



University
of Victoria

ANTHROPOLOGY COLLOQUIUM

The Life History of HIV Interventions in India: Organic Intellectuals, Community Mobilization and the Politicization of Enumeration



Group of sex work activists speaking at a public rally. © Robert Lorway

Dr. Robert Lorway

Associate Professor, Centre for Global Public Health
Canada Research Chair, Global Intervention Politics and Social Transformation
University of Manitoba

Monday, October 28th, 2019

11:30 am – 12:50 pm

Cornett Building: B107

Critical scholars characterize the historical emergence of global health as occurring around the intensification of standardized measurement practices that pivot on neoliberal logics of efficiency and accountability. Scholars raise a number of important questions that confront the rise of evidence-based medicine in global health, and the evidentiary regimes that tend to distance us from a closer attention to the everyday lived realities of health and illness. In the global response to the HIV pandemic, the prime value accorded to positivistic knowledge that is assumed to be verifiable and universally comparable is especially reflected in the public health literature that pertains to sex workers; it is replete with interpretations of data generated from prefixed quantitative indicators that are biological, behavioural, and spatial in nature. Within these terrains of measurement, what forms of socio-political awareness emerge among sex workers? In India's so called high HIV prevalence states, organic leadership among sex workers neither calls for the dismissal of enumerative practices nor the overthrow of 'the numbers'; rather it renders a political account of how measurement practices need not be at odds with the fine-grain social justice work that is vital for the transformation of social conditions that underpin sex workers' vulnerability to illness.

EVERYONE WELCOME. BRING YOUR COFFEE MUG.