



**Eleanor Rathbone Social Justice Public Lecture Series 2024-25**

**Wandering throughout lives: Addressing intersectional trajectories  
of torture and torturous violence in asylum regimes**

**Professor Victoria Canning, Lancaster University**

**Wednesday 30 April 2025, 17:30–19:30**

**School of Law and Social Justice Events Space - ([Campus Map](#))**



*Eleanor Florence Rathbone, Social and Political Reformer  
(12 May 1872 - 2 January 1946)*

The impacts and effects of punitive asylum systems in Northern Europe on refugee survivors are severe and wide ranging. Asylum regimes extend beyond processes of control and systematic exclusion, reproducing multiple harms to those subjected to them. Furthermore, the asylum regime and the bordering practices it sanctions and enacts intersects with broader forms of violence and torture.

How far does the UN Convention Against Torture reflect intersectional and gendered experiences of severe violence? What is the relationship between bordering and torture? What can be done to collaboratively address the impacts of punitive asylum regimes on refugee survivors in Northern Europe?



This public lecture discusses the impact that increasingly punitive border practices have on people seeking asylum, and the ways in which these processes both compound trauma and facilitate social and emotional harm for survivors of torture and torturous violence. Drawing on the findings from five key projects undertaken over fifteen years, it highlights the impacts of everyday bordering and encourages collaborative discussion on addressing the barriers to support in the aftermath of violence.

Victoria Canning is Professor of Criminology and Director of the Harm, Crime and Criminalisation Research Centre; Associate Director of Oxford Border Criminologies; co-chair of Statewatch EU; and co-editor of the Emerald Activist Criminology series. She has authored and edited seven books, including *Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the British Asylum System* (2017), *From Social Harm to Zemiology* (2021, with Steve Tombs) and *Torture and Torturous Violence: Transcending Definitions of Torture* (2023). She has spent almost two decades working on the rights of women seeking asylum, specifically on support for survivors of sexual violence and torture with NGOs and migrant rights organisations.