



Centre for Diaspora & Transnational Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Annual Report 2023-2024



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Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues and Students,

As the Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, I am delighted to reflect on the academic year 2023-2024, which has been our most successful yet. We have set a record for the number of events hosted, showcasing our commitment to fostering vibrant academic discourse and community engagement.

This year, global developments have also prompted our community to deeply consider core values such as academic freedom and justice. These discussions have been both challenging and enlightening, reinforcing the importance of our work.

After six years as the director of the Centre, I will be transitioning to a new administrative role as the Dean of Arts at Trinity College. The time I have spent here as director has been profoundly impactful, both for the community and for myself. One of the most important notes is that the number of faculty members has quadrupled since 2017, leading to exponential growth in debate, insight, and rigor as well as the foundations for a vibrant community.

The Centre is well-positioned for a bright future, built on a foundation of intellectual curiosity and academic excellence. I am confident that it will continue to thrive and contribute significantly to our understanding of diaspora and transnational studies.

Thank you for your dedication and support.

Kevin Lewis O'Neill

Professor and Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies



About CDTS

The Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies is an incubator for interdisciplinary transnational and diasporic research across the humanities and social sciences. Located in the world's most diverse city, the Centre is ideally situated for its innovative and urgent research on the experiences of migration.

The Centre serves as a connective tissue between departments and schools while also supporting original research and engaged teaching. In addition to the Centre's comparative, qualitative and historically-driven work, it provides policy insights on pertinent issues in the world today.

Founded by University Professor Ato Quayson, the Centre continues its remarkable growth under the leadership of Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill, Director and Dr. Antonela Arhin, Associate Director.



**Founded
in
2005**

**11
appointed
faculty**

**150+
Undergraduate
Students**

**40+
Graduate
Students**

**Monthly lectures,
conferences,
seminars, panels,
networking
opportunities and
social events**

CDTS Faculty



Alejandra González Jiménez is an anthropologist of labour and global capitalism. Her research ethnographically examines car production in Mexico with a focus on the social and labour relations between unevenly located workforces. Her work illuminates the ways in which workers reinforce, disrupt, or contest a tier-labour system. She holds a joint position between the Centre of Diaspora for Transnational Studies and the Centre for Industrial Relations & Human Resources.



Andrea S. Allen is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Her research has addressed matters of race, sexuality, gender, violence, and religion in Brazil and the African Diaspora.



Angelica Pesarini is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies and Italian Studies at the University of Toronto. Her work seeks to expand the field of Black Italia focusing on dynamics of race, gender, identity, and citizenship.



Anna Shternshis holds the position of AI and Malka Green Professor of Yiddish studies and the director of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. She is the author of over 20 articles and multiple books on the Soviet Jews during World War II, Russian Jewish culture and post-Soviet Jewish diaspora.



Kamari Maxine Clarke is a Distinguished Professor at the University of Toronto. For more than twenty years, she has conducted research on issues related to legal institutions, human rights and international law, religious nationalism and the politics of race and globalization.



Kenneth MacDonald is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Toronto. He is also a core faculty member in two interdisciplinary programs: the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies and the Centre for Critical Development Studies. Most of his research is ethnographically grounded and seek to understand the role of transnational processes in the reproduction of cultural formations.

CDTS Faculty



Kevin Lewis O'Neill is the Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies and Professor in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. A cultural anthropologist, his work focuses on the moral dimensions of contemporary political practice in Latin America.



Naomi Seidman is the Jackman Humanities Professor at the University of Toronto, in the Department for the Study of Religion and the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies. A 2016 Guggenheim Fellow, Professor Seidman is presently completing a study of the Hebrew and Yiddish translations of Freud's writings during his lifetime.



Padraic X. Scanlan is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies and the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources at the University of Toronto. He is also a Research Associate at the Centre for History and Economics at the University of Cambridge and Harvard University. Professor Scanlan is currently working on a history of the Irish Great Famine, agricultural labour and imperial political economy, and a history of the working day in the nineteenth century.



Sumayya Kassamali is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto. Professor Kassamali's research addresses migrant domestic work in Lebanon, and the broader transformation of social relations that accompanied the large-scale reliance on temporary African and Asian migrant labour in the Middle East.



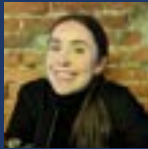
Ted Sammons is an Assistant Professor (CLTA) at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto. His research focuses on everyday intersections of racial formation, national sovereignty, and capitalist globalization, with particular attention to perspectives on related topics that resonate in the contemporary Caribbean.

CDTS Staff, Postdoctoral Fellow, and Visiting Lecturers

Staff



Dr. Antonela Arhin is the Associate Director and a Sessional Lecturer at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto where she teaches courses on human trafficking, diaspora and transnationalism. She brings over 20 years of experience in higher education, government, NGOs and consulting.



Katharine Bell is the Communications and Program Officer at the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto. She brings over five years of experience in academic administration, logistics, and developing communications strategies.

Postdoctoral Fellow



Niyousha Bastani is a postdoctoral scholar, with research interests focused on the overlapping histories and politics of: psychology, race, anti-Muslim racism (particularly in the UK), and education. Especially through engagement with the political thought of Sylvia Wynter, her work questions how these histories and politics shape racial understandings of being human.

Visiting Lecturers



Anita Norich is Collegiate Professor Emerita of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She translates Yiddish literature and lectures and publishes on a range of topics concerning modern Jewish cultures, Yiddish language and literature, Jewish American literature, and Holocaust literature.



Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui is a Professor of International Relations Theory and African Political Thought at Cornell University. Originally from Guinea, he attended Law School before serving as law clerk, judge, and legal counsel for the National Commission on Trade, Agreements, and Protocols. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1988.

2023-24 Courses

Undergraduate

DTS199H1 - Superman and Other Migrants

From the 1938 debut of Superman until the spate of recent autobiographical graphic novels by immigrants and children of immigrants, the development of the comic and graphic novel form has been intricately bound up with the diaspora experience. In this course, we will explore the emergence of the superhero from the immigrant experience; trace the depiction of migrants, immigrants and refugees in recent graphic novels; and study visual strategies for representing migration and displacement.

DTS200Y1 - Introduction to Diaspora and Transnational Studies

What is the relationship between place and belonging, between territory and memory? What effect has the emergence of new media of communication had upon the coherence of cultural and political boundaries? All of these questions and many more form part of the subject matter of Diaspora and Transnational Studies. This introductory course examines the historical and contemporary movements of peoples and the complex issues of identity and experience to which these processes give rise. The area of study is comparative and interdisciplinary, drawing from the social sciences, history, the arts and humanities.

DTS300H1 - Qualitative and Quantitative Reasoning

Focuses on research design and training in methods from history, geography, anthropology, literary and cultural studies, and other disciplines appropriate to Diaspora and Transnational Studies. Prepares students to undertake primary research required in senior seminars.

DTS305H1 - Topics in Diaspora and Transnationalism:

NAFTA: Anthropology of Free Trade

Do you ever wonder where your yearlong supply of avocados comes from? Do you know how Canadian mining companies benefit from Mexico's so-called drug war? Did you know that an auto-part crosses the Mexico-US border, back-and-forth, about seven times before being assembled into a car? This course grapples with these and similar questions by taking a critical look at free trade. Specifically, we focus on NAFTA/CUSMA, the Canada-Mexico-United States free trade agreement.

DTS310H1 - Transnational Toronto

This course examines the processes that have produced Toronto as a transnational city over time, including the dynamics of immigration and mobility, experiences of alienation, the global extension of capitalism, and the (re)formation of communities grounded in the complex dynamics of identities produced in a space that is both 'home' and away'. We will also explore the specific practices, and connections that produce "Toronto" as a space that transcends its physical geographic boundaries and is continually reproduced in and through the flows of people, capital, objects, ideas, - and the many forces that reproduce and reconfigure these flows.

DTS314H1 - Citizenship and Multiculturalism

This course examines approaches to belonging and distinction that accompany different models of citizenship. Areas of emphasis will vary, but may include topics such as authenticity and assimilation; ethno-nationalism; immigration and naturalization policy; indigeneity; insurgency; legacies of colonialism; mass media and popular culture; policing and surveillance; racial stratification; transnational markets; and xenophobia.

DTS390H1/Y1 - Independent Study

A scholarly project chosen by the student, approved by the Department, and supervised by one of its instructors. Consult with the Diaspora and Transnational Studies Program Office for more information.

DTS401H1 - Advanced Topics in Diaspora Studies: Being Human: Race, Science, and Transnationalism

Who is imagined to be human? Who is not? How does social scientific inquiry produce racial hierarchy and categorize the human? Once firmly rooted in colonial sense-making, scientific knowledge about race and being human now also shapes and is shaped by processes of diaspora and transnationalism. This course invites us to take an in-depth look at the human as envisioned in past and present forms of knowledge making and gathering, of science and surveillance. It also invites us to imagine the future of being human, or not.

DTS402H1 - Advanced Topics in Diaspora Studies: Desire in Yiddish Literature

What does "desire" mean to a Yiddish writer? Desire most commonly refers to sexuality and the erotic life. The object of desire may be a person, but it can also be a thing, an idea, an art form, and more. How does our milieu affect our sense of who or what we desire? Yiddish writers have always been necessarily multicultural, multilingual, trans-continental in knowledge and perspective. They responded to an extraordinarily diverse array of political and social movements including emigration/immigration, various forms of nationalism, socialism, religious belief, rejection of religious observance.

2023-24 Courses

DTS404H1 - Advanced Topics in Diaspora Studies: History and Counterstories in the Black Mediterranean

This course explores colonial histories and counter- stories of resistance in the Black Mediterranean. Intended not only as a physical space but also as a symbolic site, the Black Mediterranean can be seen as a new theoretical approach useful to understand the racialized production of bodies and borders, and to highlight forms of resistance. The course focuses on Italy and its (post)colonial ties with Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. Going from the Italian invasion of Eritrea in 1890 to the current so-called "refugee crisis"; the case of Italy illustrates the intersections and resignification of race, bodies and borders in the Mediterranean region, as well as the presence of important histories of resistance and alternative conceptualisations of belonging.

DTS410H1 - Diasporic Foodways

As peoples have moved in the world, food has played a central role in (re)defining who they are, reproducing myth and ritual, and bounding diasporic communities. This course seeks to address questions surrounding the dynamics of the food 'we' eat, the ways in which 'we' eat, the meaning 'we' give to eating, and the effect of eating in a transnational world. Recognizing that culinary culture is central to diasporic identifications, the focus is on the place of food in the enduring habits, rituals, and everyday practices that are collectively used to produce and sustain a shared sense of diasporic cultural identity.

DTS412H1 - The Diasporic Imagination

This course focuses on echoes of diasporic and transnational life in artistic work, and on the significance of aesthetic production to the formation of diasporic and transnational worlds. Areas of emphasis will vary but may spotlight particular historical and geographic contexts, and may foreground one or more form, including film, poetry, fiction, music, and dance.

DTS414H1 - Money on the Move

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, industry and finance matured together, pushing people into motion around the world. The instruments of long-distance trade, like insurance, credit, and debt, connected people in new and sometimes unsettling ways. The free movement of goods and cash was mirrored by restrictions on migration to some parts of the world and by forced or coerced migration to others. This course explores the history of the rise of global capitalism at a human scale, exploring how financialization, industrialization and imperialism overlapped and intertwined, and how the rise of liberalism and capitalism weighed on human lives.

DTS416H1 - Wars, Diaspora, and Music

This course explores how composers, performers, songwriters and audiences made sense of traumatic and violent events that they experienced, such as ethnic conflicts, wars, exile and displacement, through music. We will also look at how government ideologies employ music during wars. The case studies will include stories of Jewish, Palestinian, Afghan, Romani, Korean, Rwandan and other diasporas severely affected by wars and violence.

Graduate

DTS1000H1 - Comparative Research Methods in DTS

This seminar will introduce students to a range of theories to do with diaspora and transnationalism from the humanities and the social sciences. Core questions will include the methodological differences between diaspora and its many synonyms, such as migrant communities, exile, refugee, etc. The different emphases and overlaps between Migration Studies, Urban Studies, and Diaspora and Transnational Studies will also be pursued.

DTS2001H1 - Grad Topics in DTS: Going Astray: Translation, Migration, Diaspora

This course will explore the intersection between translation theory and diaspora studies, focusing on translation as movement and on the linguistic dimensions of diaspora experience. Topics we will cover include postcolonial translation theory, the geopolitical sites of translation, and the literature of the translated migrant self.

DTS2002H1 - Grad Topics in DTS: Rethinking Diaspora: Cultures, Futures, Homes

This graduate-level class considers the meaning of "diaspora" in the 21st century. What has happened to earlier divisions between place of origin and place of arrival in the context of ever-faster media technologies, shifts in national demographics due to increased migration and displacement, and new political calls to reckon with diversity and representation? Sitting in Toronto, how can we think together about the collapsing of space and time, nation and difference, arrival and departure, origin and identity? Drawing on examples rooted in contemporary global political conditions (war, migration, economic disparity, racial hierarchy, and more), we will build conceptual vocabularies to rethink "diaspora" beyond an earlier paradigm focused on hyphenated identity, multiculturalism, and intergenerational conflict.

Calendar of Events

CDTS Guest Lecture Series

The Banality of Good: The UN's Global Fight against Human Trafficking to Japan

Professor Lieba Faier

University of California, Los Angeles

September 21st, 2023

Black Feminisms, Emotion, and Radical Honesty as Praxis

Professor Bianca C. Williams (in conversation with Professor Nisrin Elamin, University of Toronto)

Bowdoin College

October 12th, 2023



Refashioning Race: How Global Cosmetic Surgery Crafts New Standards

Professor Alka Menon

Yale University

October 19th, 2023



Tracking and Mapping Religious Racism against African Diaspora Religions in Brazil

Professor Danielle Boaz

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

November 9th, 2023

Making Love and Borders

Professor Sealing Cheng

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

November 17th, 2023

rivers in nomos: sounding law from transit through Western Amazonian terrains

Professor Richard Kernaghan

University of Florida

February 1st, 2024

Calendar of Events

CDTS Guest Lecture Series

Diaspora in reverse? Immigrant folk music in contemporary Italy

Professor Emeritus Alessandro Portelli
University of Rome, La Sapienza
March 1st, 2024

Jews and the Pig: A 3,000 Year History

Professor Jordan Rosenblum
University of Wisconsin-Madison
March 14th, 2024

Queer World Making: Contemporary Middle Eastern Diasporic Art

Professor Andrew Gayed
OCAD University
April 4th, 2024



Evasion, Andrew Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Public Talks

Professor Ronald Deibert in conversation with Professors Kevin Lewis O'Neill and Kamari Clarke

Professor Ronald Deibert
Citizen Lab, University of Toronto
October 4th, 2023



You've Just Been F*cked by PSYOPS

Trevor Paglen
Artist
October 11th, 2023

Hack and Leak

Professor Gabriella Coleman
Harvard University
October 19th, 2023

Calendar of Events

Evasion, Andrew Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Public Talks



Black Life in the Wake and the Making of *Otherwise* Projects

Professor Christina Sharpe and Dionne Brand
York University, Poet
November 16th, 2023

Measures of Care and Race

Dr. Niyousha Bastani
Sawyer Seminar Postdoctoral Fellow
December 6th, 2023

Techno-Humanitarianism as an Emergent Regime

Professors Kamari Clarke, Jennifer Burrell, and Sara Kendall
University of Toronto, State University of New York - Albany,
Kent Law School
January 26th, 2024

Inside the Great Dismal Swamp: Evasion, Surveillance, and Its limits

Professor Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui
Cornell University
February 15th, 2024

The Anemy of the Liberal Script for Science: Apocrypha, Misology, Misoneism, & Cryptomnesia

Professor Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui
Cornell University
February 29th, 2024

Grief, Accountability, and Youth Incarceration

Professor Laurence Ralph
Princeton University
March 5th, 2024



Calendar of Events

Evasion, Andrew Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Public Talks

Theses on The Africana Diasporas: Topologies of Time, Consciousness, and Intelligence

Professor Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui
Cornell University
March 7th, 2024

The Strike as Theory: History of the Present and Uprising in Colombia

Professor Alejandra Azuero-Quijano
Swarthmore College
March 25th, 2024

Litigating Clerical Sexual Abuse

Patrick J. Wall & Levi Monagle with Professor Kevin O'Neill
Priest Investigator/Author, Lawyer, University of Toronto
April 2nd, 2024

Dumping Fate: Toxic Waste and its Maritime Aftermath

Professors Jatin Dua & Naor Ben-Yehoyada
University of Michigan, Columbia University
April 11th, 2024

UofT Events

Fall Campus Day

November 18th, 2023

Program Exploration Day

February 29th, 2024

CDTS Social Events

Welcome Party

September 20th, 2023

DTS Alumni Panel

March 6th, 2024



Calendar of Events

Collaborative Events

From Here: Documentary Screening and Filmmakers Q/A

In collaboration with the Centre for the Study of the United States

November 29th, 2023

De/Militarized Ecologies: Making Peace with Nature Along the Korean DMZ

In collaboration with the Asian Institute

February 16th, 2023

A Very Canadian Coup in Haiti (20 Years Later)

In collaboration with The Centre for Caribbean Studies

February 26th, 2023

Translucency: Memory, Materiality and loss in the Venezuelan Diaspora

In collaboration with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

February 28th, 2023

1834 Global Summit

In collaboration with Operation Black Vote Canada and 1834 Global

May 3rd - 5th, 2024



Diaspora and Transnational Studies Union Events

Annual Open House

September 29th, 2023

Taylor Swift Karaoke Party

October 19th, 2023

Lunch and Learn with Prof. Padraic Scanlan

November 30th, 2023

2024 Annual Ato Quayson Lecture

This annual, year-end event is named after Professor Ato Quayson. University Professor and the Centre's founding director, Professor Quayson's bold research set the Centre's agenda for more than a decade. This lecture now serves as an opportunity for students and scholars to participate in the futures that this intellectual labour made possible.

Settler Colonial Apologia

Professor Audra Simpson
Columbia University
February 8th, 2024

Audra Simpson is a Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. She researches and writes about Indigenous and settler society, politics and history. She is the author of *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke University Press, 2014), winner of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association's Best First Book in *Native American and Indigenous Studies Prize*, the Laura Romero Prize from the American Studies Association, the Sharon Stephens Prize from the American Ethnological Society (2015) and CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title in 2014. She has published articles and book chapters spanning various fields. She was a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Jackman Humanities Institute at the University of Toronto in 2018, the Nicholson Distinguished Visiting Scholar in the Unit for Criticism and Theory at University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) in 2019 and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Department of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity at University of Chicago in 2023. In 2010 she won Columbia University's School for General Studies Excellence in Teaching Award. In 2020 she won the *Mark Van Doren Award for Teaching*. She was the second anthropologist in the 50-year history of the award to do so. She is a Kahnawà:ke Mohawk.



CDTS News

CDTS Welcomes New Faculty Member Professor Alejandra González Jiménez

Professor González Jiménez's research is centered around the domains of labour, capitalism, and free trade. She is co-appointed with the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources.

Professor Padraic Scanlan promoted to Associate Professor

Professor Scanlan's research focuses on the history of labour, enslaved and free, in Britain and the British empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is currently working on a history of the Irish Great Famine, agricultural labour and imperial political economy, and a history of the working day in the nineteenth century.

Trinity College Appoints Professor Kevin Lewis O'Neill as Dean of Arts & Vice Provost

As Trinity College's Dean of Arts, Professor O'Neill will provide leadership for academic programs and advance the academic mission within the College, the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and the University of Toronto. He will oversee the College's undergraduate academic and co-curricular programming, including the Margaret MacMillan Trinity One Program, the College's upper year programs offered in partnership with the Faculty of Arts & Science (Ethics, Society & Law and International Relations) and the Faculty of Medicine (Immunology), as well as Trinity's academic sustainability programming – part of the Integrated Sustainability Initiative – in partnership with the School of the Environment. As Vice-Provost, the Dean is responsible for formulating plans and policies, building research capacity across the institution and acting on behalf of the Provost, as required. The Dean of Arts also represents the College in the wider academic community at the University of Toronto and contributes directly to the work of the Faculty of Arts & Science through membership on university committees.

Appointment of Professor Ken MacDonald as Interim Director of CDTS

Professor Ken MacDonald will serve as the Interim Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies effective July 1, 2024 until June 30, 2025. Professor MacDonald is a cultural geographer at the University of Toronto. He is cross-appointed to the Department of Human Geography and the Department of Global Development Studies at UTSC, and the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at UTSG; and is also core faculty in the Culinary Research Centre. Professor MacDonald's research and writing have focused on the role of transnationalism and transnational ideologies in the production of cultural identity in northern Pakistan and India, the postcolonial politics of development, and the culture political of environmental governance. He also has various ongoing projects regarding his specific interest in Food Studies.

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