

A *What is Happening in Canada?* Event

The Politics of Academic Voice in Canadian Immigration Debates

Wednesday February 18, 2026 | 1:00 – 2:00 pm EST

Register [here](#) for the Zoom information

What role should scholars play in public debates on political issues? Sociological theory offers two diametrically opposed visions. One sees the scholar as a neutral figure who pursues knowledge for its own sake and refrains from engaging in debates about its practical or political implications. The other sees the scholar as fundamentally embedded in the unequal social worlds they study, making neutrality impossible and political activism a valid component of professional duties. This talk considers the challenges faced by scholars on both sides of this spectrum in the context of increasingly polarized debates about immigration in Canada. In doing so, it provides the academic “backstory” to my forthcoming, co-authored book, *Immigration and Canada: Sixteen Questions* (MQUP).

This talk will be moderated by **Daniel Béland**, Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and James McGill Professor at the Department of Political Science at McGill.



Jennifer Elrick

Associate Professor, Sociology,
McGill University

Speaker Biography

Dr. Jennifer Elrick (she/her) is Associate Professor of Sociology at McGill University, where she also holds the Research Chair in Multiculturalism. Her research focuses broadly on how migration governance creates and perpetuates gender, racial/ethnic, and/or class inequalities, and how these affect both newcomers and receiving societies. While most of her work focuses on institutions, her most recent, SSHRC-funded project looks at public perceptions of the different immigrant groups that are defined by immigration policy. Her first book - *Making Middle-Class Multiculturalism: Immigration Bureaucrats and Policymaking in Postwar Canada* - was published in 2021 by University of Toronto Press. Her forthcoming book - *Immigration and Canada: 16 Questions* - draws on the latest research to provide readers with a comprehensive and accessible overview of Canada's immigration system and its effects on immigrants and Canadian society. This compact “explainer” is co-authored with Mireille Paquet (Concordia University) and will be available soon as part of the Canadian Essentials series at McGill-Queen's University Press.

For those who have **pre-registered for WIHIC**: please [register on Zoom](#) to receive the event details.

For more information: robarts@yorku.ca or
<https://www.yorku.ca/research/robarts/what-is-happening-in-canada-series/>



This series is made possible by the participation of the Centre for Indigenous and Critical Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University, the Canadian Studies Network, the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada, the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, and the School of Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies at Trent University, University of British Columbia Canadian Studies Program, with the support of the International Council for Canadian Studies.