

# BEYOND DISCOURSE

*Critical and Empirical  
Approaches to  
Human Trafficking*

University of Kansas  
April 4-5, 2019

While often constructed as a universally abhorred form of violence, the concept of human trafficking continues to raise contentious debates in activism, policy, and scholarship. Mired in divisions around the role of the state, gender and sexuality, labor exploitation, and migration, factions disagree over definitions of trafficking, and some urge we abandon the term altogether.

This two-day conference will apply the contributions of critical anti-trafficking scholarship to the demand for empirical research on human trafficking in our communities and around the world. It uses the insights of discursive critiques to conduct better research on the prevalence, nature, and prevention of social problems that have become known as human trafficking. We seek interdisciplinary and intersectional conversations to better understand the continuities and ruptures across investigations of human trafficking, building toward more just and effective frameworks for research on exploitation and violence.

On April 4 and 5, the University of Kansas will host an interdisciplinary symposium examining human trafficking research. Kamala Kempadoo (York University) will open the symposium with a keynote address on Thursday, April 4 at 4 pm, with a reception to follow. Friday, April 5 will feature panels by regional and national scholars, including Amy Farrell (Northeastern University) and a closing keynote by Sally Engle Merry (New York University).

All papers related to human trafficking research are welcome, including but not limited to:

- Empirical Approaches to Illicit and Criminalized Industries
- Tracking Consequences of the Carceral Framework
- Innovations in Critical Media Analysis
- Ethics of Representation and Storytelling Against Narrative Tropes
- Long Shadow of the Mann Act: Historical Precedents and Alternatives
- Politics of Fieldwork across Ideological Difference
- Survivor-Led Research Initiatives & Collaboration
- Translating Critical Research to Policy Makers and Other Stakeholders

Please join us by submitting a brief CV and a 250-350 word abstract for a panel, paper presentation, or roundtable contribution addressing these issues to [BeyondDiscourse@gmail.com](mailto:BeyondDiscourse@gmail.com) by January 7. Invitations will be distributed and registration open from January 15 at [beyonddiscourse.ku.edu](http://beyonddiscourse.ku.edu).

Convened by:

Profs. Hannah Britton, Brian Donovan, Sarah Deer, Akiko Takeyama, and Stacey Vanderhurst

Sponsored by:

The Institute for Policy & Social Research, the Hall Center for the Humanities, the Office of the Provost, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the Center for East Asian Studies, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the Center for Global and International Studies, the Kansas African Studies Center, the Department of American Studies, the Department of Anthropology, the Department of Political Science, the Department of Sociology, the Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, the School of Public Affairs and Administration, and the Emily Taylor Center at the University of Kansas.