips if you are having any issues with accessing the Teams meeting:
sandra.phillips@warwick.ac.uk



DETAILED PROGRAMME

Thursday 12 June 2025

Panel I: History-writing: Feminist Methodologies and Feminist Methods

9:30am – 11:00am | *Discussant: Laura Lammasniemi; Chair: Paola Zichi*

Maria Drakopoulou: *Clio's International Travels: an excursus* (University of Kent, School of Law)

Historiography has not been a priority of feminist legal scholarship, even though the 'place of women in history' has been a long-standing question. Women's legal history existing today falls, broadly speaking, in two major categories: histories of legal doctrine, particularly those that historically are seen as injustices, implicated in women's oppression, and histories of 'memorable deeds of women', whether of legal professionals, scholars, campaigners or activists. In contrast, feminist legal scholars of international law, in zealously embracing the discipline's 'historical turn', appear to constitute something of an 'anomaly', albeit a very welcome one. Here, not only is legal history posited as a significant constitutive element of feminist inquiry, but perhaps most importantly, because this newly acquired prominence of historical understanding calls for a series of difficult, peremptory, yet timely, questions; questions that can function both as an invitation to leave the safety of familiar disciplinary grounds, and as reflection on established modes of 'doing feminist history' in law, international or otherwise. In short, questions that interrogate our historical understanding. It is such questions that my paper engages with. I use historical understanding as a framing category that points to specific entanglements of events, phenomena, activities and/or actors, along with our sense of ourselves and the world forming and informing distinct configurations that 'flow' between temporal planes, be they of the past, present or future.

Modern historical understanding having lost the transparency that positivistic history and methodology afforded it faces a multitude of challenges. From the postwar rise of 'the new history' to the announcement of 'the end of history' in the 90's, and from the critical interventions of 'the linguistic turn' to those of posthumanism, technoscience and Earth System Science, established historical sensibilities concerning historical process, change, time and the positing of the human as the unquestionable agent of history, have been seriously undermined. Put simply historiography, historical understanding, is being transformed.

It is my contention that an engagement with feminist historiography in law, in particular international law, cannot proceed whilst ignoring these critiques and the new historical practices they suggest. This is not to say however, that modern historical understanding must be abandoned or be replaced. My intention is instead to problematise the writing of feminist legal histories; their 'why' and 'how' in

current conditions. To this purpose I want to revisit feminist thinking on historiography in law and international law and bring it into dialogue with the new material and intellectual shifts. I will do so by focusing on certain specific themes that hitherto have been central to feminist history, namely time, space memory and experience. The objective is not to advocate a novel or singular method or history as a solution, for this is clearly not desirable. Rather, I wish my reflections to contribute to our addressing Clio's current predicament.

Short Bio: Maria Drakopoulou is Professor of Law at Kent Law School. She became an academic after practicing as a criminal barrister in Athens. Amongst many academic roles, she has held research fellowships at the European University Institute in Florence and Griffith Law School, Brisbane, has been academic advisor to centres for gender studies at the universities of Gothenburg and Umeå, and a Fellow of the AHRB Peer Review College (History and Law). She is a member of the Editorial Board of *feminists@law*, co-founder and director of Kent's Centre for Critical Thought, and recently completed an AHRB funded project on 'Law and the Human'. Her research is located at the intersection of law and the humanities, with her main areas of research interest including Feminist Theory and History, Jurisprudence, and Political Theory. Relevant publications include *Feminist Historiography of Law: an Exposition and Proposition*, *The Oxford Handbook of Legal History* (2018) OUP; and 'Clio's Forgotten Consciousness: History and the Question of Feminist Critique in Law', *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 38. (2013). Current projects are: 'The Forgotten Foundations of Feminist Legal Scholarship' (co-ed with Prof. R. Hunter) special issue, *feminists@law* (forthcoming, 2025) and a monograph on the genealogy of feminist legal thought.

Solange Mouthaan: "Finding our foremothers: stories of colonial racialisation through the burial record of the European cemetery in Peneleh, Surabaya" (University of Warwick, School of Law)

Short Bio: Solange Mouthaan is Associate Professor at Warwick University Law School and teaches International Criminal Law. She is Co-Director of International Programs. Her research explores understandings and translations of gendered experiences of armed conflict in the interpretation and application of international crimes by tribunals. Solange is particularly interested in what the law invisibilises, and she does so by using a feminist/female and decolonial lens. Solange's current research focuses on the gendered experiences of colonial harm within the context of current manifestations of the colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Paula Balmaceda & Gina Heathcote: “Plural Feminisms, Archive and Epistemologies of IL”
(Newcastle University, School of Law)

In this paper we examine and explain our commitment to plural feminism as having a significant methodological purchase that is unexplored in feminist writing on international law. In particular, through drawing on a combination of decolonial, TWAIL and queer feminist perspectives we analyse the role legal pluralism plays within plural feminist approaches, thus moving plural feminism beyond a descriptive claim (there are many feminisms) to an epistemological claim about the nature of law, legal subjects and legal relationships. In the second part of the paper, through examining Article 38(1) (c) of the ICJ Statute, on general principles of international law, we apply a decolonial and TWAIL feminist lens to encounters in the archive, disrupting mainstream legal assertions on the sources of international law that reaffirm the status quo, and re-considering an international law that makes space for diverse legal traditions and voices. The final section of the paper then uses a queer feminist encounter with dust, the archive and temporalities to question how bodies, embodiment and Othering require plural feminisms that theorise incongruous plural legal histories.

Short bio: Paula Nuño Balmaceda is a Chilean international lawyer and academic specializing in public international law, human rights, and feminist legal theory. With experience in Chile’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and academia, she researches critical approaches to international law and is currently pursuing a PhD at Newcastle Law School with a thesis titled “A Decolonial Feminist Interrogation of the Sources of International Law”.

Gina Heathcote is Professor of International Law at Newcastle Law School and publishes across the areas of collective security, the law on the use of force, international law of the sea and ocean governance. Her enduring passion is the possibilities and limitations of feminist legal methodologies, and the scope for creative, interdisciplinary approaches that challenge disciplinary orthodoxies. She has contributed a chapter, with Kate Grady, to Immi Tallgren's (award winning) *Portraits of Women in International Law: New Names and Forgotten Faces?* (Oxford University Press, 2023), has, together with Paola Zichi, a chapter on *Feminist Methodologies in Deplano and Tsagouris (eds.) Research Methods in International Law: A Handbook* (Edgar Elgar 2021) and was co-editor of the Special Issue of *Australian Feminist Law Journal* on *Hygiene, Coloniality and Law*, all of which engage the role of gender and history in feminist approaches to international law.

Coffee Break | 11:00am – 11:15am

Panel II: Decolonial Legal History and Gender Justice

11:15am – 12:30pm | *Discussant: Michelle Burgis-Kasthala; Chair: Serena Natile*

Ningning Liu: “Negotiating Women’s Rights to Political Participation: Western Ideals, Confucianism, and Feminist Struggles in Semi-Colonial China (1840-1920)” (Queen’s University Belfast, School of Law)

The period between 1840 and 1920 in China was characterised by significant political, social, and cultural upheavals, including foreign invasions, the collapse of the Qing monarchy (1644 – 1911), semi-colonial exploitation, and attempts to establish a republic. These challenges also gave rise to evolving discourses on human rights and women’s emancipation. By the late Qing period, Chinese women faced systemic oppression. Heavily influenced by Confucian ideals that had dominated China’s culture and society for centuries, women were confined to domestic roles, denied access to education, and excluded from public and political life. Following China’s another humiliating defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, intellectuals and reformists looked to Western ideals of liberty, independence, and equality in their search for solutions to the nation’s crises. They argued that women’s liberation and gender equality were critical to the country’s revitalisation and modernisation. However, while there was a broad consensus on the need for women’s marital and educational advancement, opinions diverged heavily on women’s political empowerment, echoing debates within Western suffrage movements.

This paper explores the dynamic and contested narratives on women’s rights to political participation during this transformative era in China. By examining how Chinese reformists strategically reinterpreted Western concepts of liberty and equality to challenge patriarchal and imperial power structures and advocate for women’s rights, this study reconstructs how Chinese women’s political inclusion was negotiated within a context shaped by both Western influences and indigenous Chinese traditions.

Through a socio-legal and gendered analysis of primary historical texts, including legal writings, petitions, and journal articles from both Chinese and Western sources, this paper seeks to critically investigate the strategies employed by Chinese activists to debate women’s rights within prevailing colonial and imperialist frameworks. By situating early Chinese feminist perspectives within the broader context of anti-colonial resistance and global struggles for gender equality, the study further reveals how the colonial interventions and Western ideals, together with Confucian values, collectively influenced the evolving discourses on gender and political inclusion during this period.

Furthermore, this paper helps to emphasize the critical role of gendered perspectives in rethinking legal historiography and the politics of historical narratives in both China and globalised contexts. By foregrounding the historical construction of international law and gender relations, it challenges traditional legal historiography by questioning what constitutes legal sources and feminist historical records, thereby expanding the scope of international legal history to include diverse and marginalised voices.

Ultimately, this paper argues that the historical struggles for women's political rights in Modern China offer valuable insights into contemporary challenges of achieving gender equality and justice within international legal frameworks. By rethinking the relationship between international law, history, and gender through an anti-colonial and anti-racist feminist lens, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in decolonizing international legal histories and constructing more inclusive and equitable global futures.

Short Bio: I am a PhD researcher in Law at the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast. My research interests include feminist law, Chinese legal history, asylum law, and international law. My PhD project, "Political Participation in Modern China – Shanghai (1840-1949): The Lessons for Women's Empowerment", investigates the evolution, challenges, strategies, and impact of women's rights to political participation in modern Shanghai from 1840 to 1949. This research is funded by a Department for the Economy (DfE) Scholarship, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom. I also serve as the PhD student representative on the Doctoral Studies Committee of the School of Law at Queen's.

Dina Haddad: "Women's Rights and International Law in the Middle East: Temporality, Coloniality, and Development" (Centre d'Histoire et Anthropologie du Droit, Paris 10 Nanterre)

This paper examines the role of crisis, temporality, coloniality, and development in the application of international human rights standards, with a particular focus on women's rights in the Middle East. It critically analyzes how international legal frameworks, rooted in colonial histories and development paradigms, struggle to maintain continuity and relevance in the region due to its constant crisis. The paper reflects on how the temporality of law—oscillating between moments of crisis and so-called normality—disrupts the longevity and consistency of international human rights standards, particularly for women.

Grounded in a Third World feminist perspective, the paper highlights how the coloniality of international law has shaped human rights discourse in the Middle East, perpetuating power

imbalances and reinforcing patriarchal structures. The reliance on development narratives often frames women's empowerment as a means of economic or geopolitical progress, sidelining the systemic inequalities embedded in cultural and legal norms. Such frameworks fail to address the enduring disruptions in the implementation of women's rights, as moments of crisis—such as the Arab Spring, counter revolutions including backlashing on feminist movements and rhetoric serve to both expose and exacerbate these structural weaknesses.

On the other side, this analysis also critiques the inability of a Third World reading of women's rights to establish a sustained framework beyond feminism, particularly in light of the backlashes against feminist movements and identity politics. These backlashes, often rooted in both internal and external political agendas, undermine efforts to create enduring standards for gender justice. By exploring the interplay of crisis and normality, the paper underscores how the temporality of international law perpetuates the fragmentation of women's rights advocacy in the region.

The paper concludes by calling for a novel approach to international law that transcends colonial and developmental paradigms, centering women's agency and intersectional realities. It emphasizes the need for a more durable and context-sensitive application of international standards that resists co-optation by crisis-driven interventions and instead builds a foundation for long-term gender justice in the Middle East.

Short Bio: Dr Dina Haddad is a Research Fellow at the Centre d'Histoire et Anthropologie du Droit, Paris 10 Nanterre. Dr Hadad is a specialist in international law and has a significant involvement with research and a first-hand knowledge of socio-legal and political complexities of the Arab Middle East World. She has been trained legally at various institutions including: Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, UK & University of Oxford, St Anne's College and University of Montpellier. Her legal experience is complemented by her doctoral research from University of Aberystwyth, UK in international law and human rights followed by several academic posts in the UK and the Middle East (Universities of Birmingham, University of Dundee, University of Aberdeen and Kuwait International Law School). She has profound teaching and research experience in a range of legal and political areas including International Law, Cultural Studies human rights, security and development, international environmental law, Islamic politics and legal perspectives on intersectionality and feminism.

Lunch | 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Panel III: Gendered Orders and Global Governance

1:30pm – 3:00pm | *Discussant: Serena Natile; Chair: Christine Schwöbel-Patel*

Paola Zichi: “Rethinking Emancipation: Relational Solidarity, Voluntary Servitude, and Feminist Contestations of League of Nations Governance” (University of Warwick, School of Law)

This paper explores the connections between the ideas of the sixteenth-century French magistrate, Etienne de la Boetie, on voluntary servitude, gender dynamics, and international governance system of the League of Nations mandates. This contribution centres the role of relational solidarity, friendship and love in dismantling domination by weaving together La Boetie’s queer love together with feminist archives of disobedience and contestations of the League’s enquiry. By doing so, the paper reworks an early modern meaning of self-emancipation which is not limited to freedom as tied to institutional frameworks that prevent arbitrary rules but rather also encompasses an ontological condition inherent human capacity that manifests itself in acts of civil, ideological and practical disobedience and defiance. Ultimately, by linking La Boétie’s voluntary servitude concept with contemporary feminist critiques of institutional governance frameworks, this contribution aims to offer a fresh lens to analyse historical power formation structures. This framework bridges La Boétie’s theory of power with the gendered and colonial dimensions of international governance, offering a critical lens to shed new light on the historical reverberations of feminist tension between resistance and compliance in international law.

Short Bio: Paola is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Warwick Law School working on a research project on Feminist Lawyering and International Law: Women Jurists in European Legal History (1899-1949). She completed her PhD at SOAS on feminisms, gender law reform and the League of Nations in Mandate Palestine. Her research interests and expertise fall within the broader field of history of women’s international law and global governance in the twentieth century, feminist legal thought, feminist approaches to international law, Israel/Palestine and Jewish history. She won the Modern Law Review’s Helen Reece Prize for best PhD in feminist legal studies, and she is a member of the Editorial Board of the Australian Feminist Law Journal. The title of her monograph, forthcoming with Routledge Feminist and Queer International Law Series, is *Feminist Governance and International Law: A Critical Legal History from Mandate Palestine*.

Miriam Bak McKenna: in progress (Roskilde University, Department of Social Sciences and Business)

In this paper I examine the neglected role played by Nordic women’s activists in pushing for women’s equality in terms of equal access to resources and broader social and economic structural change during their involvement in the early decades of the United Nations. The close working relationship enjoyed by many of these Nordic actors– including Bodil Begtrup (Denmark), Aase Lionaes (Norway), Ulla Lindstrom (Sweden) and Alva Myrdal (Sweden)– ensured that a common Nordic position on feminist issues came to emerge, one that was grounded in women’s economic and social possibilities. Guided by their previous efforts working within the structures of the welfare state to counter the structural basis of gender inequality – an approach dubbed “state feminism” or “international welfare feminism” – they pursued a similarly social democratic idea of gender equality through international and domestic law reform at through their work at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the United Nations Department of Social Welfare, UNESCO and the WHO. This approach emphasized guarantees to equal pay, adult education, employment options, enlightened marriage legislation, day care for children and rights for children of unmarried mothers.

Short Bio: Miriam Bak McKenna is an Associate Professor of Law and Global Governance at Roskilde University. Her research takes an interdisciplinary and socio-legal approach to different areas of law with a particular focus on the history and theory of international law and law, gender and political economy. Her first monograph – *Reckoning with Empire: Self-Determination in International Law* (Brill, 2023) traces the ways in which various actors have sought to reinvent self-determination in different juridical, political, and economic iterations to create the conditions for global transformation. Drawing on the law and humanities tradition, her research also examines the aesthetics and spatial politics of international law. A book based on this research is forthcoming.

Claerwen O-Hara: “Feminism, International Law and the Global Economy: Sketches of Alternative Legal Imaginaries from the 1970s” (The University of Melbourne, School of Law)

This paper explores feminist approaches to international economic law through three rival conferences that were held in response to ‘International Women’s Year’ in the mid-1970s. These are the UN-endorsed World Conference of the International Women’s Year in Mexico City in June-July 1975; the Communist Bloc’s World Congress of Women in East Berlin October 1975; and the non-state-affiliated International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Brussels in March 1976. International economic issues spanning trade, development and labour were at the heart of all three, although the legal solutions put forward varied. This paper draws out these plural, contested and oft-forgotten feminist legal imaginaries with two aims in mind. First, it seeks to challenge the World Trade Organisation’s (WTO) recent gender-related initiatives, which not only present gender and the global economy as a new issue in international law, but also conflate the idea of ‘gender’ with ‘women’. As

a result of this conflation, the WTO tends to treat women as an overlooked economic group, rather than explore the way that gendered (as well sexual, racial and class) relations structure the global economy by devaluing certain forms of labour and exchange, and dividing the economy into ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ spheres. Retrieving these feminist debates and alternative legal imaginaries from the past, which often attended to the structural dimensions of gender, not only helps to demonstrate the narrowness of the WTO’s contemporary approach, but also to denaturalise it by showing how things could have been otherwise. Second, by assembling a repository of feminist legal framings and ideas, this paper aims to provide impetus for reimagining international economic law in feminist directions in the present.

Short Bio: Dr Claerwen O'Hara (they) is a Lecturer at Melbourne Law School, Co-Chair of the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law (ANZSIL) Gender, Sexuality and International Law Interest Group, and a member of the editorial board of the Australian Feminist Law Journal. Their research spans the fields of international human rights law and international economic law, with a particular focus on queer and feminist approaches to international law, alternative internationalisms, and law and political economy. They have recently edited two books on queer approaches to international law with Dr Tamsin Phillipa Paige: *Queer Encounters with International Law: Lives, Communities, Subjectivities* (Routledge, 2024) and *Queer Engagements with International Law: Times, Spaces, Imaginings* (Routledge, 2024). Claerwen's first monograph, *Consensus in International Law: Critical History, Queer Reimaginings*, is under contract with Oxford University Press.

Coffee Break | 3:00pm – 3:15pm

Panel IV: Feminist Visions of Justice: Between Movements and Institutions

3:15pm – 4:45pm | Discussant: Loveday Hodson; Chair: Aisel Omarova

Saadiya Alam: “The Historiography of the 1990s and the Impact of this on the CEDAW Committee” (Birkbeck Law School)

This paper presents a fresh look, thirty-five years on, at how the political factors present in the 1990s led to the CEDAW Committee acquiring institutional authority, the translation of this into judicial authority, and the role of interpretive power in this process. In the midst of the euphoria following the end of the Cold War, two key World Conferences took place, both of which had a major impact on

the CEDAW. The historiography of this period shows two contradictory attitudes which nevertheless resulted in the proliferation of human rights during the 1990s and into the new millennium. On the one hand, international human rights were seen as part of the new era and integral to the new world order, leading to a surge in the number of international courts and tribunals internationally and regionally. This included the right to individual petition to the CEDAW Committee by the end of the decade. On the other hand, growing dissent by Southern and Third World states against the supposedly universal nature of human rights, and the growing encroachment on matters of sovereign states led to scepticism of the status quo.

These conflicting positions formed part of the dialogue at both World Conferences at which women's rights played a key role. The 90s also saw the CEDAW Committee grow in self-confidence, and the outcome of contentious debates was to direct states to ratify the CEDAW, leading to an almost 98% ratification rate. Taking direction from the operating procedures of the Human Rights Committee, in 1994, the CEDAW Committee clarified its competence when reviewing state reports to also issue Concluding Observations and General Recommendations. These were then used by the Committee to clarify the scope, meaning, and obligations under the Convention, consequently consolidating the Committee's interpretive power. As the 2000s came underway, the Committee's acquisition of quasi-judicial authority further legitimised its interpretive powers. Twenty-five years on, the Committee has given merits decisions in 62 cases, backing up its findings largely by citing its own General Recommendations and Concluding Observations in relevant state reports. Globally, although there continues to be resistance against implementation of some of the rights contained in the Convention, there is an unspoken deference towards the authoritative status of the Committee's interpretation of these rights, and States continue to engage in dialogue, justifying and providing reasons for non-compliance. By analysing the impact of the 1993 Vienna Conference and 1995 Beijing Conference, this paper will offer a unique perspective on how the CEDAW Committee used the political realities it faced in the 1990s to gather authoritative status and establish itself as the expert body on women's rights.

Short Bio: Saadiya is a PhD Candidate at Birkbeck. She also teaches Human Rights, and before coming to academia, she was a solicitor with over 15 years of experience in litigating cases raising issues of women's rights (practicing under the name Saadiya Chaudary).

Char-Lee Lewis: "Recognising the Necessity of Acknowledging Intergenerational Trauma in International Human Rights Instruments: A Case Study on Femicide in Jamaica" (University of Leicester)

Women in Jamaica, particularly Black women, have historically faced dehumanisation under colonial enslavement, where they were regarded as the property of white men and denied their humanity.¹ Arguably, this legacy persists in postcolonial Jamaica, where the perception of women, especially Black women, as men's possessions remains ingrained in society. As Francoise Verges notes in *A Decolonial Feminism*, "It is coloniality that establishes a politics of disposable life, of humans as waste."² This suggests that Jamaica's colonial past continues to influence contemporary views, where women are seen as disposable if they do not conform to patriarchal norms.

Prior to the colonisation of Jamaica, the indigenous Jamaicans operated a homogenous society and the chief, whether woman or man, was the only one with superiority.³ Women were not viewed as subordinates to their male counterparts because of their gender; instead, the Jamaican Tainos operated a matrilineal system.⁴ The subordination of individuals based on gender was not practised by indigenous Jamaicans; rather, it is a phenomenon that emerged after the colonisation of Jamaica.⁵

This article argues that international human rights frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), need to account for the long-lasting impact of colonisation, particularly intergenerational trauma, to help postcolonial societies like Jamaica address GBVAW, including femicide. Drawing on empirical data from a 2022 study in Jamaica, this article highlights that violence, including femicide, is deeply rooted in the societal structures that were shaped by Jamaica's colonial past.

The article will explore whether violence such as femicide in contemporary Jamaica can be attributed to intergenerational trauma. The article will argue that the European enslavement of Afro-Jamaican people has caused intergenerational trauma. As a result of intergenerational trauma, Jamaican society is suffering from post-traumatic slave syndrome (PTSS)⁶ as a result of colonisation. Post-traumatic slave syndrome (PTSS) is a form of intergenerational trauma and can be transmitted through epigenetics and familial transmission; PTSS can affect the way in which a society is socialised.⁷ Based on Jamaica satisfying Dr Degruy's criteria for PTSS, it is argued that PTSS is pervasive throughout Jamaica, affecting both men and women. The article contends that CEDAW and similar international human rights instruments do not sufficiently address the long-term impacts of colonialism, particularly how intergenerational trauma affects the rights of women in postcolonial societies. By failing to recognise these enduring legacies, such instruments overlook the root causes of violence, such as femicide in countries like Jamaica. The article argues that for international frameworks to be more effective, they must consider the profound and lasting effects of colonialism and integrate strategies that address intergenerational trauma.

Short Bio: I recently submitted my PhD thesis in International Human Rights Law to the University of Leicester (December 2024). My thesis is titled: *A Tree Without Roots:*

An Exploration of femicide in Jamaica through a decolonial feminism lens. My research focuses on the efficacy of Women's human rights in post-colonial countries, specifically CEDAW and the Belem Do Para Convention, as effective tools in femicide prevention within Jamaica. From witnessing GBVAW against women at a young age, I decided to dedicate my life to helping women and to try and assist in the prevention and alleviation of GBVAW. I completed my LLB and worked as a family legal advisor for domestic violence victims. While working as a legal advisor, I completed my LLM, and my dissertation focused on breast ironing in Cameroon.

Selin Altay: "Bringing Reproductive Justice to the Judgements of ECtHR through Polymorphous Queer Biokinships" (Ruhr-University Bochum, Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict)

This paper critically examines the European Court of Human Rights' (ECtHR) approach to family formation in the context of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) used by queer parents, arguing that the Court's rulings are still rooted in heteronormative family structures. While the ECtHR has made some strides in recognizing non-traditional family models, it continues to prioritize genetic kinship and biological ties over diverse forms of kinship, particularly in cases involving queer families. The paper engages with Stu Marvel's concept of polymorphous reproductivity of queer biokinships, which highlights the multiplicity of ways in which queer individuals use ART to form families, often in ways that defy traditional biological or sexual norms. It argues that these alternative kinship structures challenge the Court's narrow interpretation of family life and necessitate a shift towards a more inclusive legal framework.

Through an analysis of key ECtHR rulings, such as *Gas and Dubois v. France* and *S.H. and Others v. Austria*, the paper illustrates the Court's consistent reluctance to fully embrace queer biokinships and their legal recognition. Despite acknowledging evolving societal views on family, the Court's application of a wide margin of appreciation and its deference to national sovereignty have led to inconsistencies in the recognition of ART-based queer families. Furthermore, the Court's failure to protect queer families using ART from discrimination underscores the limitations of its current jurisprudence, which still reflects a preference for traditional, heteronormative structures.

To address these gaps, the paper proposes the integration of a reproductive justice framework into the ECtHR's approach to family law. Reproductive justice, as conceptualized by scholars such as Ross and Solinger, emphasizes not only the right to access reproductive technologies but also the right to do so in a non-discriminatory environment. By incorporating this framework, the ECtHR could better support diverse reproductive practices, ensuring that queer families have equal access to ART

and related rights. The paper concludes by calling for a transformative shift in the Court's understanding of family, one that recognizes the full range of queer biokinships and ensures legal recognition of families formed through ART, in line with contemporary reproductive technologies and justice principles.

Short Bio: Selin Altay (she/her) is a Ph.D. Candidate and Research Associate at the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), Ruhr-University Bochum. She holds a bachelor's degree in law from Bilkent University and a master's in Gender and Women's Studies from the Middle East Technical University. Prior to her doctoral studies, Altay worked with several organizations, including the Kaos Gay Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association (Kaos GL), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Turkey, TED University Centre for Gender Studies, and the ÜniKuir Association. Her work focused on issues related to LGBTI+, women's, children's, and refugee rights, with a specific emphasis on sexual and gender-based violence, access to support services for LGBTI+ university students, and the integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system.

Get Together: Drinks & Dinner | 5:00pm – 7:00pm

DETAILED PROGRAMME

Friday 13 June 2025

Panel V: Historical and Contemporary Challenges to Children's Rights

9:30am – 11:00am | *Discussant: Naomi Lott; Chair: Daniel Lowe*

Ludovica Aricò: "The International Action Against Child Labour: a Mirror of the Evolving International Dynamics" (Università degli Studi di Padova)

The objective of this paper is to analyse how economic and political dynamics have modified international priorities, ultimately shaping the whole ILO action against child labour from 1919 to the end of the 1990s. To achieve this goal, the paper will employ a systematic review of existing historiography and archival sources from the ILO and EU archives, respectively located in Geneva and Fiesole, as well as from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

The first part of the paper will examine the period between 1919, the year of the ILO's foundation, and the outbreak of the Second World War. A particular focus will be placed on the post-WWI economic recovery and the adverse effects of the 1929 crisis, and the emergence of dictatorship in Europe. This section will highlight the extent to which these political and economic dynamics have transformed the ILO's mission and, consequently, impacted the first ILO Minimum Age Conventions transforming them into means of indirectly defending the interests of adult workers.

The second part of the study will analyse the period between 1945 and 1973. A particular focus will be placed: on the political dynamics that emerged because of the Cold War and Decolonisation; the economic challenges posed by the enlargement of the international trade system; and the rise of employment issues and regional imbalances that emerged in the creation of a more social Europe Economic Community (EEC). This section will demonstrate how the ILO inserted the scope and nature of the new instruments on child labour in its transformed international strategy, such as the Minimum Age Convention of 1973.

The third section will analyse the period between 1973 and the end of the 1990s. It will illustrate how the process of globalisation, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the dismantling of national boundaries in favour of integration into the international market shifted the priorities and objectives of the international community. This paragraph will demonstrate how these dynamics altered the nature of discussions within the ILO, thereby contributing to the establishment of the ILO "two-plank" approach, which aims to reconcile the need to protect child work with the long-term goal of completely abolishing all forms of child labour. This in turn led to the creation of the International

Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the adoption of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999.

The conclusions will demonstrate that the evolving economic and political dynamics of the international community have shaped the ILO's goals, priorities and internal discussions since its foundation, inevitably modifying the ILO's action against child labour.

Short Bio: Ludovica Aricò is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Human Rights, Society and Multilevel Governance at the University of Padua. Her research focuses on the historical and legal analysis of international instruments aimed at the complete abolition of child labor. Specifically, her project examines the work of the International Labour Organization in the creation of the 1973 Minimum Age Convention and the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention.

Aisel Omarova: "Children's Rights to Life, Protection, and Consent in the ICESCR and the ICCPR: Evolution of the Drafting Process" (University of Warwick, School of Law; Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University)

The paper explores the drafting process of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as they relate to children's rights: the principle of equality, the right to life, special protection of childhood, and the regulation of marriageable age and consent.

It examines how these themes were conceptualised, contested, and negotiated during the drafting process, and how children were positioned — explicitly or implicitly — within broader debates on human dignity, state obligations, and family structures. The analysis highlights the main controversial points among delegates, including differing views on the right to life, role of the family, and disagreements over the scope of protection and marriageable age.

By tracing the positions of individual states and their proposed amendments, the paper reveals how national legal traditions, cultural and religious values, and domestic political agendas influenced the negotiation process. The discussions also reflect how certain delegations — particularly those from Global South countries, the Soviet bloc, and Western Europe — frequently acted as cohesive blocs, promoting shared priorities and pushing for specific language in the final texts. This dynamic shed light the geopolitical and ideological dimensions of norm-making, and how consensus on children's rights was shaped through compromise and debates across diverse legal cultures.

To conduct this study, I analysed official meeting records from the drafting committees and the sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights. I conducted a legal comparison of the Covenants' draft norms. I used chronological order for that purpose.

Examining the drafting process of the ICESCR and the ICCPR gives us valuable insights into the global evolution of children's rights in the mid-20th century and the role of some delegations in shaping their scope and limitations.

Short Bio: Aisel Omarova is a British Academy Research Fellow, Associate Tutor at University of Warwick (UK) and Associate Professor at Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University (Ukraine). She has conducted research and proficiency enhancements at leading research institutions and universities in Czech Republic, Poland, the United Kingdom and other European countries. She currently works on historical and legal aspects of children's rights and the history of children's rights protection at the national and international levels.

Natalia Krestvoska: "Returning Ukraine's Children: Can Mediation Help?" (National University 'Odesa Maritime Academy')

The large-scale abduction and illegal transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian territory stands as one of the gravest consequences of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. These children are subjected to systemic Russification, military indoctrination, and, in some cases, forced adoption – amounting to violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. While legal proceedings are underway at both international and national levels, including ICC arrest warrants for key Russian officials, the judicial path is slow and insufficient to address the immediate needs of affected children.

This article explores the potential of mediation as an alternative, child-focused strategy to facilitate the return of Ukrainian children. It examines the psychological, legal, and political implications of forced transfers, including how they constitute a breach of Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and may qualify as genocide under Article 6(e) of the Rome Statute. Drawing on precedents such as Qatar's successful reunification efforts and the Vatican's involvement, the paper argues that mediation—if carried out with neutrality, competence, and a child-centered framework—can serve as an effective complement to formal legal mechanisms.

The article also emphasizes the urgency of immediate solutions, particularly for children who are orphans or whose parents have lost custody, making legal return channels like the 1980 Hague Convention inapplicable. Mediation offers a flexible, peaceful tool for dialogue among conflicting

parties – including international actors – that can expedite returns while safeguarding the child’s identity, psychological well-being, and best interests.

In conclusion, the paper advocates for institutionalizing mediation efforts in tandem with legal accountability to ensure that Ukrainian children are not lost to history – as occurred with many forcibly Germanized Polish children during World War II. Mediation represents both a humanitarian imperative and a practical mechanism for restoring justice and protecting future generations.

Short Bio: Natalia Krestovska is a Head of the Maritime Law Chair, National University "Odesa Maritime Academy", Doctor of Law habil., professor, one of the founders of Juvenile Law studies in Ukraine. She advocates the idea of reforming juvenile justice in Ukraine. Natalia participated law-drafting “On child-friendly justice” (passed first hearing in Verkhovna Rada). She is author of more than 10 textbooks in various legal disciplines. In particular, a co-editor and co-author of the first Ukrainian textbook on juvenile justice. Her most recent publications are Mediation in restorative justice involving juveniles (with Katarzyna Stryjek and Iryna Fedorych, in the editorial office), ‘Juvenile law of Ukraine as a new area of legal regulation’ in Single educational space in the conditions of digital transformation (E-science space, 2021), ‘Children and the Armed Conflict in Eastern Ukraine’ in The Use of Force against Ukraine and International Law (Springer, 2018). Natalia is a mediator, trainer of mediators, developer of training standards and training programs for mediators, co-editor and co-author of the first textbook on mediation for lawyers in Ukraine. Currently she works on restorative juvenile justice.

Coffee Break | 11:00am – 11:15am

Panel VI: Gendered Harm and Structural Violence

11:15am – 12:45pm | Discussant: Christine Schwöbel-Patel; Chair: Marina Velickovic

Nivedita Joon: “In the Courts of Women: Feminist Tribunals, Gender Experts and the Making of the International Women’s Movement (1976-1995)” (Geneva Graduate Institute, International History and Politics department)

Writing in the *Nouvel Observateur*, the French feminist philosopher and activist Simone de Beauvoir declared the ‘International Year of the Woman’ “preposterous” and a ruse by male society to continue its colonization of women. The women who attended the recently concluded UN First World

Conference on Women in Mexico were simply ordered around by their nationalist political parties. In contrast to those elitist women, De Beauvoir reserved her praise for the two thousand odd women who gathered at the first International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels in the spring of March 1976.

What De Beauvoir didn't know, is that this strategy of testimonial evidence would soon be adopted in the following UN conferences as feminist activists and lawyers began developing a rights-based strategy to combat gender-based violence. In Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) and other regional conferences, public tribunals were routinely held to "document, define and make visible" the female experience of violence. The sharing of lived experiences and testimonial evidence was understood as a uniquely feminist strategy to counter the patriarchal biases of state and international law.

In this paper, I look at three feminist tribunals to understand how testimony about violence came to be an important strategic tool for feminist activists in the global women's movement. I explore the tribunal proceedings, testimonies and organizational communiques of the following tribunals: the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, Brussels 1976, the Global Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights, Vienna 1993 and the Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights, Beijing 1995. Beginning from Brussels, there is a marked quality of novelty and disarray in the discussions which fail to produce a singular narrative about the causes of violence against women and its remedies. But, with the consolidation and financing of transnational feminist organisations in the 1990s, tribunal organizers at the Vienna Human Rights Conference and the Beijing World Conference begin to mold testimonies into the terms of human rights. This was done by legal experts and their opinions on the testimonies, preselecting the participants using specific criteria and encouraging testifiers' stories to be generalizable and dispassionate. In the conclusion, I bring the three tribunals together to understand how this 'tribunal as strategy' trajectory results in the establishment of liberal carcerality.

Short Bio: Nivedita Joon is a doctoral candidate in the International History and Politics department at the Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland. Her doctoral research focuses on the transnational feminist movement on violence against women from the 1970s to the early 2000s. In particular, she investigates transnational feminist activism against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to understand how third world feminists imagined, advanced and resisted carceral politics within women's conferences and activist circles in UN conferences, regional networks in Latin America and transnational NGOs in Africa. Previously, Nivedita completed her MA in International Relations and Politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute.

Anna Gopsill: “Interpreting sexual violence and masculinity in the tribunal space: Male victims of sexual violence at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda” (University of London, School of Advanced Study)

Sexual violence and its widespread perpetration as a method of war and genocide during genocide in Rwanda is well documented. Indeed, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was the first international tribunal to establish that rape was an act of genocide in the landmark case of the ICTR v. Jean-Paul Akayesu. However, while a significant development in international jurisprudence, the rhetoric surrounding sexual violence continued to centre on the female experience of this violence. At the ICTR, perpetrators were found guilty of genocidal sexual violence against women, but not against men. This is despite widespread evidence that men were victims of sexual violence during genocide in Rwanda.

Through comprehensive textual examination of selected case testimony and judgements from the ICTR, this paper explores how the tribunal understood and conceptualised sexual violence against men. Specifically centring on the crimes of forced perpetration of rape and sexual violence, forced nudity, and castration of male victims, the paper examines how gendered violence in its multitude of forms were approached by the international legal mechanism and reflects on the use and terminology of genocidal rape. In so doing, the paper contributes to a growing understanding of gendered forms of violence and provides an analysis of the nexus between violence, masculinity, and vulnerability in the tribunal space.

Short Bio: Anna Gopsill is a PhD candidate in Human Rights at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. Her research focuses on the nexus between gender and genocide, with a specific emphasis on masculinity and sexual and gender-based violence. Her PhD project centres on how male victims of sexual violence were conceptualised and addressed by international courts and institutions in the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina. She holds an MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from the University of Amsterdam and an MA in Modern History from the University of St Andrews.

Michelle Burgis-Kasthala and Matilde Placci: “Out of the Frying Pan and into the Fire: The Collapse of Gender Governance in Gaza” (University of Edinburgh, Law School)

Our paper examines the intersection of gender, governance, and genocide in the context of Gaza, particularly following the events of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent escalation of violence there

and also in the West Bank. Through a feminist lens, it interrogates the ways in which gender functions as a tool of governance to constrain the flourishing and self-determination of the Palestinian people. Beginning with a discussion of the gendered narratives surrounding allegations of sexual violence against Israeli women and their deployment in framing Hamas's actions, the paper transitions to explore how gender governance shapes and is shaped by the conditions of genocide imposed on Gaza.

The analysis is framed through an intersectional feminist methodology that emphasizes interrelated dimensions of temporality, spatiality, intersectionality, and interdependence. Rejecting isolated narratives, the paper situates the ongoing genocide within the broader colonial continuum of Zionist state-building and settler colonialism, highlighting how imperialist aims of land expansion and ethno-national security are enacted through gendered policies and practices. These include reproductive restrictions, denial of access to natal care, and the instrumentalization of gender norms for securitization purposes, such as the use of sextortion to coerce Palestinian women and closeted individuals into collaboration.

The paper further critiques the role the two Palestinian governments play in perpetuating restrictive gender norms both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It highlights the ways in which these norms, emphasizing fertility as a mode of resistance, are mobilized to reinforce nationalist and religious discourses. Simultaneously, it interrogates the complicity of global feminist and non-governmental organizations, whose selective advocacy and donor-driven agendas have constrained the development of autonomous and contextually relevant feminist movements within Palestine.

Through this multifaceted examination, the paper situates the ongoing destruction in Gaza as a form of destructive, accelerated gendered governance that extends beyond the immediate acts of violence to encompass the systematic disruption of social and reproductive structures. The concept of "reprocide" is introduced to capture the targeted elimination of Palestinian reproductive capacities as a central feature of this genocidal campaign.

The paper concludes by engaging with broader scholarly debates on gender and genocide, critiquing the dominance of sexual violence narratives in legal and academic frameworks. It advocates for an expanded understanding of gendered harm that incorporates structural and socio-economic dimensions, emphasizing the need for feminist approaches that move beyond binary categorizations and situate gender within interconnected systems of oppression. By doing so, it aims to contribute to a more nuanced and inclusive framework for understanding and addressing gendered dimensions of genocide, particularly in the Palestinian context.

This paper thus seeks to illuminate the multifaceted roles of gender in the governance of Palestinian life and death, offering both a critical analysis of existing frameworks and a call for new approaches to understanding the intersection of gender, governance, and genocide.

Short Bio: Michelle Burgis-Kasthala is Professor of International Law and Global Governance at the University of Edinburgh Law School. She has a particular interest in the Arab world.

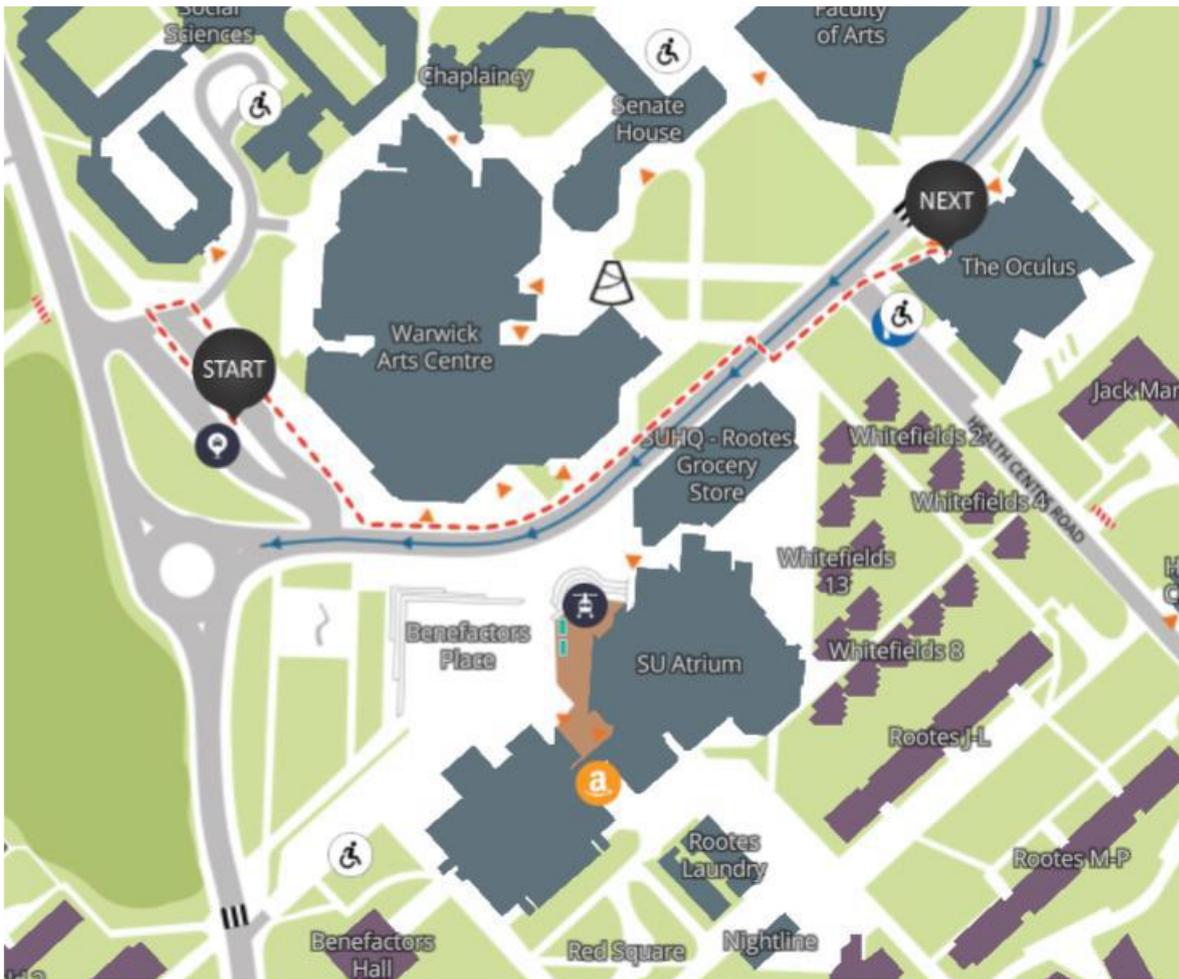
Matilde Masetti Placci is a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh Law School. Her thesis explores historically marginalised theories of international law.

Lunch | 12:45pm – 1:30pm

Keynote & Concluding Remarks

1:30pm – 3:00pm | Keynote Speakers: Parvathi Menon and Leila Ullrich

HOW TO GET HERE



Route from the Bus Interchange / Warwick Arts Centre

How to find OC1.06 when you've entered the building

<https://campus.warwick.ac.uk/search/623c8942421e6f5928c0f4f1?projectId=warwick>