

Health Law, Policy & Ethics Seminar Series

2023-2024



Screening Out: Exclusionary Lawyering and Doctoring in the Canadian Immigration System

Abstract: If the late Stephen Hawking had wanted to settle in Canada, he would likely have been denied. This is because he was disabled. Federal immigration law is designed to exclude people with chronic illness and developmental or genetic difference from permanently settling on health grounds, with some exceptions. This is referred to as medical inadmissibility. I discuss the immigration system based on my award-winning institutional ethnography of its medical, legal and administrative practices published as *Screening Out: HIV Testing and the Canadian Immigration Experience*. I demonstrate how mandatory HIV screening and medical examination trigger institutional practices that are highly problematic for would-be immigrants, refugees, and for bureaucrats, doctors, and lawyers. I articulate doable recommendations for change that carry the promise of ridding institutionally arising harms.

Presenter



Dr. **Laura Bisailon**, Associate Professor
Department of Health and Society
University of Toronto

Laura Bisailon is a sociologist and associate professor at the University of Toronto. Her scholarship investigates the inner workings of state bureaucracies through their medical, legal, and administrative practices from the standpoint of the very people toward whom exclusionary policy, law and practices are directed. She is author of the award-winning book *Screening Out* (2022), director of the film *The Unmaking of Medical Inadmissibility* (2020), and principal investigator of the project *Medical Exclusion*.

Commentator



Dr. **Valentina Capurri**, Lecturer
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Valentina Capurri has a BA and MA in History from Università di Bologna (Italy), and MA in Geography and PhD in History from York University. She has over a decade of experience in teaching at York University and Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research interests are in geopolitics, citizenship and identity, immigration as well as disability studies, particularly within the Canadian context. She is the author of *Not Good Enough for Canada: Canadian Public Discourse around Issues of Inadmissibility for Potential Immigrants with Diseases and/or Disabilities, 1902-2002* (UTP 2019).