

MARCH 2026

COMPARATIVE

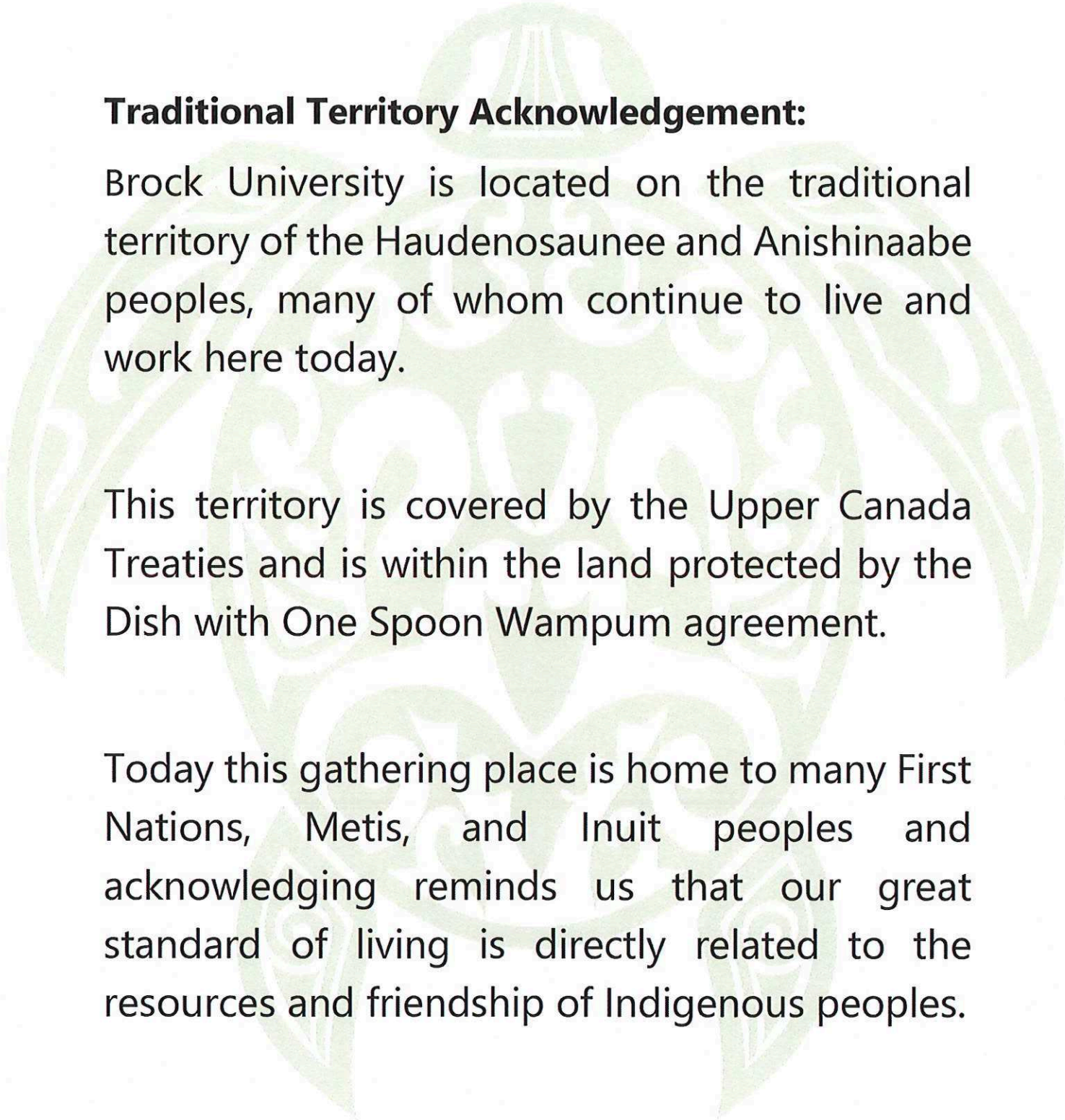
A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDENT CONFERENCE



FOCUSING ON GATEWAYS | BORDERS

BORDERS





Traditional Territory Acknowledgement:

Brock University is located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today.

This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement.

Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

Recognition of support:

We are happy to have received the support of:

Vice-President, Research, Brock University
Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Brock University
Niagara University, Department of History, Graduate School
Ancillary Services, Brock University

Conference committees:

Organizing committee

Anthony Kinik (Chair), Director, Centre for Canadian Studies, Brock University
Shannon Risk, Professor, Department of History, Niagara University
Elaine Aldridge-Low, Administrative Assistant, Centre for Canadian Studies, Brock University

Best student paper judges

Anthony Kinik, Director, Centre for Canadian Studies, Brock University
Shannon Risk, Professor, Department of History, Niagara University

Housekeeping and wayfinding

All conference sessions are held in RFP 214/215 (the large, glass-enclosed room) and RFP 216.

Refreshments will be located between RFP 214/215 and RFP 216. A continental breakfast and lunch will be available at the refreshment area, but feel free to wander around campus.

If you are looking for more food, check out the back page of this program for the list!

Washrooms are located behind the large red block in the centre of the foyer.

BrockEvents (WiFi) – Username: brockguest Password: welcome2brock0326!

Message from the Director of Brock's Centre for Canadian Studies

Welcome to the inaugural edition of **Comparative Borders**, the conference formerly known as Crossing Borders! For years, the Centre for Canadian Studies at Brock University, together with our partners at Niagara University, Wilfrid Laurier University, Western Washington University, and elsewhere, has gathered students from both Canada and the United States to share their work on Canada-U.S. border regions and border relations. This year, by popular demand, we've broadened our scope to encompass border issues globally, hence our new name.

Crossing Borders was always notable for the quality and the diversity of the work that was presented. The Call for Papers for Comparative Borders has somehow managed to attract an even more diverse body of thoughtful and intriguing abstracts. Comparative Borders 2026 is a welcoming and supportive environment, one where you can share your scholarship, engage in discussions and debates related to border issues of all kinds, and make meaningful and lasting connections. Regardless of any tensions there might be between the U.S. and Canada at this juncture, as academics we can use our talents, our communication skills, and our research to help maintain important links between our two nations, fostering dialogue and harmony.

We would like to thank Shannon Risk of Niagara University, in particular, for her invaluable assistance in the organization of this conference. And we look forward to creating a new Comparative Borders tradition, one with a bright future, on both sides of our shared border.

Anthony Kinik

Director, Centre for Canadian Studies

Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Popular Culture & Film, Brock University

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Liam Midzain-Gobin



Liam Midzain-Gobin is a settler scholar who studies the ongoing remaking of settler colonial sovereignty and Indigenous responses to it. Dr. Midzain-Gobin is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Brock University and an associate editor with the journal, *Critical Studies on Security*. He is the author of *Settler Colonial Sovereignty: Visions of Improvement and Indigenous Erasure* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2025) and his work has also appeared in *Security Dialogue*, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *Borderlands*, the *American Review of Canadian Studies*, the *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies*, and elsewhere.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE - Friday March 27, 2026

4:00-5:00 pm Conference Registration

Location: Rankin Family Pavilion

5:00-6:15 pm Keynote Speaker

Location: RFP 214/215

Brock University Welcome

Dr. Tim Kenyon, Vice-President, Research, Brock University

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

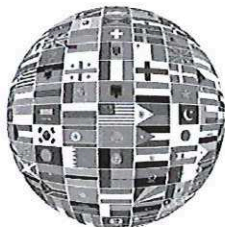
Anthony Kinik, Director, Centre for Canadian Studies, Brock University

Keynote Speaker

Liam Midzain-Gobin, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Brock University

“Unsettling Sovereignty’s Hegemonologue”

Looking at Canada today, its sovereignty can easily be taken for granted and assumed as a settled fact. However, as a settler-colonial state, such assumptions continually run into Indigenous nations’ own underlying claims to sovereignty. In this talk, Dr. Midzain-Gobin shows how the settler colonial counterclaim to sovereignty is legitimized through worldmaking processes. Organized around a logic of improvement, these processes collapsed an international collection of Indigenous sovereignties into today’s understanding of Canada by imposing settler cosmological conceptions of dominion onto the still-existing Indigenous relationships to their lands and waters. By drawing on both historical processes and present-day issues, this keynote address provides a critical view into our understandings of sovereignty, Canada, and the singular narrative of Canadian sovereignty, ultimately allowing us to reimagine how we build relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE – Saturday March 28, 2026

REGISTRATION: 8:30-9:00 am Conference Registration and Breakfast Buffet

Location: Rankin Family Pavilion

GROUP 1: 9:00-10:15 am Panel 1 - Economy and Environment

Location: RFP 214/215

Moderator: Anthony Kinik, Brock University

Cameron Haberman, Western Washington University

Buy Canadian: Difficulties in Prioritizing Canadian Products in American Dominated Industries

Kohji Haskins, Western Washington University

Columbia River Treaty for the Future

Anna Shantz and Leif Walker, University of Maine

Tariff Impacts in a Borderland Economy – Evidence from Maine's Lumber Industry

GROUP 1: 9:00-10:15 am Panel 2 - Education, Students, and Policy

Location: RFP 216

Moderator: Brian de Ruiter, Brock University

Carlton Redpath, Western Washington University

Current and Future Linkages in the Cascadian Borderland by Gen Z College Students

Olivia Schmidt, Brock University

Borders as Mirrors: Student Experiences at Niagara's Borders Under Trump-Era Nationalism

BREAK: 10:15-10:30 am

Location: Rankin Family Pavillion

GROUP 2: 10:30-11:45 am Panel 3 - Maps, People, and Boundaries: Understanding an 18th Century Boundary

Location: RFP 214/215

Panel Chair: Danny Samson, Brock University

Panel Members for web/ArcGIS group: Jasmine Buchaly, Ben Lockett, Adrian Resovac, and Jacob Rosa, Brock University

Panel Members for podcast group: Jacob Drury and Michael Micieli, Brock University

Abstract: This collaborative project in digital public history explores the contested boundaries of 18th-century Acadie/Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia – a region that encompassed territories in the northeastern borderlands of what is today Canada and the United States. Our class project develops an interactive, public-facing ArcGIS Story Map that examines imperial and Indigenous conceptions of space and territory. Pursuing historian Elizabeth Mancke's focus on "spaces of power" rather than imperial boundaries, our StoryMap and accompanying podcast examines the military, diplomatic and cultural bases of the shifting and contested borders of Acadia/Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia between 1700 and 1763. By focusing on the imperial rivalry between France and Britain, the Mi'kmaq and their Wabanaki allies, and the importance of the Acadian settler population, the project asks: How did these boundary disputes in Acadia impact the lives of the region's inhabitants?

This website enables viewers to understand how people in Acadia, including French, British, Acadian, and Mi'kmaw peoples, experienced the instability of colonial borders, the gap between on-the-ground power and the lines configured on imperial maps, and the experiences of Indigenous and settler peoples in contested spaces.

This project contributes to the Comparative Borders conference by situating early Acadia within a longer historical trajectory of the Canada-USA borderlands. By examining how imperial rivalries, overlapping jurisdictions, and contested sovereignty operated in northeastern North America prior to the formalization of the modern boundary, the Story Map highlights the deeper historical processes that shaped later Canadian-American border relations.

Two presentations will discuss the exploration of complex settler-Indigenous issues via very different modes of public history – an ArcGIS website (StoryMap) and a podcast.

GROUP 2: 10:30-11:45 am Panel 4 - Exploring the Building Blocks of Nation-making in Canada in the 1600s-1700s

Location: RFP 216

Panel Chair: Shannon Risk, Niagara University

Panel Members: Collin Blech, Lauren Ervolina, Frankie Pollino, and Calina Purnsley, Niagara University

Abstract: This undergraduate panel will explore whether or not the formation of the Canada we know today was inevitable by examining the conditions and events that shaped the early nation. Panelists will look at the Age of Empire in the Western world and its imprints on the land and the people, the ways trade often forced pragmatic decisions by rulers and people, and outcomes after the U.S. Revolutionary War.

LUNCH: 11:45 am-12:45 pm

Location: Rankin Family Pavilion



GROUP 3: 12:45-2:00 pm Panel 5 – Borders and Belonging

Location: RFP 214/215

Moderator: Joseph Sankoh, Daemen University

Chloe Canning, Wilfrid Laurier University

Securing the Border and Casting Aside Human Security in the Canada-U.S. Context

Naomi Davis, Brock University

Belonging Without Lines: How Connection Outruns the Borders that Claim to Contain Us

Caroline (Care) Lefaive, Wilfrid Laurier University

National Strategies, Local Realities: Homelessness Policy in Canada-U.S. Cross Border Urban Regions

Maheen Rajani, Brock University

Entrepreneurship Across the 49th Parallel: Borders, Trade, and Economic Sovereignty

GROUP 3: 12:45-2:00 pm Panel 6 – Emigration and Immigration Across Borders

Location: RFP 216

Moderator: Shyam K. Sriram, Canisius University

Shaira Brereton, Niagara University

Opting Out: U.S. Emigration in a Changing Sociopolitical Landscape

Iman Elkassem, King's University College, University of Western Ontario

Unequal Gateways: Discriminatory Barriers in Canada's Gaza Temporary Resident Visa Program

Hailey Solis, Western Washington University

Canada's Blind Spot: The Safe Third Country Agreement

BREAK: 2:00-2:15 pm

Location: Rankin Family Pavillion

GROUP 4: 2:15-3:30 pm Panel 7 – Culture Across Borders

Location: RFP 214/215

Moderator: Christina Keppie, Western Washington University

Hani Hedayati, Brock University

Mourning the Cow: An Autotheoretical Journey Through Loss and Transformation

Sayed Bin Ataur Rahman, Canadian University of Bangladesh (virtual presentation)

The Mathematica Aporia: Logic as a Transversal Gateway in the Comparative Border Narratives of Zia Haider Rahman and Madeleine Thien

Greg Roberts, Western Washington University

Struggles of the Modern Acadianité Through a Musical Lens

GROUP 4: 2:15-3:30 pm Panel 8 – International Relations

Location: RFP 216

Moderator: Stephanie Bangarth, King's University College

John McBrien, Brock University

Canada's Sovereignty, Military, and Foreign Policy, in the Age of Unreliability

Apeksha Pawanikar, King's University College, University of Western Ontario

Imparting Injustice: A Discourse on Colonial Hangover of Distorted Realities

BREAK: 3:30-3:45 pm

Location: Rankin Family Pavillion

GROUP 5: 3:45-5:00 pm Panel 9 – Belonging and Identity

Location: RFP 214/215

Moderator: Andy Holman, Bridgewater State University

Christina Gregory, Brock University

Invisible Labour and Delayed Action: Understanding the Slow Reform of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Anna Koziol, Wilfrid Laurier University

Hockey as a Cultural Border Regime: International Competition, Media, and the Construction of Canada-United States National Identity

Kat Rice, Brock University

Playing Along and Pushing Back: Resistance and Complicity in Queer Women's Ice Hockey

GROUP 5: 3:45-5:00 pm Panel 10 - Indigeneity

Location: RFP 216

Moderator: Marian Bredin, Brock University

Danil Huriev, Brock University

Indigenous Autonomy Within Canada: Balancing Indigenous Rights in s. 35 of the Constitution with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom

Mitchell Keene, Niagara University

Exploring Chronic Student Absenteeism in Northern Saskatchewan

Nicole Lehecka, Wilfrid Laurier University

Settler Colonialism and Femicide: Indigenous Women and the Violent Legacy of State Power in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

WRAP UP: 5:00-5:15 pm

Location: RFP 214/215

Announcement of Best Student Paper

Anthony Kinik, Centre for Canadian Studies, Brock University

Comparative Borders Conference 2027

Shannon Risk, Department of History, Niagara University on March 27, 2027

ABSTRACTS

Shaira Brereton, Niagara University

Opting Out: U.S. Emigration in a Changing Sociopolitical Landscape

Abstract: This qualitative, phenomenological study examines the perspectives of Americans living abroad. Guided by an analytical framework grounded in push-pull theory, this study relies on U.S. emigrant survey responses to identify the core factors that influence citizens' decisions to relocate abroad, explore the influence that sociopolitical environment has on emigration phenomena, and gather insights about post-emigration experiences. With factors such as cost of living, social life, and lifestyle commonly cited as push factors away from the United States and pull factors toward a destination location, this study highlights three core themes – material conditions, sense of community, and cultural adaptation – that inform the American emigration experience. Ultimately, this study contributes new insights about U.S. emigration phenomena by identifying key environmental catalysts that influence citizen emigration decisions. Moreover, this study expands the scope of topical knowledge by adding depth to scholarly emigration discussions and provides foundational understandings that can be used to inform social policy.

Chloe Canning, Wilfrid Laurier University

Securing the Border and Casting Aside Human Security in the Canada-U.S. Context

Abstract: Since the attacks of 9/11, the securitization of the Canada-United States (U.S.) border has become an increasingly apparent feature in its management. Most scholars tend to focus on the relationship between free trade and state security as well as how to balance these two factors when analyzing the transformation of Canada-U.S. border operations. The idea that border securitization has been the result of increased globalization since the late 20th century explains the coercive nature of Canada-U.S. border policies amidst the significant shift in governing priorities post-9/11. However, this has led to gaps in the way other non-traditional forms of security, apart from terrorism, are addressed at the Canada-U.S. border. More specifically, research on how similar securitization logic is shifted onto other 'crisis'-related threats such as pandemics, climate displacement and irregular migration is insufficient. As a result, this paper explores how Canada-U.S. border policies over the last two decades have reflected and extended existing post-9/11 securitization logics, causing ineffective bilateral governance over salient issues and leaving room for new vulnerabilities to rise in the face of emerging threats at the Canada-U.S. border.

Naomi Davis, Brock University

Belonging Without Lines: How Connection Outruns the Borders That Claim to Contain Us

Abstract: We live in a world where borders still exist on maps, but not in the ways people actually live. Postmodernism tells us that meaning, identity, and belonging were never fully contained by nation-states and that the internet accelerated that shift. Many people feel more connected to someone online halfway across the world than to someone in their own neighbourhood. Yet political rhetoric in North America pushes for stronger borders, tighter controls, and a return to nationalism. This tension – between how people actually live and how politics imagines we live – is what I want to explore. What does it mean to talk about borders when so much of our experience already exceeds them? How do we make sense of belonging in a world where connection is no longer limited by geography?

To explore these questions, I draw on three very different border experiences – within North America, the EU, and Mexico – to show how borders are lived and felt in contrasting ways. These examples reveal how borders operate not only at national lines but also inside communities, shaping space, identity, and movement in ways that often go unnoticed. They also highlight how easily people cross, settle, and build relationships, even when political discourse insists on separation. By placing these lived experiences in conversation with contemporary debates about national identity, I argue that

borders no longer function as meaningful containers of belonging. Instead, they persist largely as symbolic markers, out of step with the global, relational, and digitally connected ways people already inhabit the world.

Iman Elkassem, King's University College, University of Western Ontario

Unequal Gateways: Discriminatory Barriers in Canada's Gaza Temporary Resident Visa Program

Abstract: This research paper examines the discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in Canada's humanitarian immigration system through a critical analysis of the Gaza Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) program. While framed as a compassionate emergency response, the program's design and implementation reveal structural racism embedded in immigration policy. By comparing key program elements to the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), only when necessary to expose inequity, this study demonstrates how racialized risk profiling, political expediency, and bureaucratic opacity have excluded Palestinians. Through a compilation of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policy documents, advocacy reports, and an interview with an anonymous government official experienced in crisis

immigration programming, the analysis shows how the anchor-family requirement and biometrics processes function as discriminatory mechanisms. The findings highlight how racialized compassion and selective humanitarianism undermines Canada's obligations under human-rights law. A Welcome Guide for Palestinians Arriving in Canada is also presented to support those who are working with this population and aim to improve practical access and rights awareness for newcomers in London, Ontario, and surrounding regions.

Christina Gregory, Brock University

Invisible Labour and Delayed Action: Understanding the Slow Reform of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Abstract: This paper looks at why reforms to Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) have been slow due to the country's cultural, socioeconomic, and political structures that systemically undervalue racialized migrant labour (Bauder, 2005; Patrias, 2016; Preibisch & Otero, 2014; Weiler & McLaughlin, 2019; Lozanski & Baumgartner, 2020; Perry, 2012). Using the work of Bauder (2005), Patrias (2016), Preibisch & Otero (2014), Weiler & McLaughlin (2019), Perry (2012) and Lozanski & Baumgartner (2020), I analyze how historically racial ideologies, employer-driven power imbalances, and sociocultural representations of migrant workers have portrayed them as disposable and undeserving of full citizenship and labour rights. Historical beliefs of racialized agricultural labour indicate that reforms in labour policies are implemented when white workers advocate for change, revealing racial bias in policy enactment and enforcement (Patrias, 2016, p.102). The paper further examines how the overall design of the SAWP, particularly the tied work permits, absence of paths to citizenship, and reliance on employers for housing, healthcare, and status create an "unfree" labour force that prevents worker advocacy and allows for employer exploitation (Bauder, 2005, p.43; Preibisch & Otero, 2014, p.185). Media representations and tourism render migrant workers invisible, further justifying government inaction and reinforcing their exclusion from the communities (Bauder, 2005, pp.52-53; Lozanski & Baumgartner, 2020, pp.10-11). This systematic undervaluing of migrant workers and reform delay is maintained through political and economic interests such as employers' dependency on vulnerable workers and weak enforcement of work regulations (Preibisch & Otero, 2014, pp. 188-190). My paper contends that systemic racism and the normalization of the disposal of migrant labour explain the persistence of institutional disparities within the SAWP, while acknowledging counterarguments that policy delays occur partly due to the complexity of international agreements. Activist groups and researchers argue that meaningful reform requires stricter enforcement of labour regulations, the implementation of open work permits, clear pathways to permanent residency and citizenship, and the recognition of migrant workers as integral members of Canadian society who truly belong (Preibisch & Otero, 2014, pp.194-195; Weiler & McLaughlin, 2019; Bauder, 2005, p.44).

Cameron Haberman, Western Washington University

Buy Canadian: Difficulties in Prioritizing Canadian Products in American Dominated Industries

Abstract: As trade relationships between Canada and the United States continue to weaken, the push for Canadian consumers to purchase domestically becomes increasingly prevalent. While efforts have been urged by the government of Canada, prioritizing Canadian consumer purchases for the average consumer can come with challenges. Many industries such as food, beverage, and grocery retailers are primarily dominated by American-based conglomerates. Often brands holding Canadian association are owned in majority or entirely by such conglomerates. Efforts have also been made by these corporations to promote their domestic and local Canadian supply chains, and they are advertising this to consumers. Ultimately, however, most of these profits are remitted to the U.S., leaving a difficult landscape for Canadian consumers to navigate.

This paper explores the challenges to “buy Canadian” for consumer goods, providing context and data around the problems facing Canadian buyers and this new relationship with American goods. It focuses on industries that face heightened American monopolization, especially key consumer staples such as beer, hygiene products, and kitchen appliances. Ultimately, this research will clarify the dominance of American consumer products in the Canadian market and will encourage further thought into the difficulties of the buy Canadian movement and options for future action.

Kohji Haskins, Western Washington University

Hockey as a Cultural Border Regime: International Competition, Media, and the Construction of Canada=United States National Identity

Abstract: The Columbia River treaty is the bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Canada over the management of hydropower and flooding in the Columbia River basin. This treaty was originally ratified in 1964 and modernized in 2024, due to adjustment of compensation of hydropower in the U.S. that was caused via Canadian actions upstream. However, these actions miss other key sectors that are under-represented in the treaty arrangements. There is little consideration for native lands, agriculture, and the ecosystem. The river generates USD\$198.8 billion annually in economic capital, yet the treaty focuses only on energy and flood control. This paper argues that the inclusion of these 3 sectors would greatly contribute to the economic gain of both countries. There are 671,000 acres of land that is irrigated in Washington on the Columbia River, accounting for 47% of irrigation in Washington. The basin is a critical habitat for several fish species including steelhead trout, chinook, sockeye salmon and other species. These resources are vital for the First Nations and Native Americans in the upper Columbia, but spawning salmon have not been able easily to swim upriver for nearly 70 years after the building the hydro-electric dams. Additionally, the native tribes of both nations were not consulted on the treaty. The inclusion of these sectors in a revised treaty would greatly increase the economic ties and benefits for both nations.

Hani Hedayati, Brock University

Mourning the Cow: An Autotheoretical Journey Through Loss and Transformation

Abstract: This presentation emerges from an autotheoretical engagement with Gholam Hossein Saedi’s *The Cow* (1969), a Persian novella, and the life and artwork of Mokarrameh Ghanbari, Iranian artist, to examine migration as an affective and material border crossing. Reading Hassan’s psychic collapse alongside Mokarrameh’s creative reorientation, I explore how loss at the threshold of displacement can either unravel subjectivity or generate new forms of agency. At the center of this inquiry is the migrant’s attachment to images that organize desire: the nation left behind and the imagined life ahead. Both function as sustaining fantasies, structuring belonging, recognition, and the promise of a “good life.” Yet these attachments can inhibit flourishing when the conditions that once sustained them no longer exist. Here, Lauren Berlant’s concept of cruel optimism clarifies how subjects remain bound to compromised objects that simultaneously

sustain and constrain them. Migration also disrupts the embodied dispositions through which one navigates space and social life. Through Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, displacement appears not merely geographic but structural: the loss of material and symbolic capital that once stabilized perception and practice. The border unsettles pre-reflective bodily orientation as much as legal status. Furthermore, drawing on Lauren Fournier's articulation of autotheory as feminist practice, this presentation situates theory within lived experience, resisting the demand for scholarly detachment. Migration thus becomes a negotiation between sustaining attachments and the possibility of reworlding at the border.

Danil Huriev, Brock University

Indigenous Autonomy Within Canada: Balancing Indigenous Rights in S. 35 of the Constitution with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Abstract: One of the main issues underlying the actualisation of Indigenous self-governance is the compatibility of Aboriginal self-governance, protected as a fundamental Indigenous right under s. 35 of the *1982 Constitution Act*, with Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982. Due to the underlying conceptual differences in Aboriginal and Canadian vision of rights, it is reasonable to expect an occasional conflict between constitutions of self-governing Indigenous communities and provisions of the *Charter*. The individualistic spirit of the *Charter* collides with Aboriginal values which are collective in their nature. Hence, a certain degree of variation between Canadian and Indigenous laws is permissible and even necessary for the protection of Indigenous autonomy, as well as revival of Aboriginal culture(s) and traditional ways of living.

Canadian jurisprudence, however, has proven reluctant to confer an *absolute* right to self-governance onto Indigenous peoples. Nor did it venture to fully exempt Aboriginal governments from the effects of the *Charter*, as was held by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Dickson v. Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation* [2024], for fears of severely undermining individual *Charter* protections guaranteed to everyone, including Indigenous people. That being said, it is crucial to determine the *extent* to which self-governing Indigenous communities (and their constitutions) may deviate from the effects of the *Charter*. A delicate balance between collective rights of Aboriginal people and the *Charter* would ensure the cultural autonomy of Indigenous people while also upholding the constitutional protections of individual rights as guaranteed by the *Charter*.

Mitchell Keene, Niagara University

Exploring Chronic Student Absenteeism in Northern Saskatchewan

Abstract: Chronic student absenteeism is a common phenomenon that education staff in northern Saskatchewan experience. Eighty-eight percent of the students who attend publicly funded schools in northern Saskatchewan self-identify as First Nation, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI), and a likelihood exists that many students are descendants of residential school survivors. A phenomenological research method was selected to explore whether current student attendance patterns could be an additional expression of intergenerational trauma experienced by those who attended residential schools. Data were generated through qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a snowball sample of three individuals who self-identified as Indigenous, have lived in northern Saskatchewan, and are somehow connected to the residential school system in Canada. Causation coding was used to analyze how participants believed antecedent conditions eventually led to certain outcomes. Findings are summarized in a causation map that establishes plausible causation sequences and how multiple contextual factors may influence certain outcomes. Findings suggest that chronic student attendance patterns are a plausible consequence of the attempted cultural genocide through assimilation that took place in residential schools. Indigenous parents also expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction regarding the broken education system in Saskatchewan. Intensive intervention programming is needed for parents and students to begin healing and making positive progress. Educational leaders ought to consider re-designing instruction and developing tailor-made attendance intervention models.

Anna Koziol, Wilfrid Laurier University

Hockey as a Cultural Border Regime: International Competition, Media, and the Construction of Canada-United States National Identity

Abstract: Borders are often understood as territorial lines that separate sovereign states, but scholars emphasize that borders also function as social and cultural processes that define belonging and national identity. They are produced through media, discourse, and everyday practices rather than solely through political institutions. In North America, ice hockey plays a significant role in shaping Canada's national identity, particularly in relation to how Canada defines itself in distinction from the United States. This paper argues that hockey functions as a cultural border regime that regulates Canada's national identity. Through media, international competition, and public discourse, hockey reinforces symbolic distinctions between the two nations. Examining the 1988 Wayne Gretzky trade as a historical foundation, this paper demonstrates how, over the years, hockey has long served as a medium through which Canadian national identity is constructed and continues to be used to frame concerns over American influence. In recent years, international competitions such as the Four Nations Face-Off and the Olympic Games have provided contexts in which public discourse frames Canada-United States hockey rivalries as contests of national distinction, rather than purely athletic events. By analyzing media narratives, political rhetoric, and public commentary, this research highlights how hockey outcomes are mobilized to reinforce symbolic boundaries between Canada and the United States, demonstrating how cultural institutions engage in the ongoing construction of national borders.

Caroline (Care) Lefaive, Wilfrid Laurier University

National Strategies, Local Realities: Homelessness Policy in Canada-U.S. Cross-Border Urban Regions

Abstract: Homelessness in Canada-United States border cities exposes governance gaps that national housing strategies are not structured to address. While both countries have developed comprehensive homelessness frameworks, these policies remain largely domestically focused despite the economic and social integration of cross-border urban regions. Border cities share interconnected labour markets, industrial histories, housing pressures, and vulnerability to common economic shocks. However, homelessness prevention programs, housing supports, and service delivery systems operate within fragmented national, provincial, state, and municipal jurisdictions. This fragmentation may create policy misalignment that is particularly visible in border regions. This paper will examine homelessness governance in Canada-U.S. border cities, with a primary focus on the Windsor-Detroit region and reference to other cross-border areas such as Sarnia-Port Huron. Using comparative policy analysis, the paper will assess how differences in funding models, eligibility requirements, and prevention strategies shape local responses to housing insecurity. It will explore whether these structural differences limit coordination and reduce policy effectiveness in shared urban regions. This paper will argue that homelessness in Canada-U.S. border cities cannot be fully addressed through isolated national strategies. It proposes the development of a targeted binational housing policy framework that emphasizes coordinated data sharing, aligned prevention efforts, and formalized cross-border collaboration. Such an approach could better reflect the interconnected realities of border regions while strengthening existing domestic housing systems.

Nicole Lehecka, Wilfrid Laurier University

Settler Colonialism and Femicide: Indigenous Women and the Violent Legacy of State Power in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Abstract: This study examines femicide in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside through a critical analysis of Canadian legal, political, and institutional structures that not only historically but continue to put Indigenous women in disproportionately more vulnerable circumstances. While public discourse often frames violence against women as isolated criminal acts, this research argues that femicide must be understood as structurally embedded within colonial governance systems and institutional practices. By drawing on feminist, Indigenous, and decolonial theories, the project

situates contemporary violence within the legacy of settler colonialism, including the ongoing impacts of the Indian Act, child welfare system, racialized policing practices, and socio-economic marginalization. The Downtown Eastside is a product of wicked policy decisions that have displaced Indigenous women through housing precarity, intergenerational trauma, and systemic exclusion from social and legal protections.

Through qualitative policy analysis and case-based examination of state and media responses including policing failures, legal thresholds for accountability, and findings from government inquiries, this research investigates how a government's design and intentions behind its design contributes to both exposure to violence and the denial of justice after harm occurs for Indigenous women. Particular attention is given to how current policy governs whose lives are protected and whose disappearances are under-investigated or deprioritized. Ultimately, this study argues that addressing femicide requires confronting the structural violence embedded in Canadian governance systems rather than relying solely on individual responses to criminal justice. By reframing femicide as a systemic outcome rather than individual tragedy, the research contributes to ongoing discussions on Indigenous sovereignty, gendered colonial violence, and legal reform.

John McBrien, Brock University

Canada's Sovereignty, Military, and Foreign Policy, in the Age of Unreliability

Abstract: Throughout the world, Canada is known for its peacekeeping operations. However, following the end of the 2014 NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, Canada's role in peacekeeping and peacemaking has declined significantly. At a time when international global order is threatened by authoritarianism, increased global violence, and instability amongst allied partners, Canada's policy and role on the international stage is outdated in the face of unprecedented times. This paper argues that Canada must make a firm commitment to its peacemaking operations alongside middle powers, at a time of increased threats from rival and allied powers. Additionally, Canada is facing major obstacles to the change of military policy and procurement for the Canadian Armed Forces as American instability challenges Canada's international response. Canada must find a balance between its military and foreign policies to include Arctic security and sovereignty, military procurement, and the commitment to peacekeeping readiness and strategy. There is no doubt the global order has dramatically shifted, and the conservation of economic development is unable to occur without the conversation of human rights. While Canada grapples with international readiness, it collides with a backdrop of shifting global affairs, a warming world, confronting the recent American necessity to undermine and rival the United Nations.

Apeksha Pawanikar, King's University College, University of Western Ontario

Imparting Injustice: A Discourse on Colonial Hangover of Distorted Realities

Abstract: Borderlands in contemporary Western nations are often inaccessible, thereby creating socioeconomic barriers. They delineate invisible obstacles hindering individuals from less affluent countries from entering Western states. Borders are continuously evolving, shaped by Western interests seeking to exploit labor from less wealthy nations. The essay argues that borders are legally regulated as essential components of the state system, though their permeability varies according to the desirability of migrants. Factors such as race, class, and place of birth significantly influence eligibility for entry. The section titled 'border duality' explores how borderlands function as unwelcoming zones restricting immigration through legislation, often motivated by economic considerations. Western countries tend to prioritize economic gains, fostering anti-immigrant sentiments that marginalize racialized groups and economically disadvantaged populations, thereby limiting their access to resources and sustaining economic disparities. The section 'Seeking Labour' assesses how borders facilitate the exploitation of domestic workers in affluent nations, often with vulnerabilities that are gender-specific, leading to human rights violations as evidenced in Arab countries and supported by data from the International Labour Organization. These workers frequently endure conditions akin to modern slavery, with governments relying on

unpaid and coerced domestic labor. The section, 'Modern-Day Industrial Colonization,' illustrates how Western capitalism infiltrates poorer countries through borderless industrial expansion, resulting in environmental degradation and child labor, exemplified by mica extraction in Jharkhand. Ultimately, the Eurocentric framework of border regulation and trade monopolies has created a global system in which Eastern nations primarily serve as suppliers of labor, resources, and industrial capacity. This scenario positions borderlands at the intersection of exploitation, migration regulation, and industrial development, emphasizing borders as arenas of power, exclusion, and economic disparity.

Sayed Bin Ataur Rahman, Canadian University of Bangladesh (virtual presentation)

The Mathematical Aporia: Logic as a Transversal Gateway in the Comparative Border Narratives of Zia Haider Rahman and Madeleine Thien

Abstract: I examine how mathematics and music function as epistemological gateways in Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know* and Madeleine Thien's *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*, novels that confront the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and China's Cultural Revolution and their afterlives in diasporic communities. My aim is to demonstrate that formal logics, presented within these narratives as neutral or universal languages promising clear passage across cultural borders, frequently operate instead as instruments that reproduce exclusion, historical amnesia, and embodied trauma. I adopt a transversal interdisciplinary methodology, combining postcolonial theory—especially Mary Louise Pratt's contact zone and Boaventura de Sousa Santos's *Epistemologies of the South*—with mathematical philosophy, archival research and close textual analysis; I also mobilise conceptual metaphors such as Gödel's incompleteness and visual aporias like Poggendorff's illusion to probe limits of proof and perception. My readings show that Rahman's protagonist, a mathematics prodigy, treats numerical knowledge as a Rosetta Stone that paradoxically becomes a smokescreen for classed passport control and organised numbness, while Thien's figures, including a musician and a mathematician, rely on musical and notational logics that fail to repair intergenerational wounds; comparative analysis situates these failures within neoliberal gateway cities—London, Vancouver, Toronto—that selectively admit expertise while enforcing racialised norms and liminal legality. I propose the concept of the "mathematical aporia," a double-edged gateway offering illusory integration yet reinforcing displacement, and argue that border studies must incorporate epistemological critique and narrative attention to grasp the human costs of technocratic belonging.

Maheen Rajani, Brock University

Entrepreneurship Across the 49th Parallel: Borders, Trade, and Economic Sovereignty

Abstract: Small and medium-sized businesses that operate between Canada and the United States perceive borders as persistent and fundamentally significant, despite the fact that globalization is frequently characterized as erasing borders. This study looks at how tariffs, regulatory differences, customs processes, intellectual property rights, and currency fluctuations all affect entrepreneurial autonomy along the Canada–U.S. border and the future of small enterprises.

The study makes the case that the border serves as an economic filter that redistributes power between states and private businesses in addition to being a physical boundary, drawing on political economics and sovereignty theory. Cross-border trade offers Canadian entrepreneurs the opportunity to expand their markets, but it also comes with layers of regulatory compliance, cost volatility, and reliance on U.S. policy decisions, which is one of the biggest and most diverse markets to global success. Therefore, in practice, trade agreements and customs regimes serve as tools for negotiating sovereignty.

The analysis focuses on how changes in U.S. trade policies and discourse surrounding border enforcement can affect Canadian exposure to risks, investment choices, and business planning. This study presents entrepreneurs as participants in a binational governance context, where political authority on both sides of the border determines economic opportunity, rather than as indifferent market actors.

This study adds to comparative border studies by analyzing small-business experiences in the Canada–U.S. sector and showing how routine cross-border trade limits, facilitates, and reshapes economic sovereignty. By doing this, it emphasizes how important boundaries are even in a time that is frequently seen as "post-national."

Carlton Redpath, Western Washington University

Current and Future Linkages in the Cascadian Borderland of Gen Z College Students

Abstract: This study investigates current travel patterns and attitudes of American and Canadian college students in the Cross-border Cascadia Region, which is especially timely given the current trade and political tensions between the two current national administrations. Additionally, it asks respondents to project their thoughts into the future and speculate about the expected nature of the international border, Cascadian identity, and attitudes towards it when their generation assumes the levers of power. Data was collected from approximately 100 students each at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA located 25 miles south of the Peace Arch crossing, and a second group of Canadian students attending the Annual Meeting of the Western Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC 25 miles north of the crossing. Although the exact extent of Cascadia is undetermined, approximately 80% of its population lives in Mainstreet Cascadia which extends from Vancouver, BC north to Portland, OR south, making the Bellingham to Vancouver section highly representative. Comparing the results from this study with a pre-Covid one for all ages demonstrates significant differences which in part appear to reflect generational change.

Kat Rice, Brock University

Playing Along and Pushing Back: Resistance and Complicity in Queer Women's Ice Hockey

Abstract: Hockey is often described as the lifeblood of Canada, a cultural practice through which national belonging is imagined and (re)affirmed. To love hockey is often framed as synonymous with being Canadian. But this narrative obscures the ways in which hockey has and continues to function as a regulatory space, shaping who can claim membership in the nation. While women have played hockey alongside men since the 1880s, hockey has been a space where Canadian masculinity is built and celebrated. This masculinity has historically been intertwined with heterosexuality, leading hockey to be an arena to regulate gender and sexual norms. This dynamic complicates queer women's participation in the sport: hockey's heteronormative environment has restricted the expression of gender and sexuality among players, yet queer women continue to actively utilize the sport to claim belonging within the national community.

Drawing on oral history interviews and written questionnaires with five research participants, this conference paper examines queer women's experiences in hockey from the 1980s to present day to investigate how queer women navigate systems of power in Canadian hockey. I argue that resistance and complicity coexist in queer women's relationships with hockey. Participating in hockey enables queer women to be conditionally accepted into the national community because their engagement performs a recognizable form of "Canadianness." However, this inclusion is contingent upon conformity to hockey's heteromale norms. By relegating their sexuality to a secondary or tertiary point of identity, queer women foreground their identities as athletes and emphasize that they are hockey players and therefore Canadian.

Greg Roberts, Western Washington University

Struggles of the Modern Acadianité Through a Musical Lens

Abstract: How does one maintain "belonging" as a linguistic and cultural minority in an everglobalized world? Acadie is a culturally recognized region in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and the region of interest in this present study. This region has produced many musical talents, from the traditional sounds of 1755, Suroît, and Angèle Arsenault to contemporary artists such as Lisa Leblanc, Les Hay Babies, and Jacques Surette who express and validate their unique

identity as cultural resilience through their craft. These artists express themselves in Chiac, protest the standardization pressures of the Québécois and French markets, code-switch, and utilize global genres as resilience tools. As Meghan Forsyth observed in her paper *Performing Acadie* these “Sociomusical alliances” link these artists “united in marginality” through a “linguistic connection, or a common musical language”. (pg.372, 2012).

Inspired by the works of Christina Keppie (2025), Elisa E. A. Sance (2014), and Meghan Forsyth (2012), this project will examine how contemporary Acadian artists use a diverse linguistic repertoire such as using French, English, a mix of the two, or Chiac to express their Acadianité. By examining the lyrical content, grammar, and vocabulary of selected songs, this project explores how Acadians continue to share their stories in an era of rapid globalization. Beyond linguistics, the project will investigate the integration of musical genres and traditional instruments used to create a link to their Acadian roots while advancing a contemporary and “new” Acadian sound. In exploring this topic, the project helps outsiders better understand the ongoing struggle of the Acadianité as a linguistic and cultural minority.

Olivia Schmidt, Brock University

Borders as Mirrors: Student Experiences at Niagara’s Borders Under Trump-Era Nationalism

Abstract: Borders are often imagined as neutral and procedural spaces, yet they are shaped by racialization, nationalism, and global political shifts. The Niagara region—one of the busiest U.S./Canada travel hubs—offers a critical site for examining how everyday border encounters are experienced. Under Trump-era nationalism, the border has become increasingly politicized, producing uneven experiences for different bodies and identities. Despite Niagara’s large student population, student crossers remain underrepresented in border studies.

This research examines how race, citizenship, and political discourse intersect at the border in subtle, overt, and contradictory ways. This study asks whether Brock University students crossing Niagara borders experience xenophobia and/or racism, how white students understand and assess their privilege at the border, and how political events (particularly Trump’s presidency) shape perceptions and experiences of border crossing.

I employed ten semi-structured interviews with white, racialized, and dual/multiple citizen Brock University students who have crossed the border in the last year. I also utilized critical autoethnography to explore my own lived experience and white privilege. Guided by Alpa Parmar’s (2020) theory borders as mirrors, this methodology situates lived experiences within this specific geopolitical moment.

Preliminary findings indicate that Trump’s presidency has intensified fear, anxiety and uncertainty around border crossing for students, leading to deterioration in their perception of both the border and the United States. Racialized and non-citizen participants reported heightened levels of discrimination and microaggressions contrasted with white participants relative ease of crossing. These findings demonstrate how border reproduce racialized and nationalized hierarchies and shape everyday mobility.

Anna Shantz and Leif Walker, University of Maine

Tariff Impacts in a Borderland Economy – Evidence from Maine’s Lumber Industry

Abstract: Recent shifts in U.S. trade policy during the Trump administration, including the reintroduction and expansion of import tariffs, have renewed attention to the economic consequences of protectionist policy frameworks, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and for firms dependent on a borderland economy. Existing empirical research on U.S. tariffs has largely examined aggregate welfare effects, price pass-through, and firm-level responses among larger importers and multinational firms, while paying comparatively less attention to smaller regional SMEs operating in trade-dependent industries. An analysis of tariff impacts on Maine’s lumber industry illustrates these on-the-ground ramifications.

The study examines the impact of import tariffs on SMEs in Maine’s lumber industry, a sector central to the state’s economy and highly sensitive to changes to input costs, export conditions, and international demand.

The analysis employs a mixed-method approach combining sector-level trade data with firm-level case studies and industry documentation. Additional quantitative data from federal and state sources are used to contextualize changes in trade flows and production costs. Qualitative evidence, including primary-source insights from invited industry speakers and stakeholder discussions organized through IGNITE, provides insights into how lumber firms perceive and respond to uncertainty in international trade markets.

By focusing on a geographically concentrated region and a single trade-dependent industry, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of tariff impacts beyond aggregate economic indicators. The findings aim to inform policymakers, regulators, and regional businesses by providing evidence on the distributional effects of trade policy and the resilience of SME-driven lumber economies.

Hailey Solis, Western Washington University
Canada’s Blind Spot: The Safe Third Country Agreement

Abstract: Canada’s designation of the U.S. as a safe third country for asylum seekers fails not just for third country nationals, but also when applied to Latino and other minority U.S. citizens subjected to discriminatory immigration policies. Prior to the Safe Third Country Agreement between the U.S. and Canada in 2002, Americans were able to seek asylum in Canada, under the premise that Americans could still face persecution. Thousands resettled in Canada during the Vietnam War, for example. Today, the rise of racial profiling in the United States has created heightened vulnerability for minority citizens, such as Latino, Somali, Afghan, and other Muslim groups.

Canada’s Supreme Court recently upheld the government’s decision to designate the US as a “safe third country”. This paper uses previous court cases and historical examples to analyze the implicit and explicit legal structure of Canada-United States asylum issues. It argues that the failure to acknowledge threats to racialized people has led to constitutional violations that have become widespread in the U.S. Therefore, Canada has an obligation under its own laws to accept asylum claims from Americans where they fit Canadian legal criteria. In light of recent U.S. immigration policy changes (i.e., “Kavanaugh stops” that explicitly permit racial profiling), this paper offers an argument as to why Canada should abolish the Safe Third Country Agreement and open itself to asylum claims from the United States.



FOOD ON CAMPUS

Fresh Food Company (located in DeCew and Lowenberger residences)

Our campus Fresh Food Company locations are designed as an all-you-care-to-enjoy restaurant, featuring a chef curated menu focused on authentic food that has been grown responsibly, cared for and made with heart. The Fresh Food Company provides the ultimate destination for quality food, convenience and healthy options on campus.

Monday to Thursday 7:30 am to 1:00 am
Friday 7:30 am to 11:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday 8:30 am to 10:00 pm

Hungry Badger (located in the Walker Sports Complex)

Hungry Badger is a great campus destination for grabbing food on the go. It features national retail brands as well as healthy grab-and-go options, snacks and beverages. Pizza Pizza offers the standard campus favourites as well as other exciting options. Always expect the highest quality from all our Pizza Pizza locations; Pita Pit offers classic pita favourites as well as a selection of fresh smoothies; and Tim Hortons offers the full line of Tim Hortons products serving all of your brand favourites.

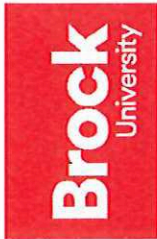
Tim Hortons
Monday to Thursday 7:30 am to 9:00 pm
Friday 7:30 am to 6:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Pizza Pizza and Pita Pit
Monday to Thursday 11:00 am to 9:00 pm
Friday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Starbucks (located in the lower level of the Schmon Tower)

This location is a full-service Starbucks offering a complete selection of coffees, teas and pastries. It also offers a great selection of Starbucks Sandwiches, Fruit Cups, Yogurt Parfaits and Protein Boxes. A great place to quickly refuel throughout your day.

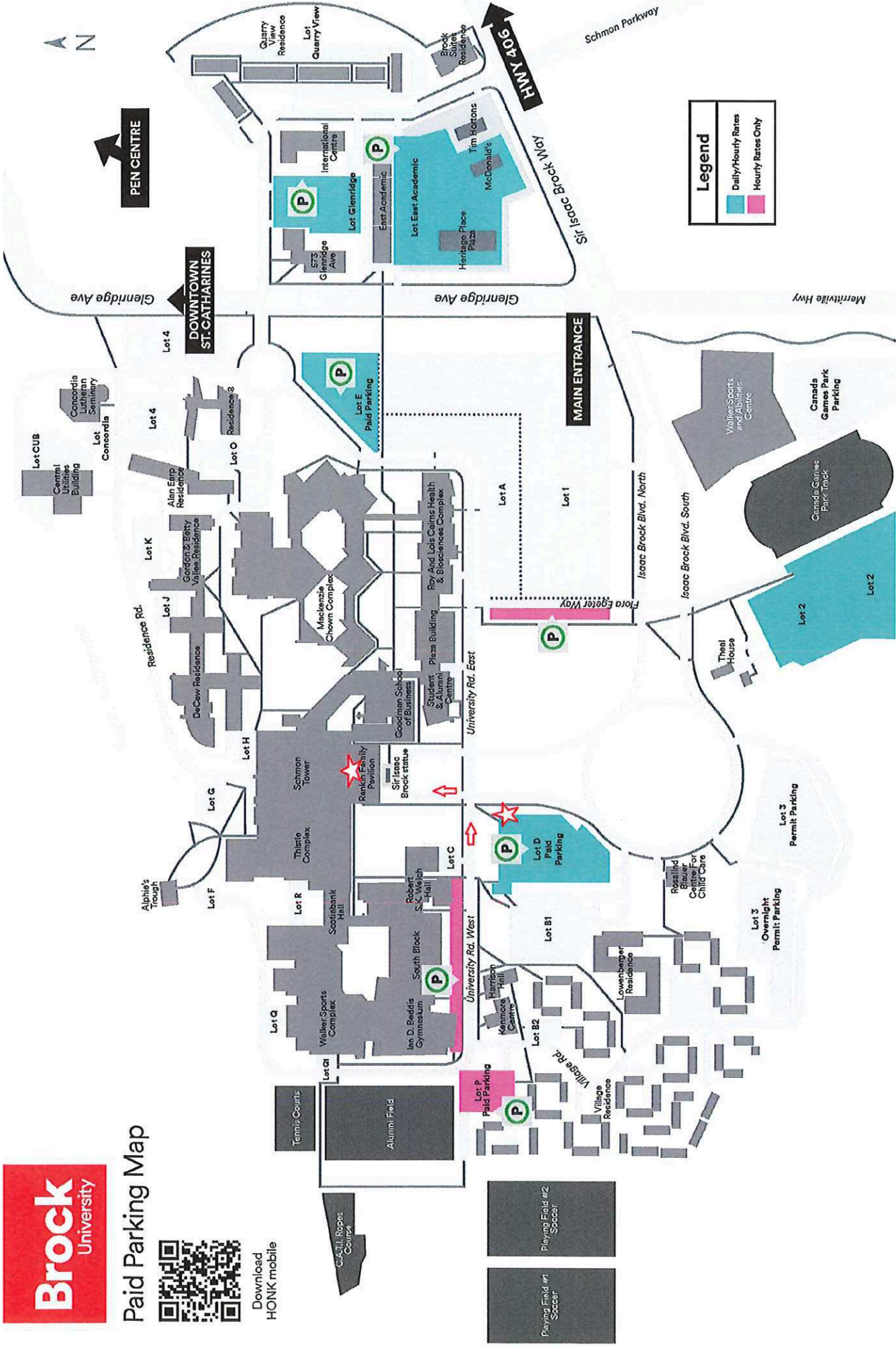
Monday to Thursday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm
Friday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm
Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm



Paid Parking Map



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Canadian Studies



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