

ROBERT F. HARNEY PROGRAM IN ETHNIC, IMMIGRATION AND PLURALISM STUDIES
MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY
2019 – 2020 HARNEY LECTURE SERIES IN ETHNICITY

David FitzGerald

Refuge beyond Reach: How Rich Democracies Repel Asylum Seekers

January 30, 2020 2-4pm

Campbell Conference Facility,
Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
(1 Devonshire Place, University of Toronto)



Abstract: Media pundits, politicians, and the public are often skeptical or ambivalent about granting asylum. They fear that asylum-seekers will impose economic and cultural costs and pose security threats to nationals. Consequently, governments of rich, democratic countries attempt to limit who can approach their borders, which often leads to refugees breaking immigration laws.

In *Refuge beyond Reach*, David Scott FitzGerald traces how rich democracies have deliberately and systematically shut down most legal paths to safety. Drawing on official government documents, information obtained via WikiLeaks, and interviews with asylum seekers, he finds that for ninety-nine percent of refugees, the only way to find safety in one of the prosperous democracies of the Global North is to reach its territory and then ask for asylum. FitzGerald shows how the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia comply with the letter of law while violating the spirit of those laws through a range of deterrence methods -- first designed to keep out Jews fleeing the Nazis -- that have now evolved into a pervasive global system of "remote control." While some of the most draconian remote control practices continue in secret, Fitzgerald identifies some pressure points and finds that a diffuse humanitarian obligation to help those in need is more difficult for governments to evade than the law alone.

Refuge beyond Reach addresses one of the world's most pressing challenges -- how to manage flows of refugees and other types of migrants -- and helps to identify the conditions under which individuals can access the protection of their universal rights.

David FitzGerald is Theodore E. Gildred Chair in U.S.-Mexican Relations, Professor of Sociology, and Co-Director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego. His research analyzes policies regulating migration and asylum in countries of origin, transit, and destination. FitzGerald's books include *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*, which won the American Sociological Association's Distinguished Scholarly Book Award, and *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration*.

This event serves as keynote lecture for
the 13th Annual R.F. Harney Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Research Conference.

It is co-sponsored by the Canada Research Chair in Global Migration, the Munk School's Global Migration Lab, and the Joint Initiative in German and European Studies, funded by the DAAD with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office.

Registration: <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/event/29150/>